I, Andrea Stiefvater, hereby submit this work as part of the requirements for the degree of:
Doctorate of Education

in:
Literacy/TESL

It is entitled:
Language Socialization in ESL Writing Classes: A Systemic Functional Analysis

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Language Socialization in ESL Writing Classes: A Systemic Functional Analysis

A dissertation submitted to the
Division of Research and Advanced Studies
of the University of Cincinnati

in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

DOCTORATE OF EDUCATION

in the Division of Teacher Education
of the College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services

October, 2008

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Abstract

Research on English as a Second Language (ESL) writing classes tends to be narrowly focused. In particular, studies tend to present a narrow view of student learning by focusing on formal, rather than functional, elements of writing. Additionally, studies of graduate students learning functional aspects of written academic English are rare. The present study examines how graduate-level ESL students are socialized into functional aspects of written academic English through ESL writing classes. Data collected included classroom observations, interviews with teachers and students, course documents, student writing, and teacher comments on student writing.

Results of this study indicate that, even when teachers themselves have not been socialized into a functional approach to language, they recognize that a formal approach is insufficient to the demands of graduate-level academic English. Consequently, the teachers attempt to socialize their students into a functional approach despite lacking the framework with which to articulate this approach. Despite the teachers’ lack of ability to clearly articulate a functional approach to language, students were socialized into a functional approach to language. This socialization is reflected in their classroom discussions, interviews, and written assignments.

This study points to a need for ESL programs to create programs that specifically address the needs of graduate-level students by taking an integrated and functional approach to teaching ESL writing. Implications for program design, teacher training, pedagogy, and future research are discussed.
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Acknowledgments

First, I would like to thank my dissertation committee for their time, thought, and consideration of this dissertation. Thanks especially to Dr. Gulbahar Beckett for the emails, phone calls, encouragement, challenges, and patience that were put into this dissertation process. I wasn’t exactly the fastest worker on the planet, and my geographic distance didn’t make things any easier for us to work together. Nonetheless, you didn’t give up on me, and I appreciate that. I am also grateful to Dr. Keith Barton for agreeing to remain on my committee despite his move. Thanks also go to Dr. Eric Paulson and Dr. John Bryan for their thoughtful comments.

Second, I would like to thank the students and teachers who participated in the study. Thanks to all of you for your candor and dedication. I recognize that participating in a research study for one year can be distracting, especially when you’re also a graduate student. I truly appreciate your willingness to be distracted.

Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family for their support as I very slowly worked my way through this process. I know that some of you were tempted to lose faith in and patience with me; I will be eternally grateful that you only lost patience.
Chapter 1 – Introduction

Background

This study examines the socialization of English as a Second Language (ESL) graduate student into academic writing. Such a study is important because of the large number of graduate students attending U.S. graduate schools, as well as the high stakes associated with many graduate-level programs. This study was conducted during the 2004-2005 academic year. According to the Institute of International Education, the 2005/6 school year (the year after the study was conducted) was the seventh consecutive year that the U.S. hosted 500,000 or more foreign students (np). Despite changes in visa regulations, the number of international students newly enrolling in American universities during the 2005/6 school year was 8.3% higher than the previous year (np). Of these new enrollees, 44.9% (64,235) were graduate students.

At the university where the research took place, total student enrollment (according to the university website) for the 2005-2006 school year was 35,527. Of that, 8,350 students (23.5%) were graduate students. The sheer number of international graduate students studying in the U.S. speaks to the need to develop better methods for serving their specific needs. These graduate students go on to become professors, researchers, and teachers, and their contributions to their chosen fields can only be strengthened by their facility in academic writing. One way to identify better methods for serving their specific needs is to study how these students are socialized into academic writing, and what role (if any) ESL classes play in the socialization process.
Research Problem

Previous studies of ESL students learning academic writing have focused on institutional expectations; those about scholars’ (both emerging and established) negotiations of academic writing; studies of interactions/negotiations of academic discourses; and studies of the linguistic characteristics of academic language. As a whole, these studies have begun to provide us with insight into how students learn and teachers teach ESL writing; however, the studies have been too narrow in their focus. In other words, the studies have lacked the “extravagance” (Halliday, 1993, p. 23) necessary to fully describe and understand the socialization process. Rather than focusing on the many different aspects of socialization, these studies have focused on one or two. For example, studies focused on student experiences of the socialization process (e.g., Currie, 1998; Gosden, 1996; Katznelson, Perpignan, & Rubin, 2001) have reported students’ perceptions of challenges they face when learning academic writing and their coping mechanisms for dealing with them. They don’t, however, report on whence those challenges arise, where students learn their coping skills, or what influence writing classes and/or teachers have on the students.

Other studies have focused on teacher perspectives (e.g., Mohan & Lo, 1985; Tait, 1999; Zhu, 2004) of academic writing classes. These studies have tended to focus on teacher and/or researcher perspectives of what teachers tend to emphasize in their approaches to teaching writing. Thus, these studies provide us with excellent information about teachers’ beliefs about the relative importance of various aspects of writing, such as formal grammar or specialized content. However, these studies do not
provide us with perspectives on how the teachers’ students perceive these priorities, or of how these priorities are enacted in the classroom. In a similar vein, other studies that focused on textual analysis (e.g., Connor, 1987; Hinds, 1987) or institutional approaches to academic writing (e.g. Flowerdew, 1999a & 1999b; Kaplan & Baldauf, 2005) have also been too narrowly focused on one particular phenomenon, without examining the interrelationships between the various aspects of the socialization process. What these studies lacked was a holistic view of the socialization process, as well as a comprehensive framework for examining the characteristics of language into which the students were being socialized.

**Purpose of the Study**

The present study undertook to fill the methodological and theoretical gaps of previous studies by providing a more holistic view of the socialization process of graduate ESL students into academic writing. An important aspect of this more holistic view is the incorporation of multiple viewpoints of the socialization process. To that end, the study focused on observing and interviewing six ESL graduate students and their four writing teachers during the course of one academic year (2004-2005). Data collected included classroom observations, student writing, teacher writing, course documents, and interviews with students and teachers. The research questions asked were: What aspects of academic writing are prioritized by teachers in graduate-level ESL writing classes? How are teacher priorities reflected in their classroom interactions (including class discussions, oral and written comments on student writing, class handouts and assignments)? To what aspects of academic writing are graduate ESL
students socialized throughout one academic year of ESL writing classes? How is the student socialization process reflected in students’ classroom comments, written work, and interview responses?

By exploring these research questions in relation to multiple sources of data, the findings of the study present a comprehensive overview of the student socialization process. Additionally, the theoretical frameworks used emphasize not only the sociocultural setting’s impact on student socialization, but also a socioculturally functional view of academic language.

Theoretical Framework

As previously mentioned, the goal of this study was to provide a holistic view of how graduate ESL students are socialized into academic writing within the context of ESL writing classes. To achieve this, the sociocultural theory of language socialization was used to guide the research. Additionally, in order to provide a detailed and robust description of the language characteristics that teachers prioritized and into which students were socialized, the linguistic theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) was used. The following is an overview of the two theories and their relevance to the current study.

Vygotskian Sociocultural Theory

Consciousness is what sets humans apart from other creatures, forming a link between knowledge and behavior. As such, consciousness, as Vygotsky conceived it, is an integral part of human problem-solving. As Lantolf and Appel (1994) describe it, Vygotskian consciousness includes "planning, voluntary attention, logical memory,
problem solving, and evaluation” (p. 3). Historically, human consciousness was viewed as either an impetus for instinctual acts or as an amorphous, self-perpetuating state (Lantolf & Appel, 1994; Wertsch, 1998). Vygotsky suggested that consciousness was best explained by studying interactions between people or between people and objects. As such, “Vygotsky's theory rejected any attempt to decouple consciousness from behavior and searched for the explanation of consciousness in the interaction (that is, concrete and symbolic activity) which links humans to each other and to their artifacts” (Lantolf and Appel, 1994, p. 5). Thus, development of cognitive functions occurs as an interaction between natural, instinctual human functions and sociocultural factors. Vygotsky posited that the sociocultural setting is the primary element in shaping higher mental functions such as voluntary attention, conceptual thought, planning, perception, and problem solving (Lantolf and Appel, 1994, p. 5). Learning involves gaining control over socioculturally mediated artifacts such as tools, symbols, and language (Lantolf and Appel, 1994, p. 6).

Language socialization theory builds upon Vygotskian sociocultural theory by positing that language is learned in a social context. This is in contrast to language acquisition theory, which builds upon cognitive (rather than social) theories of learning. As discussed in Beckett (1999), Kramsch (2003), and Shiffrin (1994), the differences between a language acquisition epistemology versus one of language socialization are characterized by shift in focus. One difference between language acquisition and language socialization has to do with the end goal of language learning. For subscribers to language acquisition theories, the goal of language learning is mastery of linguistic
forms; the successful language learner can produce target-like norms of language. For subscribers to language socialization theories, the goal of language learning is mastery of social norms; the successful language learner can communicate in the language of his/her chosen community and act according to social norms (Kramsch, 2003, p. 13). Thus, language acquisition tends to be focused on form, while language socialization focuses on function. Language acquisition theories view the learner as a computer who needs appropriate language input in order to achieve accurate output, while language socialization model of language learning requires that students be apprenticed into their language learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

*Lave and Wenger’s Legitimate Peripheral Participation*

Legitimate peripheral participation refers to the process through which newcomers to a community of practice gain the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to become full participants in that community. This involves “relations between newcomers and old-timers…activities, identities, artifacts, and communities of knowledge and practice” (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 29). As such, learning is situated within a sociocultural community, and the participant either moves fluidly among different milestones of accomplishment, exists solely on the boundary of the community, or is “trapped” between two communities of practice. According to Lave and Wenger, “there is no activity that is not situated” (p. 3). Thus, international students learning to be participants within the American academic setting are situated in the borderlands of American academia, and they negotiate meaning within that context. All international students’ interactions within that cultural context are
inextricably linked to both their position as a legitimate peripheral participant as well as to their socialization. This socialization is marked by their ability to interact with culturally mediated artifacts in socially acceptable ways.

During this study, ESL classrooms were theorized as communities of practice; a place where students were socialized into academic language through multiple interactions. The students, then, were apprenticed by the ESL writing class teachers into academic language use in these classes. The purpose of the study was to examine the interactions that occurred within the ESL classrooms, and to determine how these interactions helped to socialize the students into academic English. Additionally, because these classes exist within the larger context of the students’ chosen disciplines, and within the even larger context of American academia, the study also examined the question of how the smaller communities of practice (ESL classrooms) helped to socialize students into the larger ones (their chosen disciplines and American academia). In order examine the socialization process, the language of interactions within the communities of practice was analyzed according to Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL).

It’s important to note that SFL was chosen to inform the study after the data were analyzed. This is a reflection of the grounded theory approach used to analyze the collected data. The grounded theory approach is discussed further in Chapter 3. As data were analyzed, it became apparent that, while language socialization and legitimate peripheral participation theories were sufficient for explaining the classroom interactions, the specific linguistic characteristics into which students were socialized
were not sufficiently explained by these theories. During the selective coding and theory creating steps of grounded analysis, SFL emerged as an explanatory model for the specific linguistic characteristics into which the students were socialized.

*Systemic Functional Linguistics*

There are several ways in which Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) lends itself to a study of academic language socialization. These include a theoretical orientation toward language as a resource (rather than a collection of rules), a view of language as a meaning-making tool (rather than a meaning-expressing one), text-based (rather than sentence-based) analysis, a conceptualization of texts in social context (rather than as isolated objects), and a tendency toward what Halliday & Martin (1993) refer to as “extravagance” (p. 23) (rather than parsimony). The following is an explanation of these characteristics of SFL and how they lend themselves to a study of language socialization.

SFL views language as a resource for meaning rather than as a set of grammatical rules. This view, coupled with the idea that language construes meaning, allows for a view of language as something that is used to *negotiate* with social, biological, physical, and ideational realities. In other words, language becomes the reality, rather than the reality having to conform to the pre-determined rules of language. This orientation toward language allows for an examination of the evolution of a language in a professional community (phylogenesis), in education and/or apprenticeship (ontogenesis) and in texts (logogenesis). As each of these areas of evolution are at the same time independent and interdependent, as well as embedded within a larger social
context, it is valuable (albeit complicated) to be able to view language as something that functions/is used differently in each area. Thus, the areas are able to construe the meaning of their own realities, using a language that is best suited to the task at hand, rather than having to work within the same non-negotiable set of rules. A study of language socialization can therefore focus on the three planes of language development (phylogenetic, ontogenetic, and logogenetic) and study the affordances and constraints of language as it is used to negotiate with and construe reality within and between them.

Closely related to the idea that language is a resource for construing meaning is the SFL approach to language on the scale of text, rather than sentence. This text-based approach is also indicative of the belief that discourse creates grammar, and not the reverse. Thus, grammar becomes functional, a resource for creating a text which construes reality. Within a study of language socialization, this allows researchers to focus on why a text exists in a particular form, and how that form functions within a particular context, instead of on how the text conforms to pre-set rules.

A focus on texts in social context is another way in which SFL drives analytical focus toward function. Viewing a text within social context allows for complimentary views of the discourse of that context. After all, not only is the text functioning within a social context, but it is also creating that context. Thus, in the present study, the relationship between the institution of academia and academic texts is “mutually predictive” (Halliday & Martin, 1993, p. 22) and the evolution of students’ language as they work to write sheds light on the interdependence of these contexts.
The last characteristic of SFL that lends it to a study of academic language socialization is a tendency toward extravagance (Halliday & Martin, 1993, p. 23). This extravagance consists of “developing an elaborate model in which language, life, the universe, and everything can be viewed in communicative (i.e., semiotic) terms” (Halliday & Martin, 1993, p. 23). This extravagance not only complicates the study of language, but it also liberates it from analysis that is focused too narrowly. Thus, while focus is difficult using a model of extravagance, studies using it are able to achieve greater depth and breadth than those using a more conservative approach.

Given the previously discussed characteristics of SFL that lend themselves to a study of academic language, it should come as no surprise that SFL was chosen as the theoretical lens with which to analyze the data of this study. Thus, transcripts of classes, interviews with students and teachers, student texts, teacher comments, and other course materials (in-class exercises, syllabi, etc.) were all approached from the SFL perspective.

In order to provide a clear picture of how data were analyzed using SFL, it is necessary to provide an overview of the theory. The following is an explanation of the major components of SFL. These components are reflective of the previously discussed characteristics of the theory, and were used as analytical resources for approaching the data.

The components of SFL are plane, metafunctions, stratification, rank, realization, and perspective. When used for analysis, these components allow for development of an extravagant model of academic language socialization.
Plane refers to the various levels of abstraction at which language exists. As previously discussed, language exists within a social context. Both the language and the social context are semiotic systems, but the social context is a more abstract one than the language itself. In approaching language, moving between planes of abstraction can lead to a more thorough understanding of the discourse. For example, a text (logogenetic plane) provides a miniscule piece of the culture and social practices of a discipline. The institution itself (phylogenetic plane) provides a broader view of the discipline, and a view of classroom negotiations of both of these planes, enriches understanding.

Metafunctions refers to the different modes of meaning that language construes. Halliday & Martin (1993) identify three metafunctions of language: enacting social relationships (interpersonal), construing physical and biological reality (ideational), and adapting texts to their environments (textual). Each metafunction of the language is achieved through a different form of language.

For example, the interpersonal metafunction is achieved through using mood to engage the reader in different tasks or positions. Declarative mood is used when an author (or speaker, but henceforward “author”) is giving information, and the reader (or listener, but henceforward “reader”) is expected to receive it. Interrogative mood is used when the author demands information, but the reader is not expected to possess the information; instead, s/he is supposed to have a whetted appetite for gaining the information, which the author will presumably share. Imperative mood is used for the
author to demand services, usually in the form of mental attention and/or problem-solving.

Within the same text, the ideational metafunction is achieved through using process types to construe reality. Material processes are used to construe realities of action; verbal and mental processes are used to construe realities of signification; and relational processes are used to construe realities of being.

Stratification refers to levels of semiosis within a text. Texts have levels of language as well as levels of context. The levels of language are, as expected, concrete and abstract. Concrete language is the language of expression, while abstract language is the language of content. Concrete language is concerned with phonology and graphology – for example, word choice (has this word been repeated too much? Does it “sound” right?). Abstract language is concerned both with discourse semantics and lexicogrammar. Tension exists between the concrete and abstract levels of language, because discourse semantics and lexicogrammar often result in syntactic ambiguity, which allows for literal and figurative readings of the same passage. Thus, there exists an almost constant tension between chosen words and the meanings they construe within the semantics and lexicogrammar of the discourse.

In addition to the levels of language that exist within a text, there are also levels of context: field, tenor, and mode. Field refers to the social action of the text, or how it can be identified as part of a particular discipline or discourse community. Generally, technical terms, acronyms, specific names, and measurements contribute to the field of a text. Tenor refers to the role structure created in the text, or how the author(s) portray
levels of authority in relation to the audience and other texts. Author approach to information contributes to the tenor of a text – does the author give or negotiate information? Does the author amplify his/her own ideas in order to establish greater authority? Mode refers to the symbolic organization of the text, or what role language is playing in placing the text in a particular context. This is often contributed to by functional grammatical moves such as nominalization or use of polysemous verbs in order to create abstraction, or using traditional nouns and active verbs to make a text more concrete.

Rank in language is something that occurs within the ideational metafunction (construal of physical and biological reality). Within the construal, reality is segmented, and language is used to construe either logical or experiential relations between the segments. Logical relations are based in part-to-part relationships across segments, while experiential relations are based in part-to-whole relationships between the parts and the whole they comprise. An interesting phenomenon of experiential rank in language is that the language becomes less negotiable, as actions are often nominalized in order to provide an efficient way to relate them to a whole. A nominalized action is much more difficult to argue with than the action itself; however, the nominalization also provides the benefit of flexibility, in that the nominalized phrase can begin OR end a clause (or both). Thus, rank becomes not just about how segments of reality are related to each other and the whole, but also becomes about the tenor of the language, as well. This is just one example of how all of the functions of language are interdependent.
Realization is the redundancy of a text, or, as Halliday & Martin (1993) describe it, “instantiation of system in process” (p. 42). There are two types of realization: metaredundancy, which is redundancy (or co-occurrence) across levels of abstraction; and instantiation, which is redundancy between system and process. Both types of realization occur both on a textual level – generally in the creation of relational clauses or taxonomies – as well as the intertextual level – through relating a text to all others, real or imagined, on the topic. In this way, redundancy not only between texts (real and imagined), but also within texts, is allowed for…all at the same time.

The final component of SFL is that of perspective, which refers to the organization of a text as it reflects the sociocultural approach to texts. Perspective can be either dynamic, in which the text cycles through abstractions, moving from given to new; or synoptic, in which a text moves step by step through degrees of abstraction. Halliday & Martin (1993) describe a dynamic text as “unfolding and contingent” (p. 49) and a synoptic text as an artifact to be “taken apart, interpreted, reassembled, and observed” (p. 49).

When one considers all of these components of the SFL approach to language, it is not hard to imagine the extravagant model discussed previously. It’s important to note that all of these components are not only interdependent, but co-occurring. While this is a somewhat daunting view of language, it also provides for a deep description of the phenomena influencing academic language. It is for this depth of perspective that SFL was chosen as a theoretical foundation for this study.
Significance of the Study

This study is significant to the field in several ways. First, it contributes to our understanding of how graduate-level ESL students are socialized into American academic writing. There are few studies that examine language socialization of graduate students, and for the previously-discussed reasons (high stakes, large population, future contributors to their fields of study), this is an important area to study, understand, and develop. In order to provide more effective support to graduate students in their socialization process, it is first necessary to understand how that socialization occurs. This study undertakes to do that.

Second, this study is significant because of its implications for teacher training and program design. Not only does the study examine the socialization process of graduate students, but it also examines the role that ESL writing classrooms and teachers have in that process. It is important for programs to be designed in order to effectively support and foster language socialization in addition to students’ primary field of study, and teachers must be trained in order to support and carry out the program design. Based on the findings of this study, suggestions for effective program design and teacher training are made in Chapter 12.

Third, this study is theoretically significant because it shows the efficacy of SFL for examining the language socialization of advanced learners. As discussed by Achugar and Colombi (2008), previous research of language socialization from an SFL perspective has largely focused on younger, less advanced learners. By focusing on
graduate-level (and therefore older, more advanced) learners, this study provides an example of the effective application of SFL to advanced-level language socialization.

Last, this study is methodologically significant because of its use of multiple data sources. Previous studies of second-language (L2) writing have tended to provide narrow perspectives, by focusing on student and/or teacher perceptions, writing sample analysis, or survey data. This study includes classroom observations and transcriptions, course documents, teacher comments on student writing, interviews, and written student texts. By including these multiple sources of data, the study provides a broader, more holistic perspective of the socialization process. This, in turn, allows an examination of the multiple influences on and manifestations of the students’ language socialization.

**Overview of Other Chapters**

Chapter 2 is a review of literature on ESL writing. Specifically, it focuses on four categories of previous studies: those written about institutional expectations; those about scholars’ (both emerging and established) negotiations of academic writing; studies of interactions/negotiations of academic discourses; and studies of the linguistic characteristics of academic language. The review provides a more in-depth review of the previously discussed theoretical and methodological gaps within those studies.

Chapter 3 is a discussion of the research methodology of this study. This includes a discussion of how the study incorporates Spradley’s (1980) three aspects of human experience, as well as a discussion of the soundness of qualitative research. Also
presented in this chapter are descriptions of: data collection and analysis methods, study participants, the researcher’s role in the study, and the research site.

Chapters 4 through 11 present the findings of the study and discussions of those findings. These chapters are organized topically, with two chapters dedicated to each sub-topic. The first chapter in each pair is dedicated to an examination of the teachers’ approaches to socializing students to a particular aspect of a text. The second chapter in the pair is dedicated to an examination of how the teachers’ socialization efforts manifested in students’ writing, classroom participation, and interview responses.

Chapters 4 and 5 discuss teacher and student approaches (respectively) to formal grammar. Findings of these chapters suggest that both teachers and students realize that addressing texts solely on the formal grammatical level is not sufficient to socialize students into academic writing. However, the teachers have not been sufficiently trained in an alternative approach, and therefore are not able to articulate an alternative to the students. Consequently, both students and teacher discuss functional aspects of texts using the framework and terminology of formal grammar.

Chapters 6 through 11 discuss how teachers attempt to socialize students into specific functional aspects of academic writing, and the manifestations of these socialization efforts in student writing, classroom discussion, and interview responses. Each “teacher” chapter (chapters 6, 8, and 10) examines and discusses how the teachers negotiate socializing students into a metafunction of the text into which they themselves have not been socialized, but which they believe is important. The “student” chapters (7, 9, and 11) examine how the students come to understand these metafunctions, and
how this is manifested in their writing. Chapter 12 summarizes the findings of the study and discusses their significance, as well as their implications for program design, teacher training, pedagogy, and future research.
Chapter 2 – Review of Previous Research

Previous studies of academic language can be broadly divided into four categories: those written about institutional expectations; those about scholars’ (both emerging and established) negotiations of academic writing; studies of interactions/negotiations of academic discourses; and studies of the linguistic characteristics of academic language. While all of these works have made important contributions to the study of academic writing, the following review will elucidate the theoretical and/or methodological gaps that still exist within the field.

Category 1: Studies of Institutional Expectations

Studies focused on institutional expectations include perspectives of academic writing from gatekeepers such as journal editors, subject-area professors, and language teachers. These are important studies to examine because they provide insight to the standards to which graduate students, as emerging scholars, are or will be held in their content-area classes, as well as when submitting for publication. They also provide insight into the priorities of language teachers; in other words, what language teachers emphasize in their writing classes.

The majority of articles about institutional expectations focus on editors’ and professors opinions about the problems they encounter in writing submitted to them. For example, Gosden (1992) reports results of a survey of journal editors in North America (America and Canada) and the U.K. The survey was sent to academic journals that the author considered to be “mainstream international publications in the hard sciences” (p. 124) such as physics, chemistry, and biology. The survey consisted of two
parts – a Likert-type rating of characteristics which influenced publication choices, and open-ended questions. Part one asked editors, “What degree of influence might these following ten aspects have when considering publication of a paper submitted by a NNS [non-native speaker] researcher?” (p. 138), with the scale of influence ranging from 1 (no influence) to 3 (great influence). The ten aspects addressed were: vocabulary use, coherent topic development, logical linking of sentences, organization of sections, grammatical accuracy, use of academic rather than “everyday spoken” (p. 138) style, appropriate level of claim, manipulation of language, situating work and self as researcher within the larger field, use of language to convey a sense of self and work within the field. Part two of the study asked questions about the editors’ experiences of the grammatical and language errors they experienced as being most common to NNS papers, their acceptance rates of NS versus NNS papers, and their beliefs about whether content of scientific value can be obscured by poor writing.

Of the 299 surveys that were sent out for the study, 54.4% of replies were received. Replies to the Likert-type rating scale questions indicated that editors consider logical thinking, coherent development, and grammatical accuracy to be the three most important textual characteristics that influence their decisions to publish NNS papers. Least important were ability to manipulate language, writing in academic rather than “everyday” style, and use of wide range of vocabulary (p. 126). Replies to part two indicate that NNS receive unsolicited language assistance, with most of this assistance focused mainly on correcting syntax problems relating to poor sentence structure and article usage. Ninety-four percent of respondents indicated that their journals did not
have specific guidelines for screening papers submitted by NNS, while 45% indicated that there either is or may be an editorial bias against NNS papers. Respondents also indicated that the main problems in NNS papers as compared to NS papers are logical presentation of results, “mediocre science combined with mediocre communication” (p. 132), isolation, the extra editing time and effort required by NNS papers, and presentation quality (such as type, graphics, etc.). Based on these results, Gosden suggests that classes in Research English (RE) should focus more on cohesion, reading and writing of research articles, detailed examinations of results and discussion sections, and the context of research writing (rather than simple grammatical accuracy). He also recommends that editors would do well to develop guidelines specifically for NNS papers, and that NNS should be advised not to rely too heavily on editors for simple proofreading. This article is important because it presents us with the same understanding of how editors of academic journals approach and feel about NNS-submitted papers. However, the use of a survey/questionnaire does not provide for the nuanced results that observation and interviews do, as there is no triangulation of data. Additionally, while it is important to know how editors, as people in power, approach these NNS-submitted articles, it begs the question of whether/how those submitting the papers are to ascertain this important information. In other words, this article has made an important step in beginning to make the expectations of academic English explicit to other researchers and teachers, but it does not in any way elucidate how NNS researchers themselves are expected to come by this knowledge.
Another example of a study which provides the institutional view of academic writing is Burrough-Boenisch’s (2003) in-depth look at a hypothetical Dutch-authored research article as it travels from the author to the pages of an English-language science journal. The author identifies colleagues, author’s editor, journal editor, journal reviewers, and copy editors as people who influence the outcome of the final text as it travels (recursively) between and among them. While this is, like Gosden (1992), helpful insight into the many, and sometimes conflicting, opinions with which the NNS must negotiate, the fact that the article in question is hypothetical calls into question the real-world validity of such a journey. The article brings to light an important consideration for NNS authors, however, in pointing out that “NNS authors need to be aware that not all changes are of ‘wrong’ to ‘right’ and that many changes are negotiable” (240). Again, though, the question of how NNS authors should or do learn this is not answered.

Kaplan and Baldauf (2005) used Language Management Theory (LMT), and a corpus of approximately 500,000 words, to examine the categories of linguistic problems found in NNS contributions to scholarly journals. The authors conclude that the majority of language problems, while they may appear to be simple management issues (i.e., grammatical, lexical, or spelling errors), they are in fact organized language management, or management that involve “conformity with text strategy” (p. 59) rather than surface operations. This conclusion suggests that approaches to NNS texts may be complicated by the fact that “implicit text strategies intended by the NNS author are not always transparent” (p. 61). While the article directs this conclusion mainly to journal editors, it is something that is also important for teachers to keep in mind – that what
appears to be a simple change of word or added explanation may in fact involve a deeper matter of textual fit. The language corpus from the study was all from one social sciences journal, and thus may not be generalizable to all disciplines.

Mišak, Marušić, and Marušić (2005) drew on their experiences as editors of a small biomedical journal published in English in a non-English-speaking context, to identify four layers of scientific manuscripts (study design, narrative, scientific reporting style, language) and the most common problems that occur within each layer. They then suggest that smaller journals would do well to work more intensively with authors to improve their manuscripts, as the journals can then publish potentially valuable work that is obscured by poor presentation. The experiences of these editors is important because it points out that “there are deeper and more significant problems with manuscripts by NNES authors than the use of the English language per se: their limited knowledge of study designs, poor narrative organization and presentation, and unawareness of the specificities of the medial scientific language” (p. 129).

Unlike the previously discussed studies, which chose to study journal editors as representatives of institutional expectations, Zhu (2004) reports on faculty beliefs about academic writing and writing instruction. Data were gathered through interviews with professors of business (n=6) and engineering (n=5). This was part of a larger study, in which data were collected from “several sources, including interviews of 23 faculty members from various disciplines” (p. 32). Findings indicated that some professors believed that academic writing is based mostly on transfer of general writing skills to a specific context, while others believed that it is a unique writing and thinking form that
can be built upon general writing, but must be taught in addition to it. Findings also indicate that most of the faculty members interviewed considered content and technical skills to be their primary teaching emphasis, with academic writing a secondary one. Faculty also indicated that they believed that academic writing instruction was mainly the purview of writing instructors, with the subject-area faculty responsible for “fine-tuning,” although some faculty did believe that academic writing instruction should be a shared responsibility between content-area experts and writing experts. This study is important because it sheds light on how faculty beliefs can influence the institutional contexts in which academic writing classes exist. In this case, faculty beliefs about academic writing have not in any way reached a consensus, and thus the academic home of writing is not clear. If students are not able understand how writing fits into their chosen academic program, the possibility of them recognizing its importance is undermined.

Another study which highlights the lack of institutional consensus about academic writing, and which also includes student perspectives, is Tait (1999). The study elicited perceptions of the content-area writing from three different groups of people: subject-area professors, ESL teachers, and ESL students. All three groups were asked to respond to writing samples and took part in interviews. The results of the study showed that there were different ideas among the three groups about the importance of content, grammar, and organization. Students tended to place the most importance on the content of their writing, and believed organization was the least important. ESL teachers tended to place the most emphasis on grammar and
organization and the least emphasis on content. Subject area teachers varied widely in their order of importance of the three areas, and tended to focus more on the fact that students needed to be able to understand that different classes had different expectations, and that it is the responsibility of students to ask questions about expectations. This study points to the confusion and conflicting agendas that can arise out of a lack of institutional consensus on academic writing. It also highlights the importance of students learning not only to be skillful writers, but also to learn to negotiate the multiple demands of academia.

These examinations of the points of view of those in power within the institution (editors and professors) are important because they provide insight into how the culture of academic writing and publishing uses linguistic and presentation features as gatekeeping features. Through these studies, we are able to understand the textual features that have been designated important to successful academic writing. These features include logical presentation of ideas, “conformity to text strategy” (Kaplan & Baldauf, 2005, p. 61), and grammatical accuracy. These studies also show that there is inconsistency in institutional approaches to these topics, including their levels of tolerance for poorly executed writing, their willingness to help, and beliefs about whose responsibility it is to help. What these studies do not identify, though, is how both scholars in the field and students in the classroom are expected to acquire the knowledge of and skill with the textual features that allow them to meet institutional standards of academic writing; what knowledge writing teachers have of these textual features; and how they teach them to their students. We will now turn to studies that
begin to examine the first of these issues by providing insight into students’ negotiations of academic writing.

Category 2: Studies of Individual Students’ Negotiations of Academic Writing

There is a dearth of studies focusing on graduate student negotiation of academic writing. Many studies of students tend to focus on younger – junior and senior high or undergraduate – students (Christie, 2002a and 2002b; Dubcovsky, 2003; Woodward-Kron, 2002). Other studies focus on established or recently established scholars. Many of these studies also tend to focus on Asian and East Asian Scholars. Of the five articles about scholars’ negotiations of publishing in scholarly journals published in the Journal of Second Language Writing since its inception, four (Casanave, 1998; Flowerdew, 1999a; Flowerdew, 1999b; and Gosden, 1996) focus on East Asian and Asian writers. This is an obvious skewing of research settings that, while understandable given the fact that a majority of graduate students are from East and South Asia, does not provide for a balanced picture of the field.

In addition to many articles focusing on East Asian and Asian students, another problem with articles about students’ experiences with academic writing is the fact that they tend to focus on individual beliefs and perceptions. Those studies that do focus on the interactional aspect of learning academic writing are often lacking in data triangulation. In other words, studies that purport to be about the influence of classes on students’ learning fail to include classroom data, but instead rely upon student reports about the classes. Many studies also fail to incorporate analyses of student
writing samples or teacher perspectives of classroom learning. In other words, the classroom is absent from these studies.

Gosden (1996) focused on the responses of 16 Japanese doctoral candidates in applied physics, chemistry, and cell biology to interview questions regarding their preparation of individual research papers. The five questions covered topics such as whether the students had been formally taught about academic English writing style, what the main stages of composing are for them, whether they compose first drafts in their L1 or L2, what the main changes are between English drafts, and whether they think about audience when writing their research papers. Results of the study suggest that the students had not been formally taught about academic writing, but that they do consult texts on scientific writing; that they generally begin composing either outlines or full drafts in their L1 and then translate to L2; that the main changes between English drafts are approached as opportunities for “simple mechanical editing, rather than the opportunity to continue to create meaning” (p. 117); and that they do not think about their audience when composing. While this is important insight into how novice researchers within an EFL context negotiate the difficult necessity of writing articles for publication, it is consigned to (1) a very small and specific group of students, and (2) a specific EFL academic context. Perhaps the most important thing brought to light by this study is the fact that students who are not formally taught about academic writing go about the daunting task of writing a publishable research article in a foreign language in an inefficient and possibly self-defeating manner (i.e., writing full drafts in their L1, translating phrase by phrase into English, and then editing for sentence-level
mechanical errors and vocabulary problems). While Gosden suggests that this study may be generalized to a larger population (most ESL graduate students in the sciences), the limited number of participants and narrow scope of questions dictates that caution be used in wider application of the results.

In two related articles, Flowerdew (1999a and 1999b) reports on Cantonese L1 academics in Hong Kong, the majority of whom came from science (22%) and engineering (20%) fields. The first study (1999a) reported on a survey focused on the academics’ previous exposure to English, the frequency of their writing of English and the importance they attached to English publication, their confidence levels about English writing, and the challenges they faced. Flowerdew makes a strong case that the results of the study can be generalized to a larger population, as “many of the tensions felt by Hong Kong academics in writing in English for publication are likely to be shared by their peers in other countries who are faced with the need to write in their second language, English, if they want their research to have the international impact that it deserves” (p. 143); however, the context of the study is very specific, and therefore may limit generalization. Additionally, the study is focused on accomplished scholars, and their present practices, rather than the question of how they learned to successfully publish in English.

The second study (Flowerdew, 1999b) focused on the results of interviews with Hong Kong academics regarding the problems they faced when writing for publication in English. The results indicate that the academics felt that they had to write in a more simple style, they had particular problems with introduction and discussion sections,
and that they had difficulty expressing claims with the appropriate amount of force.

Again, while it is important to know the challenges that established academics face, it is also important to know what emerging scholars are learning and how they appropriate this information when writing for academic purposes.

Casanave’s (1998) study is similar to the Flowerdew studies in that it reports on the negotiations of East Asian scholars who are already established in their fields. This study examined the academic writing activities of four bilingual Japanese scholars who were educated at the graduate level in the United States, and their negotiation of writing in both Japanese and English. Using the Lave and Wenger’s (1991) concept of situated learning, the results of the study suggest that the scholars had to learn to move fluidly between the two different writing worlds, particularly because of the different values and practices within them. The value of this study is that it some of the possible dilemmas are faced by students while they are still in graduate school; dilemmas that, if addressed during school, may be less problematic in their early professional lives.

Riazi (1997) examined the acquisition of disciplinary literacy in a 5-month study of four Iranian doctoral students. While writing samples of all of the students were collected, the findings focused on student perceptions of the demands of the writing tasks and incorporated interview and writing and reading log entries. Like contrastive rhetoric studies, this study tends to provide an incomplete picture of the student’s learning process, by focusing only on their perceptions; however, it provides insights into how and why students develop certain approaches to writing, such as coping
mechanisms, as well as how sociocultural factors, such as attitude and social interactions, affected their learning process.

Johns and Swales (2002) also conducted a study which examined the experiences of students learning to write. Their study compares experiences of L2 graduate dissertation writers and L1 entering undergraduates. Through written responses, interviews, and examination of their texts, they concluded that both groups of students face surprisingly similar problems. These problems include feelings of isolation and confusion about genre conventions and audience expectations. Teachers’ perspectives and classroom observations were not included in this study. As a result, these studies provide one perspective – the students’ – on the socialization process. Because the phenomena influencing the students’ learning process – classroom interactions and teachers – were not observed, this is a limited perspective.

Katznelson, Perpignan, and Rubin (2001) focused on aspects of student’s progress which are directly related to writing, such as interpersonal skills. The study focused on student self-reports of their perceived changes as a result of academic writing classes. While the study focused on interaction between classes and student learning, it was reliant on only one source of data collected at one time.

The previously discussed studies of students’ negotiations of academic writing provide insight into the challenges and rewards that individual students experience when learning academic writing. The studies are also helpful in that they shed light on the gaps that exist in scholars’ knowledge after extensive schooling. They also provide insight into the areas of writing on which scholars tend to focus, including grammatical
and lexical accuracy, as well as the areas on which they do not focus, such as relating to the audience. However, these studies are (1) narrowly focused on East Asian scholars, and (2) focused on individual experiences of learning. Thus, the studies can suggest what should have been included in these scholars’ courses of study, but cannot provide any information about how they were socialized to writing in their fields. For example, which classes helped the socialization process? What parts of the class helped? How long did the socialization take, and was there a common process among all of the scholars? None of these questions are addressed by these studies.

Category 3: Studies of Interactions/Negotiations of Academic Writing

Studies that are focused on interactions between classrooms and student learning pose a particular difficulty, in that they tend to be narrowly focused on either the classroom interactions or the students’ response to them, but not on the interaction of both. In many studies of the influence of the classroom on student writing, classroom observations are absent! Instead, the perceptions of the students and the teachers are used. This is a methodological flaw, as it introduces a degree of separation from the phenomenon in question. While teacher and student perceptions of what has occurred in the classroom are important, there is no doubt that those perceptions will be colored by the individuals. Also, the language of the classroom can be an important indicator of what teachers are teaching, and how students are appropriating that information.

An example of the classroom being absent is Currie (1998). This study provides information about coping mechanisms in the form of a case study of a student over the course of one semester in one class. She examined the coping mechanisms which arose
out of the student’s frustration with her inability to appropriate the writing skills necessary to satisfactorily complete the writing tasks. Interviews with the student and the TA grading the writing, samples of the student’s writing, as well as TA comments on the writing were used in the study. The study does incorporate student writing as examples of the behavior, as well as student and TA perceptions of the coping mechanism; however classroom observations were not presented in the article. Despite the lack of classroom data, the interaction between the expectations of the class, the TA, and the student provides an interesting perspective on how feedback and expectations influence a students’ learning.

Angelova and Riazantseva (1999) conducted a one-year multiple case study of graduate students as they learned to write in their first year of graduate school. This study focused on the experiences of the students within the context of American academia. The experiences of the four students were examined in the areas of attitudinal problems, cognitive problems, social problems, and “other problems” (computer use and mechanics). The research also presents the perspectives of five professors, as well as examining the coping strategies of the four participants. Once again, though, classroom observations are not used. This study provides an excellent portrait of how the interplay of several context-specific factors influences learning L2 writing. It is unfortunate that a critical analysis of the students’ writings is not included in this study, which would have provided a more holistic view of the socialization process.
While the many studies of the influence of the classroom on student writing do seem to lack classroom observations, there are some that do not. For example, Parks (2001) examines the ways in which French-speaking nurses in an English-language hospital learned the genre-specific conventions of medical writing through both self-initiated and other-initiated collaboration with colleagues. In this case, the definitions of “classroom” will have to be stretched to include a clinical setting. Results of the qualitative study suggest that the collaborations could be divided into three categories: rhetorical, informational, and linguistic, and that they occurred within the nurses’ zone of proximal development, which contributed to their “progressive self-regulation” (p. 115). The study provides excellent information about how emerging professionals learn discipline-specific writing in the workplace, but does not focus upon classroom learning and the contributions that ESL classes in specific could make.

A study which did absolutely include classroom observations is Spack (1997), which focused on the three-year process of a Japanese student acquiring academic literacy. This study is commendable because of its incorporation of both text and context, as well as the length of the study; however, an examination of more than one student is needed.

Taken as a whole, studies of students’ experiences of learning academic writing, whether the studies are intentionally focused on individual experiences or on interactions and collaborations, are lacking in scope. The studies either are too heavily reliant on individual perceptions of classes, teachers, expectations, etc., or they are limited in the number of students or length of data collection. Because of this, few
studies have examined how the language of academic writing is modeled in the classroom, how teachers talk about writing, and how that talk about writing “translates” into both student approaches to writing and their written texts themselves.

An important part of such a study is a method for describing the linguistic characteristics of academic writing. The following is a review of studies that have focused on the linguistic characteristics of academic language.

Category 4: Analyses of Academic Language

One body of research that seeks to explain some of the challenges (such as those uncovered in the previously discussed studies) faced by NNS scholars is contrastive rhetoric. These studies of contrastive rhetoric assume that scholars’ established habits of writing in their first language are transferred to their writing in English. Connor (1987) studied the argumentative compositions of 16-year-old students from England, Finland, Germany, and the United States. All of the compositions were written in the student’s native languages. The essays were broken down into sentences, and the sentences were assigned functions within the argumentative structure. The study indicated that there was some cultural variation in the approach to what the researchers postulated as a universal model for a good argumentative essay, namely: situation + problem + solution + evaluation. Finnish and German students were found to deviate from this pattern. This finding suggests that there is not a cross-cultural pattern for good argumentative writing.

Other studies which have examined cultural differences in rhetorical styles include Eggington (1987) who studied Korean subjects, and Ostler (1987), who studied
Arabic texts. Eggington found that his 37 adult Korean subjects were better able to understand text written in a non-linear style, while Ostler found that Saudi Arabian student writing manifested more compound constructions than did American writing.

Studies in contrastive rhetoric have not only focused on the differences of rhetorical organization of texts, but also on differences in attitudes toward reader and writer responsibilities. For example, Hinds (1987) examined a Japanese newspaper column in order to suggest that a difference in attitudes toward reader and writer responsibilities exists in English and Japanese writing. He suggests that English writing places more of a burden on the writer to make meaning explicit, and therefore that Japanese students may need to be taught that “it is not enough for them to write with the view that there is a sympathetic reader who believes a reader’s task is to ferret out whatever meaning the author has intended” (152). In a similar vein, Carrell (1987) has suggested that cultural patterns of reading impacts the way people write. In other words, student beliefs about the expectations of readers will directly impact the choices they make when constructing a composition.

The fact that contrastive rhetoric can explain why students make the rhetorical decisions evident in their writing can be very beneficial to writing teachers’ understanding of their students’ writing; however, one of the problems of this comparative and text-focused approach to L2 writing is the fact that it can become reductive, and attempt to establish a one-to-one relationship between students’ cultural background and their writing. As Mohan and Lo (1985), among others, have pointed out, some writing differences may result less from transfer from L1 and more because of
developmental issues or pedagogical differences. In their study, which focused on writing instruction in Hong Kong and in British Columbia, they found that writing instructors in Hong Kong tended to focus on sentence-level features, whereas instructors in British Columbia focused on organization. This difference in pedagogical styles would clearly have an impact on students’ writing production. Thus, studies such as Mohan and Lo suggest that focusing only on the texts produced by students learning to write in an L2 does not provide a holistic view of their learning processes. It is important to examine not just a student’s texts for influences of their L1 background, but also the context in which learning to write takes place. It is the learning context which influences how and what students learn. For example, if students are in a class with a teacher who emphasizes beginning essays with a question in order to capture audience interest, it is most likely that the students will begin their essays with a question. If only the student texts are analyzed, and not the repeated class times in which the teacher emphasizes using questions to capture audience interest, then interactions which led to the students’ decisions to begin their essays with questions will be lost. Since students do not learn in a vacuum, it is important to recognize the multiple influences on the learning process.

Another category of analyses of academic language is those that use Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as an analytical framework. As will be discussed later in the chapter, SFL (Halliday & Martin, 1993; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Mohan & Beckett, 2003) is an ideal analytical framework for academic writing because it provides
a focus on the function, rather than the form, of student texts, and an “extravagant”
(Halliday & Martin, 1993, p. 23) view of language.

Lemke (1990), in a study which focused on linguistic characteristics of classroom interactions, discusses thematic structures intrinsic to spoken science of high-school classrooms. He identifies the unwritten rules of talking science:

1) verbally explicit and universal
2) avoids colloquialisms, 1st and 2nd person
3) uses technical terms
4) avoids personification
5) avoids figurative language, metaphor, and humor
6) serious and dignified
7) avoids personalities and history
8) avoids reference to fiction or fantasy
9) causal explanations – no narrative or dramatics (Lemke, 1990, p. 133).

Schleppegrell (2004) provides an analysis of the language of schooling from a functional perspective by comparing “interactional language” (p. 44) – informal spoken language – and school-based language, represented by student works and textbook excerpts. It should be noted that the interactional language is drawn from interviews with students conducted in a school. Through a comparative analysis of the two language registers, Schleppegrell provides a functional linguistic overview of the characteristics of school-based language, as compared to more informal language. For her analysis, she focuses on the metafunctions of field, tenor, and mode. She argues that many previous grammar frameworks were focused mainly on the field, or ideational, component of language, and that many teachers focus on both field/ideational and mode/textual components of student work.
According to Schleppegrell (2004), academic language is characterized by the following:

FIELD:
1) Technical terms
2) Focused on relational (descriptive/identifying) and material (focused on doing) processes
3) Uses nouns and verbs, rather than conjunctions, to create logical relationships between ideas. When conjunctions are used, their meanings are not as flexible as in interactional language.

TENOR
4) Declarative mood
5) Signals of interpersonal or attitudinal stance tend to be implied using nouns, verbs, adjectives, clause constructions, and orthographic resources, rather than shifting between moods.

MODE
6) Textual cohesion is dependent on internal reference to previous or other text, rather than external reference to participants in the immediate context.
7) “A key challenge for students is to learn to condense meanings in denser clause structures that incorporate logical relationships rather than stringing together one clause after another with conjunctions as they do in spoken interaction. This means learning the more restricted meanings for conjunctions as they are used in academic registers and alternative strategies for introducing the logical relationships that conjunctions offer” (p. 66).
8) Use of embedded clauses, which don’t make an independent contribution to discourse structure, but instead function as part of another clause.
9) Academic texts “often thematize noun phrases that condense prior information and present what has already been said so that further comment can be made about it (p. 70). (This further comment is rheme). This is the classic “given – new” construction of academic texts, and is reliant on:
10) Nominalization and grammatical metaphor, which occur in much greater frequencies, if not exclusively, in academic texts.

Schleppegrell (2004) also identifies the basic genres of school writing as falling into three basic categories: personal, factual, and analytical. Personal writing includes recounts (descriptions of sequence of personal events) and narratives (reports and/or evaluations of problematic events). Factual writing includes procedures – a description of a sequence of events – and reports, which provide a set of facts about classes of
things and focus on part-whole relationships. Analytical writing includes accounts, which give causes for sequences in recounts; explanations, which explain and interpret a phenomenon; and expositions, which argue a thesis. As discussed in Schleppegrell (2004) and Christie (2002), these genres tend to follow a developmental path, with less experienced writers tending to write (and be assigned to write) personal texts, intermediate writers producing factual texts, and advanced being expected to produce analytical texts.

After identifying the general functional linguistic characteristics of the academic register, and then identifying the different types of writing required within this register, Schleppegrell (2004) also provides an analysis of the specific requirements of science writing and of history writing. It should be noted that this analysis is based on an analysis of school texts, not professional writing. Schleppegrell (2004) states that “the discourse of professional scientists and historians is not the same as what students work with but...reflect the values and ways of thinking of the disciplinary communities” (p. 114). It is important to make a distinction between textbooks as reflecting the general ontological orientations of a field versus the accepted modes of discourse; as Kuhn (1962) points out, “…the aim of such books is pedagogic; a concept of science drawn from them is no more likely to fit the enterprise that produced them than an image of a national culture drawn from a tourist brochure or a language text” (Kuhn, 1962, p. 1). In the case of this study, it is important to note that the participants are engaged in the important transition from student to professional, and that they have to learn how to make the leap from school writing to professional writing. Nonetheless, their writing is
still expected to have the basic characteristics identified by Schleppegrell: display of knowledge, authoritative tone, and expected/codified structure.

In the final chapter of her book, Schleppegrell (2004) makes suggestions of how to provide more effective schooling in academic registers. In addition to calling for recognition that academic registers have different “rules of the game,” she also points out that “an important goal in education, then, should be to help students understand the ways that language choices...actively construct disciplinary knowledge. In addition, they need to be able to use these features in their own writing in order to demonstrate their learning and participation in disciplinary contexts” (p. 138).

Using the principles of functional linguistics, Halliday (Halliday & Martin, 1993) has identified seven characteristics of written scientific English. It is important to note that Halliday did not identify these as an analytical tool, per se, but rather as a method of explaining student resistance to and difficulty in reading science. These difficulties of engaging with the text, however, are focused on the stylistic characteristics of written science, and therefore are useful as markers of what is expected in general academic discourse. The seven characteristics identified by Halliday are: technical taxonomies, interlocking definitions, special expressions, lexical density, syntactic ambiguity, grammatical metaphor, and semantic discontinuity.

*Technical taxonomies* refers to the strict hierarchy of terms that is important to scientific discourse. Just as early naturalists created a hierarchical classification system for the natural world, the discipline of science still carries out this hierarchical
organization for discipline-specific terms. This organization reduces uncertainty or inaccuracy because every term within a discipline has a specific functional value.

There are two different types of technical taxonomies: those of superordination and those of composition. Superordination refers to an *either/or* relationship between terms, or a structure of “*x is a kind of y.*” The following phrases reflect a technical taxonomy of superordination:

- Deciduous is a kind of tree
- Trees are either deciduous or coniferous

Taxonomies of composition refer to a *both+and* relationship between terms, or a structure of “*x is a part of y.*” The following phrases reflect a technical taxonomy of composition:

- An electron is part of an atom
- Both electrons and protons are part of an atom

The problem with technical taxonomies is that they are often not made explicit to the reader, either through systematic introductions or graphic organizers/flow charts that show the relationships between terms.

*Interlocking definitions* is another way that science English distinguishes itself from other forms of English. Interlocking definitions are just what they sound like: terms that serve to define each other, and thus are interdependent. The potential problem with this technique is that lack of understanding of one term within the interlocking definitions serves to obfuscate the understanding of some, all, or most of the other terms. This problem is often particularly frustrating to readers and writers
because very often the words in interlocking definitions are not difficult; it is their relationships to each other that are complex. Take, for example, the following passage:

“The bodies of sponges bear myriads of tiny pores and canals that constitute a filter-feeding system adequate for their inactive life habit for they are sessile animals” (Hickman, Roberts, & Larson, 1995, p. 314).

To fully understand this passage, one must understand that “myriads of tiny pores and canals” are a “filter-feeding system” that, in conjunction with an “inactive life habit,” which, when referring to organisms who have this habit is known as “sessile,” define a sponge. A lack of understanding of any of these terms will lead to an incomplete (or nonexistent) understanding of the biological definition of a sponge as a sessile organism with a filter feeding system composed of pores and canals in its body.

Another feature of interlocking definitions is that they are two-way definitions, thus they require a thorough understanding of all of the component parts, because they may appear either as “x is defined by y” or “y is called x.” For example, an understanding of the previous passages on sponges can be understood both as “sponges are defined by being sessile and having filter feeding systems which are defined by pores and canals in the body” or “sessile organisms having pores and canals in the body called filter feeding systems are called sponges.”

*Special expressions* are another characteristic of science English. These special expressions often stretch the bounds of grammar and meaning in order to create efficient language. The fairly common phrase “Figure 6 indicates that…” is an example of a special expression, as it requires acceptance of an idea that a figure can, in fact, indicate something (does it wave its arms?). Special expressions are often created by any
the next three characteristics of science English, or any combination of them: lexical
density, syntactic ambiguity, and grammatical metaphor.

*Lexical density* refers to the number of content words per clause. In general,
science writing has a much higher lexical density than other forms of spoken and
written English. According to Halliday (1993), spoken English has a lexical density of
approximately two content words per clause; written English approximately four to six
content words per clause, and Science English approximately 10 to 13 content words
per clause. Lexical density often shows up as long noun phrases, which become
confusing because they have no indication of the relationship between them, and thus
readers must ascertain this on their own. For example, examine the following sentence:

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Arthropods have an exoskeleton containing chitin, and
their primitive pattern is that of a linear series of similar
somites, each with a pair of jointed appendages (Hickman, Roberts, &
```

In addition to the potentially daunting lexicon of this sentence, it also has a lexical
density of 20. While the description of an arthropod is rendered efficiently, the density
of the information creates a sentence that is difficult to read precisely because efficiency
is achieved through density of information.

*Syntactic ambiguity* usually comes from two sources: nominalization and
polysemous verbs. The former, which results in the loss of semantic information, is the
most common cause of syntactic ambiguity. Nominalization is the rhetorical move of
rephrasing clauses as nouns. For example, the sentence “The researcher informed
participants of their right to anonymity at the same time as they signed consent forms”
may also be expressed as “Information about anonymity was provided to participants at the time of signing consent forms.” This rephrasing of the sentence involves nominalization of the phrase “the researcher informed participants of their right to anonymity” to “information about anonymity was provided” and the phrase “at the same time as they signed consent forms” to “at the time of signing consent forms.” While both of these nominalizations are more efficient ways of expressing the actions, they do leave out information such as who provided information and who signed consent forms.

Nominal constructions are often used in conjunction with polysemous verbs in science English, which adds an additional layer to syntactic ambiguity. Polysemous verbs, such as mean, be associated with, and signal, do not clarify relationships as being of cause or of evidence. According to Halliday (1993), there are between one and two thousand polysemous verbs in use in scientific English (p. 78). When they are used alone, such as in the sentence “Stress is associated with weight gain,” the relationship between stress and weight gain is not clearly delineated: Is stress a cause of weight gain, or is weight gain a cause of stress? Is stress simply evidence of weight gain, or weight gain evidence of stress? When the ambiguity of polysemous verbs is combined with the lost information of nominalization, even higher levels of syntactic ambiguity results:

An increase in play activities of dogs is associated with the resolution of hierarchy issues.

Because of the combination of nominalization (“increase in play activities” and “resolution of hierarchy issues”) and a polysemous verb (“is associated with”), there are
many possible interpretations of this sentence. Halliday (1993) suggests that an excellent measure of syntactic ambiguity is to try to reword a passage. Some possible rewordings of this passage are:

(When/If) play activities (between dogs/between a dog and its owner) (become more frequent/are more varied), (this is evidence that/this is because) the hierarchy issues (between dogs/between dog and owner) (have been/are beginning to be) resolved.

With only two possible rewordings (of many) in six different places, there are 64 possible interpretations of this one sentence, evidence of a fairly large amount of syntactic ambiguity.

*Grammatical metaphor* is the last feature of science writing that contributes to special expressions. Both lexical density and syntactic ambiguity are by-products of grammatical metaphor, which is best defined as substitution of one grammatical class or structure for another. This involves “breaking” the norms of grammatical representation: that processes are represented by verbs; participants are represented by nouns; circumstances are represented by adverbs and prepositional phrases; and relationships between processes are represented by conjunctions (Halliday & Martin, 1993, p. 80). Grammatical metaphor most often substitutes a noun phrase for an adverb or verb – nominalization. For example, nominalization of “dogs playing with each other using different activities” replaces the verb “playing” with the verbal adjective “play,” and completely omits the prepositional phrase “with each other,” the verb “using” and the adjective “different” to arrive at “dog play activities,” a noun phrase. The replacement of grammatical structures with another is grammatical metaphor. What
this allows is for the creation of the all-important rhetorical structure of science writing, that of moving from given information to new information. Using grammatical metaphor, given and new information can both be presented as clauses, with a verb to show the relationship between them. Thus, the clauses become metaphors for the information, and the emphasis is shifted to the verbs that express their relationship and relative status. The following is an example of how grammatical metaphor works to create a relationship between given and new information:

When horses are angry, they shake their heads and twitch their tails. Each shake of the head marks a rising level of ire, and each tail twitch signals increasing readiness to kick.

In the second sentence of the passage, horses shaking their heads and twitching their tails in anger become given information by nominalizing them to “shake of the head” and “tail twitch.” The new information of what these actions signal are also nominalized to “a rising level of ire” and “increasing readiness to kick” so that the relationship between the given and the new can be delineated by the verbs “marks” and “signals.” Thus, grammatical metaphor allows for information to be presented in an efficient and hierarchical manner, always moving from given to new, or “theme” to “rheme”.

The final characteristic of science English as identified by Halliday is semantic discontinuity. This refers to semantic leaps made by authors through which readers are expected to follow in order to arrive at a conclusion. Generally, semantic discontinuity is a mark of the writer assuming shared knowledge as given information. Thus, the
shared knowledge/given information is never explicitly mentioned, but is expected to be used in conjunction with the new information of the text in order to reach a conclusion. The following is an example of semantic discontinuity:

 Unlike cows and other ruminants, horses have no ability to regurgitate. It is for this reason that stomach and digestive problems are often fatal to horses.

While this passage by no means requires a giant leap of faith on the part of the reader, it does contain semantic discontinuity between the first and second sentences. Readers are expected to easily associate an inability to regurgitate with the inability to expel poisonous, toxic, or foreign objects from the digestive tract before they enter the intestines. They are also expected to recognize that extraction via surgery or other intervention methods is nearly impossible, given the size of horses and their intolerance of anesthesia. Thus, readers are expected to take the evidence presented by the author (that horses can’t regurgitate) and arrive at the same conclusion (that digestive problems are fatal to horses because they can’t regurgitate), without the aid of the author making the intervening information explicit.

How can these characteristics of science English be helpful to people learning to write graduate school? To begin with, they represent the characteristics of science communication that have become accepted methods of providing information. In addition to that, students familiar with these characteristics’ advantages and disadvantages may be better able to capitalize on the strengths and avoid the pitfalls of incorporating them into their writing. Also, as Lemke (1990) points out, science as a
discipline is associated with a sort of ownership of truth. Because of the discipline of science being accorded high cultural capital (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977) academic language as a whole is often modeled after the basic tenets of science communication (display of knowledge, technical language, text structure that moves from given to new/theme to rheme, declarative mood). It is for these reasons that student texts were analyzed to see when and if they incorporated these characteristics into their writing assignments for their ESL classes.

The previously discussed studies provide a wealth of knowledge about academic language, students’ and scholars’ negotiation of the languages of their chosen discipline, and of how classroom practices contribute to students’ grasp of academic language. Textual analyses provide a clear picture of the linguistic characteristics of both spoken and written academic language, while studies of institutional expectations provides an overview of the (re)current shortcomings of writing that is submitted for publication (and therefore an idea of the textual characteristics that are most difficult to be socialized into). Studies of NNS scholars provide an author’s point of view on the difficulties of academic writing, as well as possible cultural/cognitive explanations for these challenges. Finally, studies of classroom interaction begin to provide a perspective on what features of academic language are made explicit, and which remain implicit. They also begin to provide us with information about how specific classroom interactions serve to socialize students into academic language.

What is missing from these studies is an “extravagant” (Halliday & Martin, 1993, p. 23) view of academic language and the socialization process. Studies of classroom
interaction are limited in scope. They are either too short, have too few participants, or are heavily focused on either the teachers or the students. They do not include an examination of the interactions between student-teacher classroom interactions, teacher comments on student work, student and teacher beliefs about writing, and student work. They also do not include an examination of class documents – handouts and/or texts. Also, there are not sufficient studies which provide an SFL view of the socialization process. As Achugar and Colombi (2008) have asserted, SFL “can be expected to offer clear analytical tools and detailed analyses that connect grammar and meanings” (p. 54) of classroom and written language. Given that SFL is an effective, extravagant, deep, and thorough system for analyzing and describing academic language, this lack of SFL analysis of the relationship between classroom language, class documents, and student writing is a large gap in the current research. Also, given that most students and teachers do not know or learn about SFL, it is interesting to examine how functional aspects of academic writing are taught without an explicit knowledge of the framework in question.

Based on the gaps in previous research, the present study focused on the following research questions:

- Research Question 1: What Functional Aspects of Academic Writing Are Prioritized by Teachers in Graduate-Level ESL Writing Classes?
- Research Question 2: How are Teacher Priorities Reflected in their Classroom Interactions (including class discussions, oral and written comments on student writing, class handouts and assignments)?
• Research Question 3: To What Functional Aspects of Academic Writing are Graduate ESL Students Socialized Throughout One Academic Year of ESL Writing Classes?

• Research Question 4: How is the Student Socialization Process Reflected in Students’ Classroom Comments, Written Work, and Interview Responses?

The current study addressed these questions in an effort to provide insight into how students are socialized into academic language in their ESL classrooms. Through an examination of how ESL classrooms provide students with the specific linguistic skills needed to be successful in an American academic setting, the study can provide information to program administrators and ESL teachers on how to make their classroom instruction more pertinent to the specific needs of their student population. In order to provide a thorough view of the socialization process and the language that occurs during the process, the theoretical models of language socialization and systemic functional linguistics (discussed in Chapter 1) were used.

These previously discussed theories of language socialization and systemic functional linguistics allow for both a linguistic and an interactional view of students’ socialization into discipline-specific language. This provides a more “extravagant” (Halliday & Martin, 1993, p. 23) view of the socialization process, such as has been lacking from previous research. Another necessity of this more holistic view of language socialization is multiple sources of data. The following chapter will discuss the research methodology chosen for this study and how the methodology is suited to both the research questions and the chosen theoretical lens.
Chapter 3 – Research Methods

As mentioned previously, the purpose of this study was to examine how ESL writing classes socialize international graduate students to the language practices of American academia. Many international students enroll in ESL writing classes because of the quality and volume of writing required of American graduate degrees. Thus, graduate ESL writing classes provided an excellent setting for examining the following broad research question:

1. How are international graduate students socialized into academic writing through ESL writing classes?

In order to answer the broad research question, the following, more specific questions were examined:

- Research Question 1: What Functional Aspects of Academic Writing are Prioritized by Teachers in Graduate-Level ESL Writing Classes?
- Research Question 2: How are Teacher Priorities Reflected in their Classroom Interactions (including class discussions, oral and written comments on student writing, class handouts and assignments)?
- Research Question 3: To What Functional Aspects of Academic Writing are Graduate ESL Students Socialized Throughout One Academic Year of ESL Writing Classes?
- Research Question 4: How is the Student Socialization Process Reflected in Students’ Classroom Comments, Written Work, and Interview Responses?
As such, the foci of the study were as follows:

1. Aspects of academic writing that were emphasized by teachers
2. An SFL view of teachers’ emphases.
3. Student perceptions of the writing classes and topics emphasized therein.
4. Whether/how teachers’ emphases influenced students’ approaches to writing.
5. An SFL view of changes in students’ beliefs about and uses of academic language.

Methodology

Ontology and Epistemology

As discussed by Lincoln and Guba (2000), the research methods chosen for studies are directly dependent upon the researcher’s ontological stance. This study was conducted from within what Lincoln and Guba (2000) identify as constructivist ontology, which emphasizes the “local and specific constructed realities” (p. 168). Because of this relativist view of reality, the research was heavily focused on how the various participants construct – both individually and cooperatively – their realities of American academic culture and ESL writing classes. This reflects an epistemological stance of subjectivity and transactionalism (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p.168). This ontology of relativism/constructivism and epistemology of subjectivity/transactionalism, then, dictated an hermeneutic methodology, in order to capture the situated meanings constructed and co-constructed by the study participants and the researcher. This
hermeneutic methodology consisted of interviews, observations, and
document/discourse analysis in order to provide triangulated, descriptive data which
built a picture of how the study participants and researcher constructed a situated
reality.

_Ethnographic Research Methods_

As previously discussed, an effective study of ESL writing classes as places of
language socialization should be conducted from an ethnographic point of view in
order to provide for a rich description of the longitudinal process which students
undergo when learning to become members of academia. Van Maanen (1988) defines
ethnographic writings as those which “inform human conduct and judgment in
innumerable ways by pointing to the choices and restrictions that reside at the very
heart of social life” (p. 1). Thus, ethnographic research should strive to identify and
explore those “choices and restrictions” of social life. Spradley (1980) holds that the way
that ethnographers should do this is by “learning from people” rather than “studying
people” (p. 3).

In keeping with the concept of learning from people, Spradley (1980) suggests
that ethnographic research should focus on three aspects of human experience: cultural
behavior, cultural knowledge, and cultural artifacts. It is through these aspects of
human experience that cultural orientation is expressed. The job of an ethnographic
researcher is to learn about these three phenomena and then to make cultural
inferences. As Spradley (1980) explains it, ethnographic researchers use inferences “to
go beyond what is seen and heard to find out what people know” (p. 10).
The current study focused on cultural behavior, cultural knowledge, and cultural artifacts by collecting multiple data sources, and allowing those data sources to “speak” about what the participants knew and came to know about academic language and academic writing. Table 1 describes how the data sources reflect Spradley’s three aspects of human experience.

Table 1

*Data Sources as Examples of Spradley’s (1980) Three Aspects of Human Experience*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Behavior</th>
<th>Cultural Knowledge</th>
<th>Cultural Artifacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom interactions</td>
<td>Classroom interactions</td>
<td>Course documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Student texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student texts</td>
<td>Teacher comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher comments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because ethnographic research is concerned with gaining an insider’s (or *emic*) perspective of a culture or a cultural phenomenon, it is ideal for a study of discourse socialization. Unlike quantitative research methods, which are focused on identifying or categorizing a phenomenon, qualitative research provides a methodology for gaining a deeper understanding of the complexities of human experience. Patton (2002) identifies this difference in focus as one between breadth and depth:

Qualitative methods permit inquiry into selected issues in great depth with careful attention to detail, context, and nuance; that data collection need not be constrained by predetermined analytical categories contributes to the potential
breadth of qualitative inquiry. Quantitative instruments, on the other hand, ask standardized questions that limit responses to predetermined categories (less breadth and depth) (p. 227).

Patton cautions, though, that the question of breadth versus depth also arises within qualitative research design. Qualitative researchers often must choose between learning from a large group of people about a small part of their culture, or from a smaller group of people about a broader range of experiences. In the context of this study, this breadth versus depth question is manifested in the choice of participants and research sites.

I chose to design this study with an eye toward depth, focusing on a smaller group of participants at one research site, without discounting the possibility of a broad range of individual experiences. Thus, the study design used purposeful sampling, which Patton (2002) defines as selecting cases for study because they “offer useful manifestations of the phenomenon of interest” (p. 40). In this study, then, the site and participant were selected because they would offer the most in-depth insight into the cultural phenomena to be studied, mainly academic writing and language socialization.

Research Site

Description of the institutional setting. Midwest University is a large, public research-extensive institution. According to the university website, the total enrollment for the 2005-2006 school year was 35,527. Of that, 8,350 students were graduate students (5,084 full-time and 3,266 part-time). A prospectus published by the university for incoming international students states that 2,126 students from abroad come to Midwest University every year. The top 4 countries sending students to Midwest
University are India (716 students), China (474 students), South Korea (173) and Canada (77).

Description of the courses. The study took place over the course of one year in three different writing courses offered by the university’s Center for English as a Second Language (CESL). The writing courses are designed primarily for graduate students, and are designed as a three-course sequence. It is not required, however, that the students take the courses in sequence or that they take all three of them. The following is a brief description of each course, taken from the course syllabi and the researcher’s experience as a writing instructor for the CESL:

Writing 1 is a course focused on identifying and addressing the most common errors in ESL writing. Previously an editing class focused solely on grammar and punctuation, the class has changed slightly into one that focuses first on paragraphing, and then on combining paragraphs into essays. Thus, it is now a kind of hybrid editing skills/intermediate writing skills course.

Writing 2 focuses on helping students with basic academic writing such as research papers and term papers. The class covers topics such as transitions and topic limitation, as well as documentation of sources. The course was initially based solely on a textbook, but now allows students to write on topics within their disciplines. This is especially important to the coverage of documentation styles, as students are required to learn the documentation style of their discipline, rather than a “generic” style chosen by the instructor.

1 Henceforward, “the researcher” shall be referred to as “I.”
Writing 3 is a workshop course for students currently working on longer writing projects. Students learn how to critique papers, and then each class meeting is given over to discussing designated student papers. As topics arise in discussion of student papers, instructors bring in pertinent supplemental materials.

An advantage of using the ESL writing classes as research sites is the fact that I am familiar with the program because of my experience as a teacher of the series. Because of this familiarity with the curricula and goals of the classes, I was better-oriented during class observations as well as during discussions of the classes with the student and teacher participants. A possible disadvantage of this familiarity is the possibility that I brought to the research preconceived notions of how the class should proceed; however, during my tenure as an instructor, I found that instructors are given a large amount of leeway in how they actually structure the class, resulting in very different approaches to teaching. Therefore, preconceptions about how the classes should be run were mitigated by an understanding that teachers are encouraged to approach the material with different methodologies.

Thus, because of my grasp of the curricula and goals of the ESL writing series, as well as the previously discussed reasons for choosing graduate students for my research participants (higher stakes, large proportion of international students in the U.S. are graduate students), this institution and these classes were chosen as an ideal setting for this proposed research.
Description of Participants

The primary participants in the study were six graduate ESL students and their ESL writing instructor(s). The research design was a multiple case-study. As discussed previously, a case study is useful for information-rich insight into the experiences of a person or people who could be representative of a group without being reduced to a symbolic or archetypal rendition. By using this research to conduct six case studies, I have been able to create detailed, representative descriptions of how some graduate ESL students experience their socialization to academic language, and what role ESL writing classes play in that socialization. These descriptions are more in-depth than a study which focuses on a large number of participants, while offering the ability to compare and contrast the experiences of the six participants and their teachers.

Description of student participants. Student participants were recruited during class visits pre-arranged with the teachers. I gave a brief oral explanation of the study, explained that I was looking for volunteer participants, and left written descriptions of the study with each student. I then returned to the next class meeting to ask if any students would be interested in participating, to get contact information from interested students, and to pass out release forms. Through this recruitment process, six students expressed interest in participating in the study. One student was eliminated from participation because she was an exchange student who would only be at the university for one quarter, and a condition for participation was a willingness to take one year’s worth of writing classes.
The five remaining volunteers constituted the student participants of this study. Four of the participants are males – two from China, one from India, and one from South Korea. The other participant is a female from South Korea. The four male participants were all students in the College of Engineering; two were second-year Master’s students and two were doctoral students still doing coursework. The female participant was a doctoral student in Special Education. The countries of origin and majors of the student reflect the previously-discussed overall trends of the student population at Midwest University, in that three of the top four countries of origin are represented, and the majority of the participants were from the college of engineering.

The students were taking writing classes for various reasons; some had been told to do so by teachers, some were self-directed, and one in particular was doing so in order to force himself to use English on a regular basis. All of the student participants had previously taken classes from the ESL center, but none of them had taken a writing class. The following are brief descriptions of each student participant, their educational history, their degree programs, and other pertinent information. Table 2 provides an overview of this information.

Chris was a Master’s student in Materials Science, completing his second year of the program. During the year that he participated in the research, Chris was also working for a tire company; during the winter quarter, he missed several weeks of classes because of this work. The nature of his work remains somewhat of a mystery, as he was bound by non-disclosure agreements and preferred not to speak about it in depth. Originally from India, Chris was concerned that he was not a suitable
Table 2

Overview of Student Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chris</th>
<th>Emily</th>
<th>Jeff</th>
<th>Kyle</th>
<th>Wallace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language(s)</td>
<td>English Telegu (oral only) Hindi (oral only)</td>
<td>Korean English</td>
<td>Cantonese Japanese English</td>
<td>Korean English</td>
<td>Mandarin English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Degree</td>
<td>Materials Science</td>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>Civil Engineering</td>
<td>Electrical Engineering</td>
<td>Electrical Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Degrees</td>
<td>Bachelor’s degree from India</td>
<td>Master’s degree from Korea</td>
<td>Bachelor’s degree from China</td>
<td>Bachelor’s degree from Korea</td>
<td>Master’s degree from China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>English was language of schooling in India; Missed several weeks in winter due to work</td>
<td>Korean was primary spoken and written language at home; missed winter quarter due to mother’s illness</td>
<td>English was primary language spoken at home; Japanese wife</td>
<td>Previously attended a Northeastern research institution. Transferred to new university after Fall quarter</td>
<td>Mandarin primary spoken language at home; sister a professor at Columbia and role model.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

candidate for the research because he did not consider himself an English as a second language speaker or writer; English had always been the mode of instruction for him.

He remarked, “I’m more familiar with English than my mother tongue” (Chris interview, 10 November). His “mother tongue,” as he called it, is Telegu, which he uses only to speak with his family, as he never learned to read and write it. As he said he also speaks English with his family, I asked Chris when he used which language. He replied “If I’m just stating my point, it’s gonna be in English; if we’re discussing
something, it’s in my mother tongue” (Chris interview, 10 November). Chris also mentioned that he spoke Hindi with his girlfriend.

Emily was beginning a doctoral degree in Special Education, with a focus on students with mental retardation and developmental disabilities. She was in her second year of coursework when she participated in this study. Emily was making a transition back to being in school after earning a Master’s degree and working in her home country, Korea. She had moved to the U.S. because her husband had gotten a job here. She was also a mother of two young boys. She, her husband, and her children used Korean at home. Emily did not participate in the winter quarter of this study, because her mother became ill, and Emily returned to Korea to care for her.

Wallace was a doctoral student in his second year of the electrical engineering program. His research area had to do with radar and remote communication and navigation systems. Wallace was originally from China, and had moved to the U.S. with his wife, who was pursuing a degree in mathematics. His first language, and the language he used at home, was Mandarin Chinese. Wallace’s sister was also living in the U.S., and had successfully completed a doctoral program and was a professor at Columbia University. Wallace looked up to her as a role model, and often cited her as the type of person he’d like to be.

Jeff was a second-year Master’s student in Civil Engineering. His area of study was structures – specifically steel and concrete ones. Jeff was originally from Southern China, and moved to the U.S. to pursue his Master’s degree. While in the U.S., Jeff met his wife, who is Japanese. During the year he participated in this study, Jeff also began
studying Japanese. Because Jeff’s first language is Cantonese, and his wife’s in Japanese, the language most commonly spoken in their home is English. In his fall interview, Jeff explained that, previous to his marriage, he had lived with non-Chinese students, and therefore had very little opportunity to speak Chinese in his day-to-day life. He felt that this was difficult, but it improved his oral English to the point where he could now focus on writing.

Kyle was a second year doctoral student in Electrical Engineering. Before coming to Midwest University, he had studied at a large research institution in the Northeast. Kyle had never planned to study in the U.S., but when he became interested in biomedical engineering, the field had not yet caught on in Korea. Thus, he came to the U.S. in order to pursue studies in that particular field. He felt that he was linguistically underprepared for study in the U.S. In his November interview, Kyle explained “when I was in Korea, I rarely studied English. Many Korean people study English very hard. I thought that ‘why I study English? I have no chance to use English’” (Kyle interview, 10 November). He also explained that he was an introvert, and thus was taking English classes to force himself to interact in – and therefore learn – English. Kyle only participated in the first quarter of the study, as he transferred to another school. The reason for his transfer was that the school he chose had a program that was more aligned with his specific research interests, specifically bioMEMs.

**Description of teacher participants.** Through happenstance rather than design, all of the teacher participants in this study were first-time writing teachers. All of the teachers had previous experience teaching either ESL or English as a foreign language (EFL);
some had experience in both. None of them, though, had previously taught a class solely focused on academic writing. Two of the teachers were American citizens, one was a dual Greek-American citizen, and one was a Polish citizen. Three of the four teachers were bilingual, and one spoke English as a second language. The following is a description of each teacher participant, including previous teaching experience, writing classes taught during the study, and other pertinent information. Table 3 presents an overview of this information.

Table 3

Overview of Teacher Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jen</th>
<th>Grace</th>
<th>Jake</th>
<th>Sarah</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>American/Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous</td>
<td>Taught EFL in Italy</td>
<td>Taught EFL in Poland</td>
<td>Taught EFL in Croatia</td>
<td>Taught ESL for private company, Taught Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language(s)</td>
<td>Italian, English</td>
<td>Polish is 1st language, English</td>
<td>Some Croatian, English</td>
<td>Greek is 1st language, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class taught</td>
<td>Writing 1, Fall quarter</td>
<td>Writing 2, Fall quarter</td>
<td>Writing 3, Spring quarter</td>
<td>Writing 2, Winter quarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students in class</td>
<td>Emily, Jeff, Kyle, and Wallace</td>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>Chris, Emily, Jeff, Kyle, Wallace</td>
<td>Chris, Jeff, Kyle, and Wallace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Moved to Germany at conclusion of Fall quarter, not available for interview.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jen was a first year Master’s student in TESL. She is an American, and grew up in the area where Midwest University is located. She had taught EFL in Italy for two years, and is fluent in Italian. The students Jen worked with in Italy were generally middle- and high-school aged. She had never taught second-language writing before,
and was very nervous at the prospect of doing so. Her interest area and previous experience leaned more toward oral language and cultural education. Jen taught Writing 1 during the Fall quarter, and sought a fair amount of support and feedback from me. Throughout the first half of the quarter, Jen and I usually chatted for 10 to 15 minutes before or after each observed class. Emily, Wallace, Jeff, and Kyle were in Jen’s fall quarter class. In addition to the writing class, Jen also taught a pronunciation class during Fall quarter.

Grace was a Polish national who worked as an adjunct for the ESL department. She had a Master’s degree from Poland in English language and literature and translation. She had taught as an adjunct for the department for two years previous to the study’s start, and usually taught presentation skills. Grace did not feel that she was qualified to teach writing, because she was not a native speaker. She taught the Fall quarter Writing 2 class. Chris attended this class, until he was notified that he was not eligible to audit the class, which he had been doing, and therefore had to drop it. At the end of the fall quarter, Grace and her husband moved to Germany. As a result, I was not able to conduct the end-of-quarter interview.

Jake was a first year Master’s student in TESL. Jake is an American. He had taught EFL in Croatia for one year, and was planning to return to the area and a similar job after his degree program. The students Jake worked with in Croatia were high-school aged. Jake was also inexperienced at teaching a single-skill course, and had not worked with graduate students before. Previous to teaching the Spring quarter Writing
3 class, Jake had taught pronunciation and presentation skills classes. Wallace, Jeff, Emily, and Chris attended Jake’s class.

Sarah is a Greek-American dual citizen who was completing the last year of her Master’s program in TESL. She is fluent in Greek, and also taught Greek as a foreign language. Sarah had also worked for a private language-teaching company for 1 year, teaching ESL and Greek. Previous to teaching the Winter Writing 2 class, Sarah had taught presentation skills and pronunciation classes. Wallace, Jeff, and Chris attended Sarah’s class, although Chris missed several weeks due to work obligations.

Data Collection

Data collection consisted of four tasks, in order to provide for multiple perspectives and rich, descriptive data. The four types of data collected were: 1) classroom observations, 2) individual interviews both with students and teachers, 3) course documents (handouts, syllabi, etc.), and 4) writing samples (student writing with and without teacher comments). As previously discussed, these data were selected in order to capture cultural knowledge, cultural behavior, and cultural artifacts (Spradley, 1980) of the participants (see Table 1).

Classroom observations. Classroom observations were conducted once weekly, during regularly scheduled class times. The purpose of the observations was twofold. First, I observed how the teachers enacted their roles as experts in the academic culture, and how they used their expert status to model the desired discourse practices. Second, I observed how the students, in their roles as peripheral participants, interacted with both the teachers and other students, and how these interactions displayed the process
of acquiring the desired discourse practices. All classroom observations were field-noted, and, by permission of the teachers and students, audio recorded and transcribed. See Appendix A for the classroom observation guide. See Appendix B for transcription conventions.

**Student interviews.** Tape-recorded formal interviews were conducted once per quarter with each student participant, totaling eight interviews (November/December, February/March and May). The interviews had three main purposes: 1) to elicit the students’ perspectives on occurrences observed during classroom observations, 2) to ask students questions about their discourse samples, and 3) to elicit the students’ perspectives on how writing classes were impacting their socialization to American academic language. The interviews were conducted from a guide, rather than from a set of prescribed questions. Patton (2002) states that the advantages of a guided interview are that “the interviewer remains free to build a conversation within a particular subject area, to word questions spontaneously, and to establish a conversational style but with the focus on a particular subject that has been predetermined” (p. 343). The interviews were conducted using two guides: one for the first interview and one for the others. Interview guides can be found in Appendix C. In addition to the previous outlined topics, the last interview of the study asked students what they believe they learned in their ESL writing classes.

**Teacher interviews.** Tape-recorded interviews with the ESL writing teacher(s) were conducted at the end of each academic quarter. The main focus of the interviews was the teachers’ perceptions of the students’ ability to participate in academic discourse. In
addition, information about the teachers’ beliefs about the role of writing classes in academia was elicited. Finally, the teachers were asked for their perspectives on occurrences observed during classroom observations or document analysis. Teachers were also asked about each student’s socialization process throughout his/her time in the teacher’s classes. See Appendix C for teacher interview guides.

In addition to formal teacher interviews, informal interviews occurred on an as-needed basis. These interviews were conducted at the behest of the teachers, when they wanted input and/or guidance on their classes, their assignments, etc. My previous experience teaching the writing classes, the current teachers’ inexperience, and the pressure of weekly observations were most likely the driving forces behind these impromptu chats. Because of the unplanned nature of these interviews, as well as the fact that they were often no more than a few minutes in duration, they were not tape-recorded, but were field-noted.

Document collection. Because the focus of this study is on writing classes as places of discourse socialization, samples of student writing were collected. Student papers for class and instructor comments provide examples of formal written academic discourse and the instructors’ written efforts at socializing the students. In addition to these documents, student email correspondence with the instructors, and online writing (discussion board postings) were also collected. Course documents such as syllabi and instructor handouts were collected, as well.
Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Strauss and Corbin’s (1998) grounded theory analysis methods, after Beckett (1999). This is a method of inductive analysis and creative synthesis (Patton, 2002), in which the researcher becomes immersed in the data in order to discover “important patterns, themes, and interrelationships” (p. 41). Patton (2002) argues that this type of analysis is “guided by analytical principals rather than rules” and “ends with a creative synthesis” (p. 41). Spradley (1980) points out that qualitative researchers should not fit data into their literature review and chosen theories, but instead should let the data speak first. Thus, the analysis followed the typical pattern of analysis in grounded theory, as described by Strauss and Corbin (1998). In other words, the analysis moved from open coding of general concepts or behaviors (such as Spradley’s (1980) cultural behavior, cultural knowledge, and cultural artifacts), to axial coding of relating categories and subcategories created by open coding. I then began to create relational statements about the phenomena identified through the coding process. Next, selective coding identified the codes that appeared with relative frequency during the open and axial coding processes. Using those selective codes provided a “check on the fit between the emerging theoretical framework and the empirical reality it explains” (Charmaz, 2000, p. 516). Finally, analysis moved toward creating a theory that described the observed phenomena.

As previously discussed, language socialization and legitimate peripheral participation were used as a theoretical lenses for analyzing the data. These theories were particularly helpful for explaining student and teacher roles in the socialization
process and classroom interactions. During data analysis, however, it became apparent that an explanatory model was needed for the specific linguistic characteristics into which students were being socialized. In other words, during the selective coding process, the linguistic features identified as frequently occurring were also identified as needing an explanatory theory. SFL was chosen as the appropriate theory because of its focus on language as a meaning-making, as well as its focus on the text, rather than on sentences, clauses, or individual words. This focus on text and meaning-making was found to best explain the data.

Because of the extravagant nature of SFL, and the complexity of its approach to texts, a more efficient methodology of referring to SFL characteristics of language was chosen. The contexts of mode, tenor, and field (Halliday, 1993; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004), which refer to the organizational, interpersonal, and ideational metafunctions of language, were used to refer to teachers’ and students’ engagement with academic language. Additionally, the Vygotskian sociocultural concepts of cultural artifacts, language socialization, and legitimate peripheral participation were used to conceptualize classroom interactions. Using this terminology, the coding process moved from open coding to axial coding to selective codes using the concepts of mode, tenor, and field as well as language socialization, cultural artifacts, and legitimate peripheral participation to create a theory that described observed phenomena. Table 4 provides examples of how the data were analyzed using grounded theory.
### Table 4

**Examples of How Data were Analyzed Using Grounded Theory**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open coding</th>
<th>Axial coding</th>
<th>Relational statements</th>
<th>Selective coding</th>
<th>Creating theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Classroom observations</strong></td>
<td>Teachers talk about organization (cultural knowledge)</td>
<td>Discussions of organization involve discussions of transitions</td>
<td>Transitions are considered a part of organization</td>
<td>Discussions of transitions as a part of organization occurs with great frequency in observed classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviews</strong></td>
<td>Students discuss shifting focus from grammar to organization (cultural behavior)</td>
<td>Discussions of organization involve transitions</td>
<td>Transitions are considered a part of organization</td>
<td>Students frequently mention transitions as a part of organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course documents</strong></td>
<td>Transitions (cultural artifacts)</td>
<td>Discussions of organization involve transitions</td>
<td>Transitions are considered a part of organization</td>
<td>Course documents about transitions occur frequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student writing</strong></td>
<td>Students incorporate transitions (cultural knowledge, cultural artifacts)</td>
<td>Discussions of organization involve transitions</td>
<td>Transitions are considered a part of organization</td>
<td>Student writing shows a lot of attention given to transitions as a form of organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher writing</strong></td>
<td>Teachers comment about organization (cultural knowledge, cultural artifacts)</td>
<td>Discussions of organization involve transitions</td>
<td>Transitions are considered a part of organization</td>
<td>Teacher comments frequently focus on transitions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Soundness of Qualitative Research

Because qualitative, ethnographic research methodologies do not follow the same patterns of data collection and analysis as traditional, quantitative ones from the natural sciences tradition, they are often questioned as to the soundness of their research findings. This dichotomy of research paradigms is a topic of much discussion among qualitative researchers, specifically with reference to establishing criteria for the soundness of qualitative research. As Lincoln and Guba (2000) point out, the epistemological and ontological positions which lead researchers to choose qualitative research are the ones which also make the traditional, foundationalist, positivist criteria for judging its soundness inapplicable. In other words, because qualitative research represents a shift from the belief that research is conducted in order to ascertain the truth to a belief that research is conducted in order to ascertain a truth, the criteria for judging the soundness of the findings must also change. The traditional positivist criteria of validity, reliability, and objectivity do not apply in the same way to qualitative research methods as they do to quantitative ones, because the phenomena studied by qualitative researchers are by their very nature situated and context-specific. As such, a need for new criteria to measure the soundness of qualitative studies has arisen. Two criteria of note are those of Miles and Huberman (1994) and Patton (2002).

In creating their criteria for sound qualitative methodology, Miles and Huberman (1994) parallel the criteria of quantitative research. They identify five categories to which qualitative researchers should pay close attention when designing, and writing up a study, and they’ve labeled those categories both with positivistic
labels as well as with more interpretivistic ones. The categories are: (1) objectivity/confirmability, (2) reliability/dependability/auditability, (3) internal validity/credibility/authenticity, (4) external validity/transferability/fittingness, and (5) utilization/application/action orientation.

In contrast to Miles and Huberman’s detailed descriptions of criteria for soundness of interpretivistic, qualitative research in relation to that of positivistic, quantitative traditions, Patton (2003) rejects the effort to draw parallels between quantitative and qualitative paradigms, and instead offers three deceptively simple criteria: (1) rigorous methods, (2) researcher credibility, and (3) audience belief in the value of qualitative research. Because both of these proposed criteria have areas of complementarity and overlap, I will address them together in my discussion of how this research was a sound qualitative study.

Objectivity/confirmability. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), it is important to establish that qualitative research has “freedom from unacknowledged researcher biases – at the minimum, explicitness about the inevitable biases that exist” (p. 278). In order to establish the confirmability of this research, I have addressed my experience as an ESL writing teacher and the impact this may have on my approach to classroom observations. In addition, I considered competing theories to explain the phenomena observed during the study, in order to have addressed not just the “best fit” explanation, but also those with which I may be less familiar. Also, my advisor has reviewed my data as a method of checking the biases. Finally, the multiple data sources were triangulated. In other words, if a phenomenon was observed during a class, I
looked for additional evidence of that phenomenon in other data sources – interviews, course documents, and student and teacher writing – in order to confirm its validity. As such, my biases in the study, while not eradicated, are acknowledged and fully accounted for. This acknowledgement of bias also fulfills Patton’s (2003) criteria of establishing researcher credibility.

Reliability/dependability/auditability. Miles and Huberman identify auditability as reflected through a consistent process and stable observations (p. 278). Through the use of a clearly delineated research design, adherence to observation and interview guides, and triangulation of data sources, I have established the auditability of this study. As such, I have also fulfilled Patton’s (2002) call for rigor in research methodology.

Internal validity/credibility/authenticity. The issue of authenticity is closely related to that of auditability in that it is best achieved through rigorous research methods. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), authenticity is the inherent truth value of the research. By providing detailed descriptions of the research site and participants, and explicit links between the phenomena observed and possible theories to explain them, I have provided the audience with enough information to establish the appropriateness of my findings to the study. In addition, identification of negative evidence of certain criteria, as well as of areas of uncertainty in the research, prevent the research from being presented as a tidy, unproblematic, and therefore inauthentic, package.

External validity/transferability/fittingness. This criterion is perhaps the most problematic to this research study because of the fact that it is a multiple-case study design. As such, it examines a few cases in depth, and therefore is not easily
generalizable or transferable to other cases. In order to address this issue, I have been careful to present very detailed descriptions of the participants and setting, so that readers have many possibilities of areas of overlap between the study participants and their populations of interest. In addition, in my calls for further research, I will address the fact that more research needs to be done in order to make this particular study more generalizable.

Utilization/application/action orientation. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), this criterion speaks to the pragmatic value of a study’s findings (p. 280). The goal of this study is to promote a better understanding of how international graduate students are best socialized to American academic writing, and as such the research has a definite orientation to improving teaching practices within the field of TESL.
Chapter 4 – Teachers Know that Formal Grammar is not Enough

As mentioned in Chapter 1, teachers were somewhat inconsistent in their treatment of formal grammar. In general, teachers did not try to socialize students into a focus on formal grammar during classroom interactions, or at least they said they did not want to and would not focus on grammar. In their written comments and handouts, they often did focus on grammar, but their grammar comments rarely comprised a majority.

*Fall Quarter, Writing 1: “I was afraid maybe it wasn’t ok for me to give them back a paper with these errors that weren’t corrected.”*

During the fall quarter, Jen instructed students not to focus on grammar during their peer reviews.

Jen: Let's mostly look at content today, ok. You can-if you notice some grammar mistakes, you can go ahead and you can mark it and-and mention it to the person. Especially if it makes something confusing.

(Writing 1, 7 October)

This comments show the teacher’s intention not to socialize students into discussing formal grammatical points. She acknowledged the necessity of grammar to clear up “confusing” parts of the text, but the stated desire is to focus on a larger level of text than grammar. Jen did sometimes cover grammar in class discussions, despite the stated desire to the contrary, and she did also make written comments about grammar.

During her end-of-quarter interview, Jen reflected on this, stating:

Jen: that was something that was hard for me the whole way through was [2 seconds] sort of negotiating how much to concentrate …Umm how much to address as far as
grammatical issues and little problems and lexical types of errors.
(Jen interview, 2 December)

Despite the stated desire not to focus on grammar, Jen, in Writing 1, often had discussions regarding formal aspects of a text, including grammar and punctuation. Part of this was because of students’ eagerness to discuss grammar, which was most likely a result of the fact that Writing 1 often focused on particular grammar subjects, while framing them as contributing to textual cohesion. In her interview, Jen acknowledged that she sometimes felt that students wanted her to focus on grammar, and that this created a pressure for her to meet student expectations:

Jen: I was afraid they really wanted the little things, and I was afraid maybe it wasn’t ok for me to give them back a paper with these errors that weren’t corrected.
(J interview, 2 December)

This phenomenon of a teacher spending time on grammar because she feels pressure from students to do so may be peculiar to Jen because of her relative inexperience in teaching writing; this was the first writing-only class that she had taught.

The following discussion of coordinating conjunctions as a way to create cohesion in texts is an excellent example of what happened when unabashedly grammatical discussions occurred in the class (a class in which, as exemplified by Jen’s exhortation to “mostly look at content,” the teacher was attempting to socialize students into not solely focusing on formal grammar):

Jen: ok, what are conjunctions? Specifically, we looked at coordinating conjunctions. What are coordinating conjunctions?
NP student answers
Jen: Ok. But, and, or, so. What do they do?
NP student answers
Jen: They combine sentences. Ok, they combine- what specifically do they combine? What do they join?
Wallace: clause
Jen: Hmmm?
Wallace: clauses.
Jen: Clauses. What kind of clauses? Any clause? Specifically coordinating conjunctions like and, but, or . What does it say? What does it talk about? What kind of clauses?
NP student answers.
Jen: Good. Independent clauses. What is an independent clause?
NP student answers
Jen: Ok. Sure. A clause that can stay alone. That can be its own sentence. That means what? What does it have to have?
NP student answers
Wallace: subject and verb
Jen: Subject and a verb. Good. Okay, did anyone have any questions as you did the exercises? About coordinating conjunctions?
(Writing 1, 14 October)

Note how, because this discussion is decontextualized from a specific piece of writing (or even a passage in a specific piece of writing), it moves through the interdependent parts, demonstrating the slippery slope of formal grammar instruction: in order to define a coordinating conjunction, one must be able to identify a clause, and then more specifically an independent clause, and then more specifically a subject and a verb. These grammatical terms are not functional; they are not serving a purpose for a text. Rather, they serve only as interlocking definitions (Halliday & Martin, 1993) necessary to understand an abstract concept. In this sense, the discussion is perhaps helpful socializing students into the type of discourse that is common in academic writing.
The discussion of coordinating conjunctions continues with an exercise from the book, in which students are asked to combine the following sentences: Next summer, my family may visit me. Next summer, I may visit my family. While this could be argued to be useful for socializing students into a focus on textual organization or mode, the (once again) decontextualized, discussion of formal grammatical features such as clauses, pronouns, nouns, and collective nouns:

Jeff: Umm, the subject for second clauses should be they or th-uhh, my family is they, right?
Jeff: Right?
Jen: Well, o-
Jeff: Or, keep-I don’t know [laughs]
Jen: Ok, you don’t have t-right now you don’t have to replace it with a pronoun, but you can.
Jeff: Ok
Jen: Ok? Did anybody write the sentence… uh…Somebody give me an example for number 2. Next summer…
NP student answers
Jen: Ok [or my family] may visit me.
Jeff: [Yeah. We tried-] If we try to replace my family, use what? Which pronoun?
Jen: What would you use? What’s the pronoun for my family?
NP student answers
Jeff: They. Right. They
Jen: Next summer I may visit my family or they may visit me.
Jeff: Ok
Jen: Ok? What kind of noun is family?
Jeff laughs
Jen: Why maybe you were having some problems. It’s a collective noun. Right?
Jeff: Oh, yeah. It’s like people, right?
Jen: Right.
Jeff: Ok. Thank you.
Jen: Right, so that’s why. Ok. Any other questions? On the-conjunctions or the combining?
(Writing 1, 14 October)
The previous discussion of coordinating conjunctions, which necessitated covering conjunctions, clauses, clause types, and subjects and verbs, has moved to a discussion of pronouns and collective/noncount nouns. This points to the disadvantage of having specific grammar discussions in writing classes; the text is lost, and becomes a question of articles; semi-colon, colon, or comma; noncount nouns, independent clauses, etc. Jen even shows some bias toward formal grammar when she remarks that Jeff not knowing what kind of noun family is “why maybe you were having some problems.” Thus, despite her attempts to socialize students into not focusing on formal grammar, Jen sometimes refers back to the familiar vocabulary and framework of grammar.

It’s almost humorous when, at the end of the discussion of noncount nouns, Jen asks if there are questions on conjunctions or combining, as neither of those topics have been the focus of the discussion. So, even though the instructor opened a discussion of a specific grammar point (coordinating conjunctions), student questions led to a discussion of other grammar points (noncount nouns, pronouns). This is an example of how grammar discussions in class often arose by request – direct or indirect - of the students. For example, later in the same class, a student asks a question about using articles before the names of musical instruments and sports:

Kyle: Uh [mutters] I learned that uh when I use the- musical instrument, use like play the piano, play the guitar.
Jen: Without the s, you mean?
Kyle: No. The.
Jen: The.
Kyle: The
Jen: OK. Ok.
Kyle: play ***** but play the piano.
Jen: Yes. You-you can use, and a lot of times people do use, play the piano. Play the guitar. He plays the violin. You don’t have to.
Wallace: it’s not allowed
Jen: I’m sorry?
Wallace: won’t allow, play the piano
Jen: It’s not allowed?
Wallace: I think, I mean, play the piano is wrong.
Jen: It’s wrong? Do you think play the piano is wrong? If you say, uh, my brother plays the piano?
[3 seconds]
Emily: In my country, we learned that in front of musical instruments, put the.
Jen: the article?
Emily: Article. But in front of, uh, like [sport, don’t put]
Jeff: [several unintelligible words], but I don’t know.
Kyle: English exam, if I don’t use the, it’s wrong. [laughs]
Jen: Really.
Kyle: Yeah.
Jen: I-I wouldn’t say that it’s wrong. Eh... I wouldn’t say that it’s wrong. To not use the article. But [2 seconds] if that is something on an exam [2 seconds] Has anybody else run into that kind of thing on an exam? One-one is right and one is wrong? [12 seconds]. You can use it.
(Writing 1, 14 October)

Once again, this grammar discussion becomes divorced from the original context – a textbook exercise, which is in itself far removed from any actual academic writing.

Class discussion related to textbook exercises were not the only time that formal grammar discussions occurred in Writing 1, but they were the most common times.

During a peer review session, Jen wrote a list on the board of the things to which students should pay attention when reviewing one another’s’ drafts. The list included, under the heading of “sentence combining,” coordinating conjunctions and commas
Peer review sessions were also a time when student-directed questions about grammar were raised. These were not germinated by grammar-centered textbook exercises, but instead by other student’s writing. When these questions or discussions arose, Jen did engage in them, despite her encouragement to “focus mainly on content” and guidelines for peer review that were focused on more rhetorical aspects of the text. In the following example, two students (one of whom did not participate in the study), asked Jen about using the article “the” before the word “god.” Jen’s answer was fairly circuitous, but included a discussion of the grammatical forms:

J: we’re dealing with the-the article here. Unless you’re referring to one specific god, we would not use the article.

(Writing 1, 7 October)

This is an interesting example because it also involves a culture clash between a Jen, a Catholic, and Kyle, a student who describes himself to her in the course of the conversation as “not Christian, not Buddhist” (Writing 1, 7 October). Despite the cultural differences between the interlocutors, though, the conversation still centers on an explicit grammatical discussion regarding the use of articles. The discussion ends with Jen suggesting that Kyle choose another word besides god, thus shifting the discussion away from formal grammar, and toward the meaning-making function of the text:
J: But you could change this word. You don't have to use the word god. Why don't you think about maybe another word you could use?
(Writing 1, 7 October)

After the discussion, Kyle states that “it make me more confused” (Writing 1, 7 October). Despite the fact that he and his peer review partner initiated the discussion, this is another example of how discussions of specific grammatical points were often counter-productive in the class.

The previous examples speak to the fact that, despite Jen’s stated intentions not to have this happen in class, the combination of a textbook centered on formal grammar as an organizational tool, students who are accustomed to discussing formal grammar, and – perhaps – Jen’s own familiarity with formal grammar, proves to be a sort of catalyst for formal grammar discussions in class. The lack of purposeful context for these discussions affirms the findings of previous studies (Halliday & Martin, 1993; Lemke, 1990; Mohan & Beckett, 2001; Schleppegrell, 2004) that formal grammar is divorced from the function of the text, and that therefore a discussion of formal grammar often leads to isolated discussions that are not largely applicable to the whole of a students’ academic writing needs.

Even when she was not following the (somewhat) formal grammar-focused textbook and/or student requests, Jen still did provide written comments about formal grammatical elements of student texts. For example, her comments on the students’ first writing assignments included the following:
Jen’s comment on Emily paragraph:
*Language points to discuss:
Prepositions + articles
Subject-verb agreement
(Writing 1, document 3)

Jen’s comment on Jeff paragraph:
*Language issues to discuss –
Tense shift
Vocabulary/word choice
(Writing 1, document 1)

It’s interesting to note Jen’s choice of words here – “language issues” – not “writing issues” or “grammar.” Also, it’s interesting to point out that these comments appear in the form of a list at the bottom of the paragraph submitted by the students, with little, if any, association, to specific areas in the text.

Some of Jen’s comments about grammar were more than a list, but still heavily reliant on formal grammatical terms. They were more contextualized in that they often referred to specifics within the text:

Jen’s Comment on Wallace paragraph: Did you want to use intern as a verb, or as a noun (an internship or to be an intern?)
(Writing 1, document 2)

Jen’s comment on Wallace paragraph:
You’ve also done a good job with coordinating conjunctions. However, there are a couple of sentences at the end that you may want to think about combining.
(Writing 1, document 8)

Jen comment to Wallace:
The only other thing I want to mention is that you have a run-on sentence in your concluding paragraph.
(Writing 1, document 13)
As mentioned previously, these comments relate to specifics within the texts, but are again reliant on abstract formal grammatical concepts such as run-on sentence, verb tense consistency, and coordinating conjunctions. While these concepts can be helpful to improving texts, their application to the texts in question is left, at best, vague. These comments focused on grammar support the findings of previous research (Mohan & Lo, 1985; Tait, 1999; Zhu, 2004) that many writing teachers tend to focus more on formal grammar; however, their occurrences within a classroom in which a teacher declares an intention not to focus on formal grammar warrants further investigation and explanation. Further analysis of this seeming contradiction will be provided in Chapter 12.

Some formal grammar comments that Jen provided to students were more directly applicable to the texts. These comments proposed grammatical solutions to problematic portions of the text, and are more in keeping with her original comments about paying attention to formal grammar mistakes that “make things confusing”:

Jen comment on Jeff paragraph:
First, I have marked a sentence on the actual paper itself that seemed a little confusing to me. Beginning with "Lots of assignments ....." I think you should divide these clauses and be more explicit about how not hating the assignments and the exams not being hard are related.
(Writing 1, document 10)
Jen comment on Wallace paragraph:
I also see a couple of places that I would recommend sentence combining (just for the sake of interest and variety).
(Writing 1, document 12)

Note that, despite the fact that the comments still use formal grammatical concepts and terms (such as “dividing clauses” and “combining sentences”), they are much more focused on the meaning-making function of the texts, rather than on the formal grammatical accuracy. The first comment is in keeping with the findings of Schleppegrell (2004), in that it is focused on textual cohesion through internal reference: “how not hating the assignments and the exams not being hard are related” (emphasis added). The last example also indicated Jen’s attention to tenor, in the form of maintaining the “interest and variety” for the audience. These comments show Jen using formal grammatical terms to refer to functional aspects, specifically aspects related to organization, of the student texts. This suggests that she is intent on socializing the students into a more functional approach to writing, but that she herself lacks an alternate framework, because she has not been formally socialized into functional grammar.

*Fall Quarter, Writing 2: “These are minor things.”*

During the Writing 2 class observed during the Fall quarter, Grace urged students not to focus on grammar or vocabulary choices during their in-class writing reviews:

Grace: I’d like you to...in our class let’s not discuss the grammar and vocabulary choices. These you can always find out later on, but first of all about the structure and logic.
(Writing 2, 18 October)
This comment is interesting for two reasons. First, it echoes the comment of Jen at the beginning of Writing 1, urging students not to focus on formal grammar. Second, it presents Grace’s perspective on formal grammar and vocabulary: that it can be dealt with later. This belief is repeated throughout the quarter, as Grace continually socialized her students into not focusing on formal grammar, as it is an issue that could be easily addressed:

Grace: What is left really is some vocabulary choices or grammar or punctuation spelling things, and these seem to be relatively – and these are minor things, really. These are minor things. So, I wanted to point out to the organization... proper arrangement is logical for the paper, and not just detect that each and every sentence is perfect, for grammatical and vocabulary things. And by the way these things, the grammar vocabulary things can be fixed relatively quickly....So let’s concentrate on organization, and not just the fact that you are not sure that the grammar is right in this part of the sentence.  
(Writing 2, 8 November)

Here again Grace points out that formal grammar, spelling, and punctuation are “minor things” that can be “fixed relatively quickly.” This perspective on formal aspects of a text was sometimes similar to Jen’s reference to them as “language issues” or “language skills.” Grace explained this to her students in the following manner:

Grace: Some sentences are awkward, right? Some words are not picked properly, but these are...this belongs to the language skills, right? And we have all – I mean I have – it’s all underlined, it’s relatively easy to fix.  
(Writing 2, 8 November)

Grace’s beliefs about the relative unimportance of discussing formal grammatical issues were fairly consistent throughout the quarter. She did not provide written feedback to
students, but instead spent class time providing oral critiques of each student’s essay.

During these critiques, Grace did point out problems with grammar or vocabulary, but most often she simply pointed out that there was a problem, or referred to it as a language problem that could be easily fixed, as in the following example:

Grace: The closing paragraph, ahh, yeah, this one I really like… I wouldn’t change it in any way except for some punctuation problems or spelling problems. We all can see what they are, right?
(Writing 2, 8 November)

The actual problems were neither discussed nor delineated; they were simply acknowledged and then the critique continued.

On occasion, Grace’s oral critiques did, however, include critiques of formal grammar. For example, Grace made the following comments about an essay being discussed:

Grace: I see some problems, some grammar problems in this, like logical problems….”appreciate to give concerts.” It is grammatically wrong.
(Writing 2, 18 October)

What is interesting about this comment is that Grace equated grammar problems with logic problems. In this particular instance of “appreciate to give concerts,” there is no real logic problem, only an infinitive verb instead of a gerund nominalization of it.

“Logic” seemed to be a deciding factor in whether or not to specifically discuss a grammar issue. This seems to be indicative of a phenomenon similar to Schleppegrell’s (2004) assertion that teachers tend to be more concerned with field/ideational aspects of a text. Thus, in Grace’s class, the decision to discuss formal grammar was driven by
what she perceived as the clarity of logical relationships between ideas. In the following example, Grace discussed a student’s use of the modal verb ”may” under the umbrella of logic:

Grace: “…may be examples of fatal infectious diseases.” Are they fatal or not? The wording is wrong. Or ”examples of potentially fatal diseases.” So then we know. They may be fatal, they may not. But they are for sure examples.
(Writing 2, 25 October)

In another example of an intersection of logic and formal aspects of a text, Grace questioned a student’s wording of a passage and referred to it as “poor editing”:

Grace: Lines 7,8,9 have some poor editing. Is “bacterial pneumonia most often caused by Legionnaire la”…. And “first recognized in a 1976 outbreak”…hmmm. “Throughout the United States”? Or maybe “that resulted in 182 casualties throughout the United States including 29 fatal cases in Philadelphia”. For sure it cannot be the way that it is now, right? That is a lapse. And SARS is not an outbreak, SARS is a disease; there was an outbreak of SARS. So we have this logical problem that I believe is basically a language problem. It’s turned to be a logical problem.
(Writing 2, 8 November)

Here, Grace grappled with a particularly unclear passage of a text which referred to bacterial pneumonia, Legionnaire’s disease, and SARS as seemingly interchangeable diseases. The choice to focus on the logic of using the word outbreak with or without a preposition – “a 1976 outbreak” versus “an outbreak of SARS in 1976” – is framed as a logical, editing choice, not a formal grammatical one.

Not all of Grace’s comments on formal grammar were made in conjunction with the field/ideational aspect of a text. For example, Grace commented on parallelism:
Grace: When it’s about Baroque, Romantic, or Modern, it’s not quite parallel. I mean it’s not quite the same. Maybe Baroque Romanticism or Baroque Modernism. [laughs] I mean, they should all be nouns or adjectives. Do you see my point? Baroque is a noun, Romantic is an adjective, right? Modern is adjective. And we need to have a set of three nouns or three adjectives. (Writing 2, 18 October)

This is an interesting example because it points to a possible misunderstanding between the student and the teacher. The student was referring to Baroque, Romantic, and Modern musical styles; Grace was perhaps not aware of this, and thus her exhortation that Baroque is a noun. The student did not speak up; therefore the intended meaning of the passage was not made clear. In any event, this is a clearly formal grammatical discussion of the classification of the words Baroque, Modern, and Romantic as adjectives or nouns, as well as of the concept of parallelism. The intent of the text is lost here, partly because of the lack of negotiation of meaning on the student’s part.

The previous example also touches on the idea of technical terminology, specifically how teachers and students negotiated it. This will be discussed more fully in chapters 10 and 11. In most instances, it was simply a matter of teachers and students understanding or learning the terminology; however, there was an occasional intersection between formal grammar and technical terms. This is a return to a focus on field/ideational focus of teachers (Schleppegrell, 2004), as well as reinforcement of the characteristic of academic language as reliant on technical terms (Halliday & Martin, 1993; Lemke, 1990).

In the following example, a similar situation arises:
Grace: And we have singly lesson? Individual lesson? ....singly lesson? Uhnn uhnn. Lessons on a one on one basis?
(Writing 2, 18 October)

It is clear that, while Grace is unfamiliar with the terminology for “lessons on a one-on-one basis,” she is quite sure that “singly lesson” is grammatically incorrect. Thus, while she is unable to tell the student the proper term for that particular type of lesson, Grace is able to point out the grammatical inaccuracy. (In this case, I supplied the term “private lesson.”)

Similar to Jen in Writing 1, Grace was also occasionally obliged to discuss formal grammar at the behest of a student. For example, in the class which began with Grace telling students not to focus on grammar, Chris initiated the following discussion:

Chris: There’s a grammatical error in line 10
Grace: Line 10. What do you see?
Chris: “In addition, they must prepare reparatory concerts for students which are taking place in the school.” Taking place…you won’t use it like that.
Grace: which take…
Chris: take place
Grace: which take place. Maybe for student concerts as the plural, right? So. Ok.
(Writing 2, 18 October)

While Chris initiated this discussion, Grace did allow it to go forward, and even offered a formal grammatical explanation of concerts being plural, and therefore taking the plural verb form. This is also interesting because it somewhat misses the more immediate grammatical point, which is the difference between the regular and progressive forms of the verb.
Summary of Fall Quarter Teachers and their Approaches to Formal Grammar

Both Jen and Grace openly stated that they did not want to focus on grammar in their classes, but rather they wanted to focus on structure, logic, and content. This shows intent on the teachers’ parts to socialize students into a functional approach to texts. While they did not spend huge amounts of time in their classes on formal grammar discussions, they also did not avoid those discussions altogether. Sometimes, those discussions were at the behest of the students; other times, they were solely initiated by the teacher. In the case of the Writing 1 class taught by Jen, written teacher comments also focused on formal grammatical aspects of the student texts, and they were sometimes removed from a specific context within the particular text. These comments were an added contradiction to the oral statement that there should not be a strong focus on formal grammar. Some of Jen’s comments, though, were directed at a discussion of the mode (symbolic organization) of student texts, but presented in formal grammatical terms. This suggests that Jen was attempting to socialize students into a functional approach to texts, but lacked specific framework and vocabulary to do so; therefore, she used formal grammatical terms to discuss functional concepts.

In the case of the Writing 2 class taught by Grace, written comments were not provided, but in-class comments did occasionally refer to formal grammatical aspects of a student text. These comments were, however, more contextualized than the written comments provided by Jen, as they occurred in real-time reference to a particular area, line, or passage of the text being discussed. Many of Grace’s comments about grammar were focused on the field (ideational function) of student texts; therefore, she may have
been acting in a way similar to Jen. That is, it is likely that Grace, too, sought to socialize students into a functional approach to texts, but lacked the ability to fully articulate this approach, and therefore used the vocabulary of formal grammar to socialize students into a functional focus.

These findings both support and challenge previous studies that suggest teachers tend to focus on field/ideational and mode/textual aspects of student texts (Lemke, 1990; Mohan and Lo, 1985; Schleppegrell, 2004). In some cases, the discussion of formal grammar seemed to occur in conjunction with a teacher encouraging a student to increase logical and/or textual cohesion (mode), or a negotiation of technical terminology (field). In other instances, the interest and comfort level of the reader is a concern (tenor), which previous studies have not found to be a focus of teachers. The fact that teachers’ discussion of formal grammar is preceded by statements that they do not wish to focus on it, as well as an explicit statement from Jen about feeling that formal grammar is something to be “negotiated” suggests that their engagement in such discussions is for purposes other than a simple formal grammatical lesson. The inexperience of each teacher with functional approaches to text may be a contributing factor to their “falling back” on formal grammatical comments throughout the semester. A full discussion of the significance of teachers’ inconsistencies in discussions of grammar will be presented in Chapter 12.

Winter Quarter, Writing 2: “focusing on content first and grammar later was good”

In the winter quarter, Sarah remarked that not only was she not focusing on grammar, but that she expected students not to focus on it, as well:
Sarah: Notice I didn’t correct your grammar mostly. Unless there was something that really didn’t make sense and it needed to be tweaked to make sense, the grammar was not corrected, and that’s what you should be doing in your peer reviews, also.
(Writing 2, 20 January)

Again, these comments by Sarah speak to an intention on her part to socialize students into not focusing on formal grammar, but rather on the meaning and content of the text. However, her comment that grammar should be changed in order for a text to “make sense” speaks to the possibility that grammar would be given more attention, if necessary for improving the function of the text. In her end-of-quarter interview, Sarah explained her approach to grammar as follows:

Sarah: I never correct- well, I did correct some lexical issues, you know, vocabulary stuff that could have been phrased differently to make more sense, to help with the transitions, to help the other people understand. But I never corrected the grammar. And I did start correcting the grammar, like at the third draft. Because at that point, first of all, everything else had been corrected, so it was easy to focus on the grammar. I didn’t have to focus on a hundred other things, as well. And so I felt that that was a good approach, you know, not leaving the grammar totally uncorrected, but just leaving it for the right time. Umm…and so that’s something that I like. And focusing on content first and grammar later was good, also.
(S interview 1 April)

In general, Sarah was true to her statement that formal grammar would not be discussed in class. There were a few occasions when she did make formal grammatical comments, often in an effort to get more information from the students. In this way, she was similar to Grace in a use of formal grammar to socialize students into focusing on field. For example, in the following example, the class is engaged in a discussion of the
invention technique of cubing, which involves examining a subject from six different perspectives. Sarah is attempting to get the class to name each of the six perspectives, and describe each of them:

Sarah: what does it mean to associate it?
Wallace: connections
Sarah: What? Make a full sentence, please.
(Writing 2, 13 January)

Presumably, Sarah is not in fact concerned with ensuring that all student answers are in full-sentence form; rather, she requesting more information from Wallace by using a formal grammatical request.

Like Jen and Grace, Sarah also had to negotiate student requests for discussions of grammar. These requests were less common, though, and Sarah generally acknowledged, but did not dwell, on them. In the following example, Sarah is soliciting positive feedback on a student essay:

Wallace: consistent
Sarah: Consistent.
Wallace: tense
Sarah: The tenses are consistent, very good. And besides the tenses, it’s also the content is consistent.
(Writing 2, 20 January)

In this example, what could have turned into a lengthy examination of verb tense consistency is turned into a discussion of content consistency. As this topic of consistency is important to Sarah, this is a good example of how she deftly turned class discussion to highlight textual elements she felt were important. Again, this is an example of Sarah socializing students into a functional, text-based approach to writing, rather than a formal, word- or sentence-based one.
In contrast to her approach to formal grammar discussions in the classroom, Sarah did sometimes rely heavily on formal grammar correction in her comments on student text. Despite her statement in her interview that she waited until later versions of a text to make grammar corrections, she in fact made these corrections early in the writing process, and continued to make them throughout the semester. Of the four teacher participants, Sarah was the most directive in her comments about grammar. All of the student papers with comments collected from the class included grammar corrections. In spite of this, students’ grades were not adversely affected by the number of grammar corrections Sarah made. Thus, while Sarah did correct (rather than comment on, like Jen) students’ grammar, she did not create a grading system that prioritized it. This shows some contradiction in her efforts to socialize students into functional approaches to a text; however, this too can be explained as an indication that Sarah had not been formally socialized into an alternative framework to formal grammar. Therefore, Sarah “reverted” to formal grammatical comments when commenting on texts.

A large portion of Sarah’s grammar corrections to student texts focused on article use. The following sample paragraph from an essay assignment is an excellent indication of Sarah’s persistence and insistence in the matter of articles. (Note: only comments about articles are shown. Other comments made by Sarah on this essay will be discussed in later chapters):

Sarah comments on Wallace essay:
Radar consists of a transmitter, a receiver and an antenna. Radio wave is generated by transmitter and emitted by antenna. When it hits an object, it will be reflected and received by the antenna and
consequently detected by receiver. The returned signal is called "echo". The phenomenon of echo often happens around us. When one shouts into a well, the echo of the voice will come back a moment later. Because the radio wave takes a round trip, the product of the length of time between the signals sent and received, and the speed of the wave are twice the distance between the radar and the object.

(Writing 2W document 10)

It’s important to point out that Sarah’s grammar corrections were often ignored, and that she would reiterate these corrections on subsequent drafts of the assignments. For example, here are Sarah’s comments on the same paragraph of the second draft of the essay shown above (again, only article corrections are shown):

Sarah comment on Wallace essay:
Radar consists of a transmitter, a receiver and an antenna. To detect an object miles away, radio waves are generated by the transmitter and emitted by the antenna. When the radio wave hits an object, it be reflected and received by the antenna and consequently detected by the receiver. The returned signal is called "echo". The phenomenon of echo often happens around us. When one shouts into a well, the echo of his voice will come back a moment later. Because the radio wave takes a round trip, the product of the length of time between the signals sent and received and the speed of the radio wave are twice the distance between the radar and the object. Using this relation, we can calculate the distance between the radar and the object.

(Writing 2W, document 12)

Between the first and second drafts of this essay, three of Sarah’s eleven article corrections were heeded. This, however, did not deter her from continuing to make these corrections!
Summary of Winter Quarter Teacher’s Approach to Formal Grammar

Unlike Jen and Grace from the Fall quarter classes, Sarah was more consistent in her overt socialization of students into a more functional approach to texts. When formal grammar was discussed, it was most often in service of gaining more information or content from her students, thus reflecting a focus on the field/ideational aspects of a text, as discussed in Schleppegrell (2004). Sarah’s written comments on student papers, however, included a large number of formal grammatical corrections, including comments on such issues as article usage. In this way, she was more typical of the teachers discussed in Mohan and Lo (1985), Tait (1999), and Zhu (2004). In her interview, Sarah indicated that she did not make formal grammatical corrections on student essays until the later drafts; document evidence suggests the contrary. Like Jen and Grace, Sarah’s inexperience with teaching writing (and therefore lack of socialization into functional approaches to text) may have been a cause of her reliance on formal grammatical comments in her efforts to socialize her students into functional approaches to text. This inability to articulate a functional approach to academic writing will be further discussed in Chapter 12.

Spring Quarter, Writing 3 “This is not a proofreading session.”

Like the teachers from previous quarters, Jake also stated that he did not wish to focus on formal grammar. For example, he stated:

Jake: I mentioned this at the beginning of class and I’ll just reiterate here now at the end of the quarter that I’m grading you basically to see if you completed them. For those of you that have been completing critiques, I-I’m not going to grading it based on your grammar or you didn’t mention
This comment from Jake exemplifies his approach to grading the assignments for Writing 3; grammar was not a priority. The fact that he repeatedly mentions this in class – and acknowledges the repetition - also shows that focus on function rather than grammar was something that he expected of the students, as well.

In contrast to this professed desire not to focus on grammar are comments focused on formal grammatical terms and concepts that Jake made in classes. Of all of the teachers, he was perhaps the most technical in his class discussions of formal grammar. For example, in the second class, during a discussion of the critiques that students would be writing throughout the quarter, he made the following suggestion, preceded by a warning that he was “going to get into a grammar issue”:

Jake: When you write, it’s better to write and use the future conditional, say what they can do, you – it would be better for you to do this, than to say you should have done this, as if it’s something that’s in the past, they can’t improve.
(Writing 3, 31 March)

What makes this technical discussion of the future conditional tense even more striking is the statement made just (literally) seconds later that “This [a critique] is not a proofreading session” (Writing 3, 31 March). He goes on to explain that

Jake: It’s a good point that there might be more issues that maybe are more general or more important than did they use the when they shouldn’t have or that they missed a comma. You can note those things if you want when you’re going through, if you’re reading through a paper and it just really bothers you to see that there, you can make a note to
yourself. But when you’re writing your critiques, you don’t want to just write you should’ve had a comma here, you needed to begin your sentence with this type of transition. You wanna go beyond just grammar issues. (Writing 3, 31 March)

In this statement, Jake echoes Graces assertion that there are things “more important” than formal grammar, such as the field (ideational) function of a text. However, his referrals to formal grammar seem to be in contradiction of that assertion.

One of the ways that Jake covered formal grammar in his classes was to simply give resources to students, in order to follow up on written and oral comments. In the following example, he is showing students where to find a particular resource for assistance with article usage.

Jake: And then, I’ve posted something on articles, and it’s actually directly from the Writer’s Reference Book, I’m glad to see that someone bought it and is making use of it. Or at least bringing it to class if not making use of it. So this is a section who sh-weren’t able to get it, and…it talks about articles, and some of your critiques, I’ve..I’ve mentioned that you could use some-that you could use work with articles the, and a, this is a difficult part of the English language, so you have to…[mumbles] so, you can read through this. And then also, there’s a link on Blackboard that, you can find this on your own through the writer’s reference website but I posted the exact link that you can click on to go to and get specific practice with…ok, so you click on ESL Trouble Spots and then go to articles and they’ll give you practice with articles (Writing 3, 25 May).

In this comment, Jake not only references a specific formal grammatical point, but he also mentions that there are students who “could use work with articles” and gives them a resource for “specific practice.” Like Sarah’s corrections of article usage in Wallace’s essays, this attention to a particularly detailed aspect of formal grammar does
It also seems to be socializing students into a focus on formal grammar, despite comments to the contrary.

Like the experiences of the teachers in previous quarters, Jake did sometimes discuss grammar in class due to the specific request or comment of a student. For example, Jake requested that students focus specifically on the grammar of a sentence in a composition being reviewed, while incorporating a disclaimer about usually not focusing on grammar:

Jake: What could we do to this sentence as far as grammar and punctuation to make it correct?”

Student asks a question to clarify the meaning of the sentence.

Jake: Usually we don’t focus on grammar and punctuation in here but I was going to bring this sentence up for the vocabulary, but we’ll look at this.

Students ask author questions to clarify meaning

Jake explains that he’s bringing it up because it relates to a mention of articles made earlier, and then asks,

Jake: What is missing in this sentence? What needs to be changed?

Student makes a suggestion of rephrasing in order to say “requires a really good guess” instead of “requires really good guess”

Jake: What else, as far as punctuation?

Jake: “We have two independent clauses. So, “this method requires a really good guess” and then another one here “this does not really converge” so we need…

Student author suggests comma

Jake: either a comma, or a semi-colon or colon. So, one way that you could do it is to put a semi-colon here.

(Write 3, 24 May)

This discussion is interesting because it highlights both the teacher’s conflicting desires to not focus on grammar, but to discuss it when necessary, as well as the students’ readiness to discuss grammar. When Jake brings up the discussion of grammar, the
students immediately begin micromanaging a tiny portion of the text and discussing articles. Jake then turns the discussion to punctuation and independent clauses, and the students once again readily discuss these, as well. Thus, Jake gets to discuss grammar while maintaining that discussing grammar is not a priority, and the students seem only happy to comply, and add their own grammar discussion, as well. This also suggests that the teacher is not the only person who is lacking an alternative framework to formal grammar. Because the teacher is unable to articulate an alternative approach to texts, the students are not socialized into the specifics of functional grammar.

Therefore, classroom discussions of specific points are built upon the framework into which both the teacher and the students were previously socialized, namely formal grammar.

Jake’s written comments on student writing followed a pattern similar to his oral comments. Despite oral protestations against a focus on grammar in classes, comments on papers often included grammar corrections. Of the three writing instructors who provided written comments about formal grammar, Jake’s comments were by far the least directive and the most concerned with either clarifying meaning (field) or making writing more stylistically appealing (tenor and mode). Sometimes, this resulted in vague, generic comments, such as the following comments from a sample critique. It’s important to note that this was a critique that Jake wrote as a model for his students to follow:

Jake-written sample critique:
The grammar of this essay was correct and information was easy to understand. (Writing 3, document 3)
At other times, Jake’s comments, while they used formal grammatical terms, were much more specific to the texts, and directed at improving the cohesion and meaning (mode and field). For example, in comments to Chris, Jake wrote the following:

Jake comments to Chris:

**PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY**
- Experienced in adhesion of rubber to metal.
- Familiar with surface engineering of metals and development of thin films to enhance corrosion resistance and adhesion.
- Possess knowledge in metal etching and polymer characterization techniques.
- Hands on experience in using Taguchi matrix for optimizing process parameters.
- Was a successful sales representative at Dell Inc.

These comments, while heavily reliant on formal grammatical terms, reflect an effort on Jake's part to socialize Chris into paying attention to internal textual reference created through parallelism. Thus, using formal grammatical terms, Jake is socializing Chris into the functional concept of mode.

*Summary of Spring Quarter Teacher’s Approach to Formal Grammar*

While the preceding examples make it clear that Jake did focus on formal grammar to some extent, despite assertions that he would not, it’s important to point out that both his oral and written comments on student writing were not solely focused on grammar. Many of Jake’s comments about formal grammar were focused on solving problems of logical cohesion (mode) and the ideational aspects of texts (field), as suggested by previous research (Lemke, 1990; Mohan & Lo, 1985; Schleppegrell, 2004). Like teachers from the previous quarters, Jake’s comments about formal grammar were also directed toward helping students create a stance toward their audiences and the
information in the text (tenor). Thus, also similar to the other teachers, Jake seemed to be using formal grammatical concepts to discuss functional aspects of the text. This once again suggests that, while Jake wanted to socialize students into a functional approach to text, he lacked the ability to articulate this approach, and therefore used the language into which he had been previously socialized.

Discussion of Teachers’ Negotiations of Formal vs. Functional Grammar

Throughout the year, teachers began their classes disavowing a focus on formal grammatical aspects of a text. While they orally repeated their intentions not to focus on formal grammar throughout their respective quarters of teaching, classroom transcripts and document data show that they did, in fact, discuss formal grammar. These discussions were not the focus of the classes, and they were not representative of the majority of the class discussions or written comments on student writing; however, they did represent a significant enough proportion of class discussions and written comments to be remarkable.

Many of the discussions of formal grammatical aspects of student texts were centered on socializing students into addressing functional aspects of texts, including the field/ideational aspect of texts (specifically in regard to grammatically correct terminology) or mode/textual aspects (specifically in regard to clause constructions and “consistency”). These foci are consistent with the findings of Lemke (1990), Mohan and Lo (1985), and Schleppegrell (2004), Tait (1999), and Zhu (2004). The fact that teachers used the language of formal grammar in their efforts to socialize student into functional grammar suggests two things: first, that the teachers were aware that a focus on formal
grammar was not sufficient for socializing students into American academic writing; and second, that the teachers themselves had not been socialized into functional grammatical approaches to a text, and therefore lacked the ability to clearly articulate this alternative approach to their students. The relative inexperience of the teachers resulted in their own lack of socialization into functional grammar, which in turn resulted in their inability to explicitly socialize their students into functional grammar. The implications of this will be discussed further discussed in Chapter 12.

As mentioned throughout this chapter, as the teachers realized that formal grammar was not a sufficient framework for socializing students into academic writing, they began socializing them into a functional approach to texts. However, because they themselves had not been socialized into SFL, the teachers were limited in their ability to articulate this functional approach. The following chapter will discuss how students were socialized into altering their approach to formal grammar through classroom interactions. In other words, the chapter will discuss how the interactions within a particular cultural setting (Lantolf & Appel, 1994) served to apprentice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and socialize students into a particular, socioculturally mediated approach to writing.
Chapter 5 – Students’ Socialization into “Formal Grammar is not Enough”

The present chapter will provide an overview of students’ attitudes toward formal grammar, as well as an examination of whether or not the attention they paid to grammar changed as a result of socialization interactions within the sociocultural context of their writing classes. As discussed in Chapter 4, teacher participants’ efforts to socialize students into the idea that “formal grammar is not enough” were inconsistent in that the teachers seemed to be contradictory in the attention they paid to formal grammar. These inconsistencies most likely occurred because of the teachers’ inexperience in teaching writing. Because of their inexperience, the teachers themselves, while they were aware that formal grammar was not sufficient for addressing academic writing, were unable to articulate another approach. The teachers themselves had not been socialized into functional grammar, and therefore lacked the vocabulary and framework necessary to articulate an alternative to formal grammar.

The teachers often did try to socialize students into attention to functional aspects of texts such as field, tenor and mode. They did this using the vocabulary and framework of formal grammar, which led to the apparent inconsistencies in their socialization attempts. This chapter will examine how the teacher’s efforts at socializing students into attention to functional grammar, inconsistent though they were, manifested in students’ classroom interactions, interview responses, and written texts.
Students began the Fall quarter believing that formal grammatical accuracy was an important part of clarity in academic writing. As Jeff explained in his Fall quarter interview:

Jeff: We learn English, usually - I asked also Korean student - Most of us learn English more than ten years. But we usually focus on the grammar, words, how to spelling and no make mistake.
(Jeff interview, 3 November)

Kyle also explained that his previous focus when studying English had been formal grammar:

Kyle: When I started English, I only read the book, memorize the grammar and the words.
(Kyle interview, 10 November)

Chris, too, stated that his previous experience with English, and more specifically academic writing, had been focused on formal grammar and “fluency.”

Chris: I did so much writing in high school, but I never concentrated on this. It was mostly on grammar and creativity. And how fluent it was.
(Chris interview, 10 November)

This focus on formal grammar is what students brought with them to their respective Fall quarter writing classes. What this means is that the students had been previously socialized into an isolated language skills approach to learning, as discussed in Beckett (1999, 2002, 2005). Because the students had learned English in classes that focused on isolated skills, they brought with them an assumption into which they had been socialized: that the best way to learn a language is to focus on specific skills, such as
grammar, reading, listening, etc. The results of this previous socialization are reflected in students’ classroom interactions, as well as in their answer to the interview question of what they hoped to gain from the class. For example, Wallace indicated that he hoped to “learn the rules to write” (Wallace interview, 9 November). Emily explained that she signed up for Writing 1 because she felt that her grades on subject-area assignments were being lowered because of poor grammar:

Emily: The trouble is you don’t match the grammar or English type, no way to get high grade. It’s a little bit tough.
(Emily interview, 9 November)

The students’ belief that a focus on the isolated skill of formal grammar would improve their writing was also reflected in their classroom comments and interactions. As discussed in Chapter 4, the grammar discussions that occurred in class were sometimes instigated by the students themselves. This occurred especially at the beginning of the quarter, and then became less common as the quarter progressed, especially in students who took Writing 1 (all of the students except for Chris). This indicates that, despite the previously discussed inconsistencies on the part of the teachers, the students were socialized into a new, more functional approach to writing. It’s important to note that this diminishment in focus on grammar was most likely also related to the organization of the Writing 1 class, which began with some grammar lessons and then shifted focus to textual organization.

Regardless of the class, students did tend to comment on grammar more frequently at the beginning of the quarter. For example, during the first peer review sessions, students discussed and asked questions about formal grammar, despite the
teacher’s suggestion that they focus on content. When discussing the usefulness of peer review, Emily commented that having someone read her paper was helpful for catching grammar mistakes:

Emily: Whenever I check my writing by my English tutor, I didn't even think about that was wrong, even though it was -how do you say - wrong grammar. And so, help me see (Writing 1, 7 October)

During the peer review itself, Wallace raised a question about the correctness of his review partner’s use of “firstly”:


Also during this peer review, Emily raised a question about verb tenses, referring back to a previous class which had included a verb tense review:

Emily: One question. We have learned perfect present tense sentence before
Jen: present perfect tense?
Emily: present perfect tense
Jen: In this class?
Emily: In this class
Jen: W-yeah, we reviewed uh huh the tenses, present perfect, and...
Emily: And before I...what is the big difference, like, uh, he [2 seconds] uh, he have lived in United States for six months and he have lived in united states for 6 months before he came to UC. (Writing 1, 7 October)

In the case of this particular class meeting, which occurred very early in the academic year, the students were clearly still manifesting their previous socialization into the
isolated-skills approach to language learning. Thus, they believed that a focus on formal grammar was an important part of academic writing. This is related not only to their previous experiences, but also, as indicated by Emily’s question about verb tenses, to the fact that the class itself focused on grammar. In this case, the inability of the teacher (Jen) to articulate an alternative approach to formal grammar caused the students to cling to their previously instilled beliefs about formal grammar and learning academic writing.

In their desire to focus on formal grammar because of their previous socialization into language learning through isolated skills, the students are similar to those discussed in previous studies (Flowerdew, 1999b; Gosden, 1996; Tait, 1999). However, the previous studies did not focus on students’ classroom interactions. In this study, the grammatical focus on the class was pushed forward in part by the students. When formal grammar was discussed in class, students often asked related questions about other grammatical features, thus creating a sort of domino effect of formal grammatical discussions. For example, during a Writing 1 class that was focused on discussing coordinating conjunctions, Kyle initiated the following 2 discussions, one about commas, and the other about article use:

Kyle: Oh, uh, I have a question.
Jen: Mmmhmm.
Kyle: Uh, When you cancel number 2, would the 2\textsuperscript{nd} clause-2\textsuperscript{nd} what is that?
Jen: next summer
Kyle: yeah, dependent, it uh, 2\textsuperscript{nd}? That is a clause?
[Jmutters] It has a subject plus verb.
Jen: mmmhmm
Kyle: so, I think uh-is-is it necessary to use a comma here?
(Writing 1, 14 October)
Kyle: Uh [muttering] I learned that uh when I use the- musical instrument, use like play the piano, play the guitar.
Jen: Without the “s”, you mean?
Kyle: No. The.
Jen: The.
Kyle: The.
Jen: OK. Ok.
Kyle: play ***** but play the piano.

(Writing 1, 14 October)

Through these questions from Kyle, the discussion of coordinating conjunctions becomes a discussion about coordinating conjunctions, commas, and article use before musical instruments. After covering musical instruments, the discussion of article use extends to use before names of sports, usage requirements by various English exams, and usage requirements of the Praxis exam. This is a reflection of students’ previous socialization into isolated language skills as a way to learn language having lingering influence over the students’ beliefs.

During the Writing 2 class, Chris also began the quarter with a desire to focus on formal grammar, despite Grace’s suggestions to the contrary. This is another example of previous language socialization influencing a student’s approach to writing, as discussed in Beckett (1999, 2001, 2002, 2005). For example, toward the beginning of the quarter, during discussions of student works, Chris commented that “some sentences read wrong” (Writing 2, 18 October). A week later, he made two suggestions related to preposition use: the first was that a student change the phrase “building damaged with water” to “building damaged by water.” The second was that the phrase “exposure of bioaerosols” should be changed to “exposure to bioaerosols” (Writing 2, 25 October,
emphasis added to show differences). Unlike Grace’s (previously discussed) comments, which were focused on the field metafunction, but expressed in formal grammatical terms, Chris’s comments here are focused on formal grammar alone.

Despite their early focus on formal grammar, students’ attitudes toward it did begin to change during the course of the Fall quarter. As the quarter progressed, fewer and fewer comments during peer review were about grammar. During their interviews toward the end of the quarter, students indicated that, while a focus on grammar is helpful, other aspects of the text should also be addressed. This shows students changed their beliefs as they were socialized into the teachers’ more functional approach to texts. For example, Emily noted that sometimes people still couldn’t understand her writing, even when the grammar was fine:

Emily: We have to make sentence to make the English tutor or professor understood, but sometimes it not hard. I don’t know why they cannot understand [laughs]
Andrea: [laughs, mock yelling] It’s perfectly clear!
Emily: [laughing] For me! There’s no grammar mistake or no spelling mistake, why you cannot? And anyway, that’s why we need to read more and write more.
(Emily interview, 9 November)

Jeff also indicated that, while the coverage of grammar was helpful to him, he also found that there was something more required in order for a writer to be successful. He acknowledged that some texts, even if the grammar is quite good, are hard to understand or follow:

Jeff: Maybe to native speaker when read it...even for me, I’m not native speaker, somehow I read it, feel like the sentence is jumping, down, [sound effects and hand gestures] like....Uncomfortable but I don’t know why. I don’t know
why. Yeah. I don’t know why it’s looks like weird, a little bit weird. But you cannot hardly find a grammar mistake. It’s a little bit higher than only structure. (Jeff interview, 3 November)

Like the teachers, and despite their beginning to realize that improving their knowledge of formal grammar would not automatically improve their writing, the students still felt ambivalent about the necessity of being taught formal grammar. They ended the quarter still believing that formal grammar was something that was important and that they’d like to improve in. Commenting on Grace’s direction that students not focus on grammar during class, Chris said the following:

Chris: I disagree with her on that. Spelling should be given a lot of importance, because if it’s not spelled properly, you just don’t feel like reading it. You lose the flow of reading. (Chris interview, 10 November)

Wallace, Jeff, Emily, and Kyle all also indicated that they thought that they needed to improve their grammar in order to improve their writing. During the last day of Writing 1, which was structured as a sort of “debriefing session,” Emily remarked that she felt that people still had trouble understanding her writing:

Emily: Like in grammar, it might not correct. It’s correct. But they cannot understand. Here I have a problem. At the end of this class, I still have some problems. So, even though you teach the grammar, it don’t help that much. (Writing 1, 2 December)

Jeff, speaking for himself and Kyle, agreed with Emily’s assertion that the students still needed help in improving their grammar:

Jeff: as Emily said, we don’t think we improve a lot in grammar. I mean, our problem, because we should have a solid basis for that. But somehow we don’t have the detailed check.
Andrea: so, you still want to improve your grammar?
[Kyle and Jeff both say yes.]
(Writing 1, 2 December)

Kyle explained this further, stating that he lacked confidence in his grammar:

Kyle: Sometimes I’m not confident about the grammar when
I’m writing. Is this right or wrong? I don’t know.
(Writing 1, 2 December)

These comments from students show that they still hold with the isolated skills
approach to language learning into which they were previously socialized. However,
they are beginning to change their unalloyed belief in the power of formal grammatical
instruction to improve their writing. Rather than discussing formal grammar as a
method of addressing specific mechanical details of a text (as the individuals in
Flowerdew, 1999b and Gosden, 1996), the students in this study have begun discussing
grammar as something that influences “the flow of reading” (Chris interview, 10
November). Thus, the teachers’ efforts to socialize students away from a focus solely on
formal grammatical concepts and toward a more functional approach seem to be taking
effect, despite the teachers’ inconsistencies and the students’ previous socialization.

Summary of Fall Quarter Student Attention to Formal Grammar

Students began the quarter with a belief that formal grammatical correctness
dictated the effectiveness of a text. Many of the students were taking writing classes in
order to improve their grammar, and thus were very focused on grammar during the
early classes of the quarter. As the quarter progressed, the students began to be
socialized by their teachers into the belief that formal grammar was not a “magic bullet”
for academic writing, and that other aspects of a text contributed to its effectiveness. By
the end of the quarter, students still believed that formal grammar was an important
component of academic writing, but they no longer believed that it was the most
important.

Winter quarter, Writing 2 “They helped to make more writing a bit more structured.”

During the Winter quarter, students mentioned and focused on grammar very
little. As was discussed in the previous chapter, Sarah was very directive in her written
comments about grammar, but her classroom discussions were focused more on
socializing students into a focus on textual organization. These socialization efforts
were reflected in students’ comments about what they learned during the quarter.
When asked during their end-of-quarter interviews what they “got out of” the writing
class, the students all talked about organization. None of the students who attended the
winter class (Wallace, Jeff, and Chris) mentioned grammar during their interviews. The
following are the students’ answers to the question of what they learned from the class:

Chris: They helped to make more writing a bit more structured and then brought it in from previous class.
(Chris interview, 17 March)

Wallace: About structure, and the…it’s very helpful for my reading. Now, when I begin to read some papers, and I read
the structure first, and then just read it. It’s very good.
(Wallace interview, 17 March)

Jeff: In this class, academic writing class, I think we learned the discourse techniques [several unintelligible words] basic
skills of how to organize an essay, and how to learn documentation?
(Jeff interview, 17 March)
These comments make it clear that the students’ foci shifted between the end of fall and the end of winter quarter. They finished the fall quarter realizing that formal grammar was not a panacea to academic writing problems, but still feeling strongly that writing classes should have some focus on formal grammatical elements. At the end of winter quarter, there is no mention of formal grammar. It seems that the teachers’ efforts at socializing the students into a functional approach to texts have been effective.

Students’ classroom interactions also included much less mention of grammar. This could be partly due to the fact that there was no focus on formal grammar built in to the class curriculum (as there was in the early weeks of Writing 1); however, Chris was not in the Writing 1 class and therefore the difference in format between his Fall and Winter quarter classes was not noticeably different, yet he, too did not discuss formal grammar during Winter quarter classes. There were two very minor references to formal grammar by students at the beginning of the quarter. The first was by Wallace, and was also mentioned in Chapter 4. When Sarah mentioned the consistency of a text, Wallace referenced verb tense consistency:

Sarah: What do I mean when I say consistent. What do you think I mean?
Wallace: consistent
Sarah: Consistent.
Wallace: tense
(Writing 2, 20 January)

As previously discussed, Sarah was referencing the consistency of content, but Wallace was focused on the formal grammatical consistency of verb tense consistency. While he did mention the issue of tense, the discussion of that aspect of the text concluded with
that mention. Wallace did not push the reference to formal grammar, as sometimes
occurred in the Fall quarter classes.

The other reference to formal grammar during Winter quarter occurred in a
discussion of an article which Sarah had students read as a model of academic writing.
The article posits a connection between vocabulary development and formal
grammatical accuracy. Thus, there was a discussion of grammar as a topic, rather than
as a focus. Both Wallace and Jeff gave their opinions of the article’s thesis:

   Jeff: From my own experience, I didn’t feel like vocabulary
       was helpful

   Wallace: To understand grammar, you must learn
          vocabulary well.
       (Writing 2, 3 February)

Again, like Wallace’s previous one-word comment about a formal grammatical aspect
of a text, these one-sentence comments are the extent of Wallace and Jeff’s discussions
of formal grammar. This shows that the students have begun to move away from their
previous focus on isolated skills, and, even if they have not yet become complete
converts to the functional approach, they are willing to let go of a formal grammatical
discussion.

   An interesting aspect of the students’ lack of focus on formal grammatical
aspects of texts is the fact that they also partially ignored grammatical corrections made
to their own writing. As discussed in Chapter 4, Sarah provided a fairly large number of
grammatical corrections to their texts, and the level of attention paid to those
corrections was rather low. For example, in the four drafts of an essay Wallace wrote for
the class, the following sentence of the essay went through the following comment and (non) correction cycle:

Draft 1: Radar consists of transmitter, receiver, and antenna.
Draft 2: Radar consists of transmitter, receiver, and antenna.
Draft 3: Radar consists of transmitter, receiver, and antenna.
Draft 4: Radar consists of a transmitter, a receiver, and an antenna.

Despite the repeated corrections from Sarah, the insertion of articles did not occur until the fourth draft of the essay.

Jeff also had a tendency to ignore formal grammatical corrections. The following are examples of a phrase from the four drafts of his essay, with Sarah’s comments:

Draft 1: using steel structure will save a lot of money of foundation.
Draft 2: using steel structure will save a lot of money of foundation.
Draft 3: using steel structure will save a lot of money on the construction of foundations.
Draft 4: using steel structure will save a lot of money on the construction of foundations.

What is interesting about these changes is that, instead of following the first correction he’s given, Jeff rewrites the phrase to refer to construction of foundations, thus necessitating a negotiation of another formal grammatical construct. It should be noted, though, that, like Wallace, Jeff’s final draft does include the correction. The interesting point is the fact that it took three rewrites with comments for both students to make these very minor corrections. It is possible that the students, in their movement from one socially-mediated belief system (isolated skills language learning) to another
(functional language learning), the students are also negotiating their socialization with
the teacher, as discussed in Beckett (1999) and Beckett and Slater (2005).

Summary of Winter Quarter Student Attention to Formal Grammar

In general, student attention to grammar was largely diminished during the
Winter quarter. Students concluded the Winter quarter with no mention of formal
grammar. In-class comments and discussions of formal grammar were minimal, as was
the attention to grammatical corrections made by Sarah to their writing assignments.
This shift in attention was most likely due to the continuing efforts of the teachers to
socialize students into a focus on more functional aspects of a text, and students’
response to those socialization efforts.

Spring Quarter, Writing 3 “I should use some connecting words, I guess.”

There was a slight resurgence of student attention to grammar during the Spring
quarter, in that students did occasionally remark on the formal grammatical aspects of
the texts being reviewed. Because of the workshop format of the class, even one or two
comments about formal grammar, in the scope of 30-minute discussions and one- to
two-page critiques, were insignificant. Of the students, only Wallace and Chris made
any comments about grammar. Wallace’s comments were confined to a critique of
students using passive voice in their writing. In a written critique, Wallace wrote the
following:

Wallace written comments: Second, I do not know why the
author uses passive voice for all of his sentences in the
abstract part. It is very strange for me.
(Writing 3, document 27)
He also commented in class on a student’s use of passive voice, saying:

    Wallace: You always use passive voice. Every sentence is passive voice. It’s, it’s, I don’t know if this type is right.
    (Writing 3, 26 April)

When another student pointed out that engineering papers generally use the passive voice, Wallace responded:

    Wallace: I agree that most sentences are passive voice. I think if add some active voice to this abstract it will…say I think.
    (Writing 2, 26 April)

These comments, which represent the whole Wallace’s comments about formal grammar, were a very minor part of the discussion. They also represent a shift in his approach to formal grammar which reflects the way the teachers have socialized students. Like the teachers, Wallace’s comments about the texts are couched in formal grammatical terms, but they are in fact addressing a functional aspect of the text (in this case, tenor)

    In contrast to Wallace’s mention of a specific point, Chris provided written comments on grammar that were, at best, vague. On two separate occasions, he provided the following written comment:

    Chris written comments:
    U’r writing was to the point and structured
    (Writing 3, document 17)

Given the fact that the remainder of the critique was taken up with comments about the organization of the papers and the connections between ideas, it can be deduced that these comments are directed to sentence structure.
The most specific comment that Chris made about formal grammar was in regard to a sentence from one of his own papers. The sentence in question, which was being discussed during a workshop, is “Carbon fiber reinforced copper matrix composite is considered a promising material used with electrical contact devices such as electrical brush sink owing to its high electrical conductivity and thermal conductivity and in space applications because of excellent wear resistance and high specific strength.” About the sentence, Chris said the following:

Chris: If you read it very fast it does make sense, but when you read it, I think I should use some connecting words I guess, after, like, “electrical contact devices” and the brush thing.
(Writing 3, 24 May)

Even this comment, though, is fairly vague when compared to the directive comments about preposition use that Chris made during the Fall quarter. They also reflect a shift in focus from formal grammar as a way to correct a text to formal grammar as a way to clarify the meaning of a text. This shift once again is reflective of the teachers’ focus, and their efforts to socialize students into a focus on meaning rather than form.

Summary of Spring Quarter Student Attention to Formal Grammar

Students made some specific mention of formal grammatical elements of a text, specifically the use of passive voice and efficient sentence structures. These comments were, in the scope of the discussions and comments that occurred in the quarter, minimal.
Discussion of Student Socialization into “Formal Grammar is not Enough”

Students began the academic year with a strong belief in the relationship between formal grammatical accuracy and good academic writing. This is indicative of previous socialization into the isolated language skills approach to learning, as discussed in Beckett (1999, 2002, 2005). This is also in keeping with previous studies’ descriptions of what students tend to focus on when writing (especially Flowerdew, 1999b; Gosden, 1996).

During the Fall quarter, students showed the influence of their previous socialization into reliance on isolated skills instruction when they repeatedly requested that teachers address formal grammatical aspects of the text. At the end of Fall quarter, the students acknowledged that other aspects of academic writing were also important to successful texts, but they asserted that formal grammatical accuracy was also important. This shows that teachers’ efforts to socialize the students into a different, functional approach to texts, however inconsistent, did have some effect on the students.

During Winter quarter, the students’ focus on formal grammar diminished dramatically. None of the students mentioned grammar in their interviews, and focused instead on organization. This reflects the focus of the teacher on socializing students into a focus on mode, even though the socialization was couched in the language of formal grammar. During in-class discussions, references to formal grammar were general and infrequent, and they focused on functional aspects of texts. Students repeatedly ignored the very specific grammar corrections made by Sarah. In this, they
may have been negotiating their socialization with the teacher, as discussed in Beckett (1999, 2002, 2005), Beckett and Mohan (2003) and Beckett and Slater (2005). As discussed in these works, students sometimes have difficulty understanding and negotiating teachers’ efforts to socialize them to a more functional approach to language. This difficulty manifests in small acts of resistance, such as the students here ignoring specific grammar corrections.

By Spring quarter, students were definitely not focused on formal grammar. While they did make some comments, both written and oral, about grammar, they were solely focused on the functional, meaning-making aspect of the text. This shows a definite shift from the beginning of the year. This also differentiates the students from the students and scholars of previous research (Flowerdew, 1999b; Gosden, 1996; Tait, 1999), who were found to focus on surface-level, formal grammatical aspects of a text.

It’s important to note that the majority of the language socialization discussed in this and the previous chapter occurred during classroom discussions. As Vygotskian sociocultural theory posits, the sociocultural setting is the primary element influencing student socialization (Lantolf & Appel, 1994, p. 5). The fact that so many of the socialization interactions and negotiations occurred in the classroom points to the importance of including the classroom in language socialization research whenever possible. It also reinforces the previously-discussed flaw of previous research, which neglected to include classroom observations.

There are two possible reasons for the diminishment of student attention to formal grammar. The first is that, through the teachers’ efforts to socialize them to
functional aspects of writing, the students came to believe in the importance of these other aspects to successful writing. In other words, the socialization was effective. The other possibility is that students simply stopped mentioning formal grammar because of teachers’ reluctance to discuss it. In other words, the socialization was not effective, but the students were too respectful to point this out. Given the fact that, as shown in Chapter 4, teachers did discuss formal grammar – they used formal grammatical terms and frameworks to discuss functional grammatical constructs – the former seems more likely than the latter. So, because teachers socialized students into alternative foci to formal grammar, students were able to shift their attention to functional aspects of texts. These foci – textual organization, or mode; attitudinal stance, or tenor; and ideational stance, or field, will be discussed in the following chapters.
Chapter 6 – How Teachers Socialized Students into Attention to Mode

Mode refers to the symbolic organization of the text, or what role language is playing in placing the text in a particular context. This is often contributed to by functional grammatical moves such as nominalization or use of polysemous verbs in order to create abstraction, or using traditional nouns and active verbs to make a text more concrete (Halliday, 1993). The teachers in this study were particularly concerned with socializing their students into attention to mode, as suggested by previous research (Mohan & Lo, 1985; Schleppegrell, 2004). Given that they had not been socialized into functional grammar, the teachers relied upon a hodgepodge of frameworks and terminologies in their socialization efforts. A good number of the comments from teachers about academic writing were focused around what Jen broadly described as “rhetorical kind of issues” (Jen interview, 2 December). These issues included matters of textual cohesion, specifically internal reference (Schleppegrell, 2004), and the logical linking of ideas through given-new construction (Halliday and Martin, 1993). Many of the discussions about organization involved metaphors for both the three-part essay form (introduction, body, conclusion) and transitional phrases.

Each teacher had a slightly different approach to discussions of and comments about structure, and each teacher used different metaphors to frame discussions. The following sections, arranged by class, will present the differences and similarities of teacher approaches to socializing their students into attention to mode.
Fall quarter, Writing 1 “It was more, I think, important to address the rhetorical kind of issues”

During class discussions, many of Jen’s comments were directed at socializing students into attention to the logical organization of ideas into an accepted academic form. For example, during the first peer review, she told students to focus on organization and support:

Jen: Ok, so, when you read your classmate's paragraph, just kinda keep the things in mind that we talked about topic sentence, supporting points for the topic sentence, do all of the sentences relate to the topic sentence, do they, does it fit in one paragraph, ok? (Writing 1, 7 October)

These instructions are indicative of the fact that, early in the quarter, Jen began to make a concerted effort to socialize students into a focus on mode, or the organizational aspects of the text. In her interview, Jen indicated that this effort was intentional, and based on her informal assessment of the students’ need to learn what she referred to as “rhetorical kind of issues”:

Jen: I think as the quarter progressed, [4 seconds] their needs became clearer and clearer. At least to me. And it was more, I think, important to address the rhetorical kind of issues. (Jen interview 2 December)

Jen also stated that she felt like she dictated the focus of the class based on what she perceived as the most urgent student needs. When she was asked if she felt that the content of the course was useful and/or helpful to students, she replied

Jen: I think the content of this course is good, and like I said that was something that I think we sort of negotiated between students and me as the course went along, kind of nudging the focus toward, you know, these are the issues, you guys don’t know how to…this is…you have to have a
topic sentence. And you have to, it has to go like this. Otherwise it’s just not going to make much sense.
(Jen interview 2 December)

It is clear from the above comments that Jen felt that the proper organization and connection of ideas was the most important part of helping students improve their academic writing. Therefore, despite her lack of formal training in/socialization into functional approaches to texts, Jen has identified the metafunction of mode as something into which students need to be socialized. Because of the lack of formal training, Jen refers to mode using more formal grammatical constructs such as “rhetorical issues” and “topic sentences.”

This belief is reflected both in comments made in class as well as in her written comments. For example, in the previously mentioned first peer review, the majority of the peer review session was spent on the relationship of sentences to the topic sentence, or, in functional grammatical terms, textual cohesion (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Lemke, 1990; Schleppegrell, 2004). Two paragraphs were reviewed by the whole class, and for each one Jen asked about the topic sentence and the relationship of the other sentences to the topic sentence:

Jen: and what is the topic sentence?
Jeff: topic sentence is [NP student] is a very has a very success-[NP student] has a very successful academic life. I mean all this paragraph is something about um her study and uh, uh her relationship with future job, you know.
Jen: Uh, huh, exactly, so is After graduation she hopes to work in Spain as a graphic designer does that relate to her academic life?
(Writing 1, 7 October)
In both of these examples, Jen is directing students to a discussion of the textual cohesion of the paragraphs being reviewed. The first is a more direct discussion of the relationship between one idea and the topic as stated in the topic sentence; the second is a solicitation of a student’s previous suggestion to change a topic sentence in order to better reflect the information in the remainder of the paragraph. In both cases, though, the focus of the discussion is on the relationship between and organization of ideas, and specifically the given-new construction (Halliday and Martin, 1993).

This focus on organization and structuring of ideas continued throughout the quarter. As students moved from writing paragraphs to essays, Jen continued to socialize them into the importance of textual organization and cohesion. For example, during the first peer review of an essay, Jen reiterated with students the necessary organization of an academic essay:

Jen: I’ve got up here on the board the things that we really want to comment on as we look at these multi-paragraph essays. Introduction, which should introduce the topic and have a clear thesis statement. The body paragraphs which should have topic sentences and which should include the support—which should be the supporting details – which
should be related to the thesis statement. And in the conclusion we should have a restatement or summary of the thesis.

(Writing 1, 18 November)

While the scope of writing has changed, the focus on pieces of the text relating to one another has remained.

One of the tools which Jen used to describe the organizational aspects of a text was metaphors, especially in her written comments. This is most likely a result of her previously-discussed lack of socialization into functional grammar, and therefore her lack of knowledge of functional vocabulary such as “given-new” or “theme-rheme,” let alone “nominalization” or “grammatical metaphor” (Halliday and Martin, 1993; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Schleppegrell, 2004). She did sometimes first introduce those metaphors in class, as in the following example, in which the guidelines for the second peer review were written on the board, and included the following references not only to the idea of connections between sentences and the topic sentence, but also a metaphor of paragraph structure as a hamburger:

Jen writing on board:
Topic sentence
Connected, everything fits together
Hamburger model:
Topic sentence = top bun
Meat = supporting sentences
Bottom bun = concluding sentences

(Writing 1, 21 October)
During her interview, Jen indicated that she believed that the metaphors she
used for writing were helpful to students. In particular, she mentioned that Wallace
found the “fleshing out” metaphor helpful:

Jen: The analogy I think he liked because he used it a couple
times after we talked about it. Is how the introduction
should sort or give the skeleton, and the body paragraphs
should put the flesh on the bones. And, he tended to like
that.
(Jen interview, 2 December)

Jen often used organic growth metaphors or building metaphors to socialize
students into attention to textual organization and cohesion, including ideas such as
“fleshing out,” “tying in or together,” and “fitting in” such as the following comment
made to Wallace:

Jen feedback to Wallace (as note at end of essay): The
examples you provide for each of your supporting points
really helps “put the flesh on the bones”!
(Writing 1, document 21)

Within this metaphor, Jen’s comments focused on being sure that all sentences were
logically related to a clearly stated main topic, or the “given-new” construction. This
focus is indicated in the evaluation criteria for the first assignment, which included the
following criteria:

Evaluation Criteria for Assignment 1:
Is the topic sentence clearly stated?
Do all the sentences relate to the topic sentence?
(Writing 1, document 1)

Throughout the quarter, the written comments Jen made on student writing followed
the criteria introduced with the first writing assignment, and frequently focused on the
logical relationship between ideas as a way to “build upon” or “flesh out” the main idea.

The following are some examples of written comments by Jen:

Jen feedback to Emily:
Title: New Life of Yang’s Family in America
Your title is good, too, but it may make an even better topic sentence. Your paragraph tells about the family’s new life more than it tells about the reason they came (to study abroad). Your last sentence ties the paragraph together well.
(Writing 1, document 3)

In these comments, Jen is focused on the larger issue of the idea or ideas contained in the (grammatically flawed) title, and on how to carry the ideas through the paper. She also refers to the last sentence providing the internal textual cohesion (Schleppegrell, 2004) to which she often refers without using the actual term.

Jen feedback to Kyle:
To make this paragraph more cohesive, you could expand your topic sentence so that it includes Jeff’s new experiences. Now, the sentence about his experience attending a church would fit better into the paragraph.
(Writing 1, document 4)

Again, Jen is focused here on the logical connection of ideas as providing cohesion for the text. In this case, she refers to “fit” of ideas, but the emphasis still remains on the connection between ideas.

Jen feedback to Emily:
I’d like you to think about making your topic sentence a little more interesting and reflective of what you want to say about your mother….I think you need to look at what you have written and decide what the main idea is….I understand your points to be: 1) she has been very dedicated to you, 2) she has been supportive when you’ve faced difficulties in your life, 3) she’s taught you to be diligent and
hardworking, and 4) she continues to be a support to you (when you face difficulties and as a mother yourself) even though you are far away. Bingo! That last point sounds like a good topic sentence and fits with the main idea of your paragraph.

(Writing 1, document 6)

Here, Jen has provided very specific feedback to Emily about how to frame the points of her essay within a larger idea. In this way, she is socializing Emily into theme-rheme or given-new textual organization. Also, by delineating the ideas of Emily’s paragraph, rather than the sentences, Jen is providing an explicit example of writing focused on connections between ideas.

Jen provided similar feedback regarding delineation of ideas and general-specific organization to Wallace:

Jen feedback to Wallace:
Since this is the main idea of your paragraph you should mention this in the topic sentence. The support for this idea is that she showed you what love is through her dedication to her family in the following ways: 1) by caring for her sisters when she was a young girl, 2) by supporting her husband, and 3) by caring for her children. However, without first mentioning anything about dedication, these three points lack cohesion….The information you’ve presented is all there; you just need to be more explicit and direct. Remember, tell me what you are going to say, then say it, and then sum it up.

(Writing 1, document 8)

In this case, in contrast to the previous example of feedback to Emily, Jen is focused on the supporting details of the paragraph (rheme) rather than the overarching idea (theme). She also introduces Wallace to the cliché of academic writing: “tell me what you are going to say, then say it, and then sum it up.” Also, it’s interesting to note that
Jen exhorts Wallace to be “explicit and direct,” which is also an oddly inexplicit way to describe accepted standards of organization of academic writing.

Another way that Jen socialized students into the theme/rheme organization of texts was by referring to topic sentences/thesis statements and controlling ideas. She both directly and indirectly suggests that the topic sentence or thesis statement can function as the embodiment of theme, and the controlling ideas introduce rheme. In the following comments to Emily, she gives direction about the topic sentence, but not an explanation of why it’s important or how it can improve the organization of a piece of writing:

Jen feedback to Emily:
What I want to point out is the continuing problem of the topic sentence. Remember, in your topic sentence you should not only identify the topic but state the controlling idea as well.
(Writing 1, document 9)

It seems that the implied criticism here is that Emily has not forecast the controlling idea – the overall feeling or attitude toward the topic – in her topic sentence. Jen’s comment about this reflects her effort to socialize students into the importance of textual organization as moving from general to specific information.

Another example of Jen’s comments about topic sentences/thesis statements is in her comments to Wallace in which she focuses on the specificity of information in topic sentences, the placement of that information at the beginning of the text, and the type of information included in conclusions.
Jen feedback to Wallace:
You allude to that fact, but your thesis would be much stronger if you come out and say it directly. For example, “Our apartment is a very good (though remember what I said about the adjective “good” – it doesn’t really tell me much, be more specific, descriptive) place for us to live, study, and have fun together. Moreover, it has become a real home for us, with all the comforts that a home provides.”
(Writing 1, document 10)

Jen feedback to Wallace (in form of “track changes”):
This is a new idea. How does it relate to aggressive behavior?
(Writing 1, document 21)

Jen feedback to Wallace (in form of “track changes”):
I like the way your conclusion appeals to the reader and to the future. I’d like to see a little bit more of a summary of your main points here, though.
(Writing 1, document 21)

These three comments indicate Jen’s implicit instructions that information at the beginning of a text should be direct, specific and descriptive (sample one); that new information must be related to previously introduced information (sample two); and that information in the conclusion of an essay must include a summary of main points (sample three). Jen was clearly attempting to socialize students into the theme-rheme organization of ideas, and textual cohesion, but often related that information in pieces, in comments on different assignments, throughout the quarter.

Another metaphor which Jen used to frame her comments about mode was that of focus. Many of her comments exhorted students to either maintain or find focus in their ideas; in other words, to make sure that all of the ideas related to one another. The following are some examples of comments by Jen which mention focus, with the word
itself emphasized in order to draw attention to its repetition. It is also interesting to note that Jen has provided examples of sentences that will focus more exclusively on the topic at hand; thus, she has not only provided a metaphor for the organization, but also an example of what the metaphor looks like in actuality:

Jen feedback to Kyle:
I don’t think that your topic sentence completely expresses the main idea of your paragraph. Your paragraph seems to focus on more than your mother’s dedication to her family. You talk a lot about the difficulties that she had to overcome in her life. Perhaps your topic sentence should include this. For example, “Despite a life of difficulties and hardships, my mother dedicated her whole life to her family.” Or, if you would rather focus on her endless love (which you mention once and then refer to again in your concluding sentence), the topic sentence could be a variation of your sentence “Even though her life was hard, my mother’s love for her children was endless.”
(Writing 1, document 5)

In this example, focus is presented as a choice between two possible topics: difficulties or endless love; not both. For each focus, Jen provides a sample sentence, providing a model of textual cohesion. This is an explicit attempt at socializing Kyle into a focus on mode. In comments to Jeff, Jen provides a similar model of a sentence that will provide textual cohesion. She also enumerates Jeff’s examples, in a way “proving” that his focus is effective because she can easily do so:

Jen feedback to Jeff:
I like that you chose to focus your topic sentence on how she has been a good teacher for you. You mention three examples of what she has taught you: 1) to be tolerant, 2) to be confident, and 3) to be diligent. These things are clear, but there are a couple of sentences that don’t seem to be connected to these three points….Finally, the last thing I want to mention is that your concluding sentence should
refer back to the main idea (your mother as your teacher).
For example, “Because she has taught me so many important things, my mother is the one who has influenced me the most.”
(Writing 1, document 7)

This enumeration of ideas was also used in comments to Wallace, but instead of as positive reinforcement of existing focus, as a model of how to focus a topic through direct reference:

Jen feedback to Wallace:
Your topic sentence is good; however your supporting sentences seem to lack some focus. You never really directly refer to the point that Dr. R. Helped you to build confidence in your studies. I understand that together, all of the supporting sentences refer to how he helped you to do this, but I think that you could focus these points a little more. Perhaps you could first focus on the ways in which he was a good teacher. For example, 1) his lectures were clear and well—organized, 2) he was patient 3) his assignments were challenging and his exams were fair. Then you could focus on how those things affected you. For example, 1) you felt challenged and fulfilled 2) you learned by practice. Finally, your conclusion should tie these points together and relate back to your topic sentence, mentioning how these things built your confidence or how this confidence has helped you succeed.
(Writing 1, document 12)

In this example, the emphasis of focus as an organizational tool is modeled in the neat enumeration of examples, and then instructions on how to maintain textual cohesion through internal reference (Halliday & Martin, 1993; Schleppegrell, 2004) in the conclusion.
As mentioned previously, Grace’s comments on student papers were given orally, in class. By far, the overwhelming focus of her Writing 2 class was logical connection of ideas, specifically transitions and linking. Early in the quarter, Grace reminded students to look at the coherence of a text:

Grace: I’d like you to…in our class let’s not discuss the grammar and vocabulary choices. These you can always find out later on, but first of all about the structure and logic. Right? Of the essay. How united the essay is, how coherent it is. Whether all the information belongs to the content, right? And whether the essay has a flow, so reads it smoothly so we understand the connections between ideas. And do we have these connections, right, is one of the questions we’re gonna answer.
(Writing 2, 18 October)

While she made this comment later in the quarter, the following is an excellent example of Grace’s overall attitude toward academic writing:

Grace: Any paper can be better organized.
(Writing 2, 8 November)

This idea of connections, of coherent, smooth structure, was carried throughout the quarter as student essays were discussed. During the first two weeks of class, Grace laid the groundwork for socializing students into a focus on logical connections by assigning exercises and distributing handouts based on transitions and cohesion. The following are excerpts from handouts used during the first two weeks of class by Grace to socialize students into attention to transitions, logical connections, and cohesion.

First is an excerpt from a handout entitled “Coherence between paragraphs – linking ideas between one paragraph and the next.” The handout contains six examples
of transitional sentences. The first example includes an entire paragraph and the first sentence of a second paragraph. The latter is intended to be the example of linking ideas together:

This rise may seem insignificant, but global warming is nonetheless predicted to disastrously and irrevocably disrupt the earth’s eco-systems.
(Fall Writing 2 document 1)

This sentence moves from the previously given information of rising concentrations of carbon dioxide, introduced earlier in the paragraph, to the effect of global warming on the earth’s eco-systems. The nominalization of “rising concentrations of carbon dioxide” into “this” in order to refer to the previous/given/theme information is an important part of this linking.

The remaining sample sentences from the same handout as the previous example are standalone sentences, without the context of paragraphs. There are five more sentences on the handout, including the following:

II. Although once considered merely as an extravagance, e-commerce has recently gained a reputation for its convenience.

And

VI. Unfortunately, many of these who protest nuclear energy turn to coal as an alternative source of fuel.
(Fall Writing 2, document 1)

Both of these sentences provide examples of theme-rheme or given-new organization. The first example is clearly linking the idea of e-commerce as an extravagance to the idea of e-commerce as convenient; the second connects an aversion to nuclear energy to
a rise in the use of coal. The handouts do not have any mention of nominalization, theme-rheme or given-new constructions, but they do mention transitions. This is another example of how socialization into functional aspects of texts (in this case, the metafunction of mode) occurred without the specific vocabulary attached to the functional approach.

There are two seemingly conflicting phenomena occurring in this handout. The first is a very strong focus on mode/textual cohesion through internal textual reference. The second is that the examples on this handout are almost completely divorced of context. As mentioned previously, the first example does include one of the two paragraphs that are being connected, but not the full text. The second through sixth examples are sentences only, divorced of any context other than “examples of linking ideas together from one paragraph to the next.” The topics covered by the sample sentences are also varied - global warming, e-commerce, etymology of the word polka, brain damage, effects of alcohol on the brain, and fuel sources. The decontextualized aspect of the handout seems to be in direct opposition to its seemingly functional focus. This again speaks to the lack of socialization of the teachers into functional grammar, and the resulting difficulty with which they are faced while attempting to socialize students into it. The teachers lack the ability to clearly and consistently articulate a functional approach, and therefore are relying upon inconsistent resources.

Another handout used in the same week of class was a guideline for revising, which provided a hierarchical guide for revision. First is “revising ideas”; second is “revising for essay structure”; third is “revising for correctness (grammar, word choice,
This hierarchy is interesting because it reflects Grace’s stated priorities for the class, and also because, while the priorities reflect a functional approach to texts, the categories are not reflective of SFL. This once again points to the teacher’s own lack of socialization into the specifics of a functional approach to texts. The first category, as designated by Grace, is “ideas” but includes the following questions:

4. Does the paper show unity? Do all the ideas relate clearly to each other?
5. Is the paper coherent? Do ideas flow logically and smoothly from one to the other?

(Writing 2 Fall, document 5)

Even though these questions relate to unity, relationship between ideas, coherence, and logical flow, they are listed under the category of ideas. In contrast to that, in the category of structure, the following question appears:

1. Does the conclusion complete the ideas established and supported in the paper?

(Writing 2 Fall, document 5)

Categorizations aside, the most important aspect of this handout is its focus on the textual cohesion: connections between ideas, logical flow, and unity. This was a focus that Grace established early and maintained throughout the quarter. Another example of this focus being established early is the handout and homework that students were given during week two of the quarter. The handout consists of four paragraphs: paragraphs one and two were their homework. The first paragraph, they were to revise by adding transitions for unity/coherence. The second paragraph, they were to revise
for unity/coherence by taking out superfluous transitions. The third and fourth
paragraphs were to serve as a model for the exercises; paragraph four is a revision of
paragraph three, with added transitions and combined sentences. Following are those
sample paragraphs, with the changes highlighted:

Paragraph 3: Lasers have found widespread application in medicine. Lasers play an important role in the treatment of eye disease and the prevention of blindness. The eye is ideally suited for laser surgery. Most of the eye tissue is transparent. The frequency and focus of the laser beam can be adjusted according to the absorption of the tissue. The beam 'cuts' inside the eye with minimal damage to the surrounding tissue — even the tissue between the laser and the incision. Lasers are effective in treating some causes of blindness. Other treatments are not. The interaction between laser light and eye tissue is not fully understood.

Paragraph 4: Lasers have found widespread application in medicine. For example, they play an important role in the treatment of eye disease and the prevention of blindness. The eye is ideally suited for laser surgery because most of the eye tissue is transparent. Because of this transparency, the frequency and focus of the laser beam can be adjusted according to the absorption of the tissue so that the beam 'cuts' inside the eye with minimal damage to the surrounding tissue — even the tissue between the laser and the incision. Lasers are also more effective than other methods in treating some causes of blindness. However, the interaction between laser light and eye tissue is not fully understood.

The changes between these paragraphs serve not only as an example of Grace’s efforts
to socialize students into attention to mode, but also as an implicit instruction to
students regarding condensing information into denser clause structures, as is
described in Schleppegrell (2004). Thus, the internal references within the text are not
only created by the added transitional phrases (for example, however, because of this),
but also through the sentence combining, such as changing the two very short sentences “Lasers are effective in treating some causes of blindness. Other treatments are not.” into “Lasers are also more effective than other methods in treating some causes of blindness.” This creates a stronger internal reference through the creation of a comparative clause.

In order to help the student complete the previously discussed exercise, as well as to encourage continued work throughout the quarter on textual cohesion, Grace distributed a handout of transitional expressions (Writing 2 Fall, document 11), divided by the categories of addition (furthermore, besides), comparison and contrast (although, in spite of, whereas), cause and effect (due to, therefore, thus), illustration (for example, for instance), and intensification or clarification (in fact, in particular, clearly). This reflects Grace’s focus on socializing students into attention to mode by discussing textual cohesion through logical connections created through linking and transitions.

In addition to her early focus on transitions and logical linking in order to create textual cohesion through handouts and exercises, Grace continued to socialize students into attention to mode throughout the quarter in her class comments on student essays. Without a doubt, the overwhelming majority of her class comments were focused on the internal references and textual organization. In this manner, Grace was similar to the teachers observed by Mohan and Lo (1985) and Schleppegrell (2004).

The following are some examples of in-class comments made by Grace in reference to textual cohesion. Like Jen’s comments in Writing 1, many of Grace’s comments are reliant on metaphors for the logical connections. This is most likely a
result of Grace’s own lack of socialization into functional grammar, and her resulting lack of vocabulary and framework for discussing SFL. Unlike Jen, whose metaphors tended to be organic (fleshing out, making hamburgers, focusing), Grace’s metaphors tended to be inorganic building metaphors involving bridges, platforms, and blocks. For example, during the same day of class, Grace used both platform and bridge metaphors for organization:

Grace: So, we established what we call the platform, right, that looks back to the previous paragraph and helps us introduce new information that’s supposed to be developed in the next, in the following paragraph.
(Writing 2, 11 October)

This first example uses the platform metaphor as a way to describe the theme-rheme or given-new organizational pattern. Later in the class, Grace also referenced building blocks as a metaphor for organization:

Grace: Uh, let me. Umm, visualize it for you, right? Remember blocks, right? I-I-uh drew blocks last time to stand for paragraphs. Let me do it again. [pause as G writes on board]
Grace: ‘kay, and introduction-each block stands for a paragraph, right? There we have introduction, uh, conclusion, concluding paragraph, and in between the body. So, here, right, I have three body paragraphs.
(Writing 2, 11 October)

Here again, a building metaphor is used to represent the connections between pieces of text. What is interesting about these building metaphors is that they work quite literally within the idea of structure, while also creating a sense of the permanence and concreteness of a particular text. Additionally, these metaphors represent a necessity for deliberateness on the part of the author.
Another metaphor which Grace employed to reinforce the importance of textual cohesion was one of bridges. In the following example, she incorporates a bridge metaphor and a platform metaphor in critiquing a student work as lacking in textual cohesion:

Grace: There is no bridge. There is nothing that could help us relate what is going to happen in this paragraph with the first paragraph. And that was the problem with the first paragraph as well, which is to say there is no platform – it’s not tied to the introduction. And it’s also a problem with the third paragraph, which is not tied to the second paragraph. There’s no looking back to the previous paragraph. I think that as a result of this I had trouble understanding – I mean, I had no trouble following the order, it’s clear: infectious diseases, building-related symptom, and hypersensitivity diseases. But I had a problem with establishing a difference between them. And maybe this platform could help me with that.”
(Writing 2, 25 October)

Again, the focus of this comment is on the connection of ideas within the text, or internal reference. The use of bridges and platforms as metaphors for the structure of the text reinforces the necessity of “strength” (in this case, logical strength) within a text. Later in the quarter, Grace reiterated the bridge and platform metaphor in comments about an essay by Chris:

Grace: In this way, every other paragraph needs to be linked. Right, hooked in to the previous paragraph. So then we need to have is what we’ve called a platform, or a bridge. Something expands this paragraph with the previous paragraph. And, this bridge, like this platform, needs to be placed at the beginning of the next paragraph. Right? That’s what we have always said about this.
(Writing 2, 8 November)
Not only does this example reiterate Grace’s dedication to the textual cohesion through bridges and platforms, but it also includes a reference by her to the fact that this has been a constant theme in her class: “That’s what we have always said about this.”

Even when not referencing building metaphors, the Writing 2 class was largely dedicated to discussions of the logical connections between ideas within student essays. The following two examples, while they do not include building metaphors, are also clearly directed at the idea of textual cohesion:

Grace: From my point of view, this is not a good introduction paragraph. It has two parts that don’t seem connected, not linked. There’s no central theme, no indication of central theme…Perhaps you could tie the themes together, weave everything into tradition, into the notion of reputation.
(Writing 2, 18 October)

Grace: So, choose a topic, narrow it down so it’s a very specific topic, write the thesis statement. Write it down, ok? Think of the main ideas, right, you could develop in the body, paragraph by paragraph, umm, related to the thesis statement, to the topic. But just think of them, ok, so, my first idea will be this, second this, the third will be…Two will be enough, right? Umm, and then think of an idea for the closing paragraph.
(Writing 2, 11 October)

This last example also includes a reference to narrowing topics, which will be discussed in reference to field in chapter 10.

Summary of Fall Quarter Teachers’ Approaches to Socializing Students into Attention to Mode

The previous examples show that, despite not using the vocabulary of SFL, Jen and Grace did choose to focus comments to students on the organization of texts, rather
than on formal grammatical aspects. In particular, they socialized students into given-
new organization (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Halliday & Martin, 1993) and internal
textual cohesion (Schleppegrell, 2004). However, the teachers did not use the specific
vocabulary of SFL in their socialization efforts, but instead relied upon metaphors of
building, construction, and creation. These metaphors speak to the teacher’s own lack of
socialization into SFL, which, coupled with their desire to socialize students into
functional approaches to texts, necessitated some creativity on the teachers’ parts as
they tried to refer to phenomena for which they had not been taught the proper
terminology.

This focus on organization is similar to the findings of previous research (Kaplan
and Baldauf, 2005; Mohan & Lo, 1985; Parks, 2001; Schleppegrell, 2004; Tait, 1999; Zhu,
2004) that many teachers and journal editors tend to focus on organizational aspects of
texts. What is interesting about these findings is that they point to teachers focusing on
specific functional aspects of a text, such as internal references and theme-rheme
construction, rather than simply “organization.” This suggests that even teachers who
have not been socialized into SFL are able to grasp the utility of a functional approach
to academic writing.

Writing 2, Winter Quarter. “Keep it logical”

As discussed in Chapter 4, Sarah’s comments tended to be more directive and specific
than the other teacher’s. While she did make more formal grammatical comments than
other teachers, she was also concerned with textual cohesion. In her interview, she
explained that she felt that organization was one of the biggest problems with the
student essays in her class:

Sarah: one of their biggest problems was lack of
organization. And lack of parallelism? I don’t even know if
that’s what you call it in writing, but basically saying I’m
going to talk about abc and then talking about bca…which
should be common sense, in my mind. You know, you
mention this first, talk about it first. Keep it logical. When
they didn’t even know how to do that, I think those classes
help in getting that organized for them.
(Sarah interview 5 April)

This comment is also interesting because, in addition to indicating that organization
was a prioritized problem in her class, Sarah also indicates that she lacks the discipline-
specific vocabulary to discuss mode: “I don’t even know if that’s what you call it in
writing.”

At the beginning of the quarter, Sarah began by discussing textual cohesion in
terms of connections to thesis statements (similar to Jen’s discussion of topic sentences
and theses during Fall quarter):

Sarah: You need to make sense, you need to connect to your
thesis, definitely.
(Writing 2, 13 January).

Sarah also used the skeleton reference that Jen used for organization and textual
cohesion. For example, in a discussion of a student paragraph which is being shown to
the entire class as an example of good organization, Sarah said the following:

Sarah: If you can think of this as a very basic skeleton for
writing especially position essays, ok, like I believe this
because blah blah blah, or this is my favorite, this is my least
favorite. This is a good model. Ok? It’s very simple, it’s very
organized, it’s very clear, it doesn’t jump around, ok, and it
stays consistent which is really good.
(Writing 2, 20 January)

These comments indicate the basic criteria for good organization, as well as putting
forth the idea of structure as a “skeleton”: simple, organized, clear, and consistent.
These criteria are consistent with Lemke’s (1990) functional description of the implied
rules of spoken science (p. 133).

Later in the same class, during a discussion of a sample essay, the idea of
consistency came up again. Sarah asked students what feedback they would give to the
author of the essay (who happens to be me). The students said that the essay was not
good because it was confusing, and Sarah indicated that they needed to be more specific
in their description:

Sarah: ok. What’s confusing. Give good feedback
NP student answers that introduction and body are not consistent
Sarah: very good. Not consistent.
Sarah: Good. You could just say that. And then give an
example. For example, you started talking about how to use
the IPA, but then you focused on disadvantages of the IPA.
And that’s why I’m not understanding what this essay is
about. Ok?
(Writing 2, 20 January)

Through this discussion, students are socialized into the ideas of skeletons and
consistency as marks of organization. These ideas continue to be used throughout class
discussions and teacher comments. For example, Sarah used the skeleton of a fish as a
metaphor for the structure of an essay:

Sarah: Imagine this is a fish. Ok?....And so you have this
whole fish. It’s got the head, ok. And it’s got the tail. Your
intro and your conclusion, and then it’s got the body.
[drawing on board]. Oh, it looks like
Andrea: a rocket
Sarah: No, it’s like a sparrow
[laughs]
Sarah: Ok, so that’s a fish, alright. Anyway, I’m not good at
drawing. So this is your fish. What we’re doing here is we’re
taking it, we’re putting it on a plate, we’re pressing it on its
back, ok, preparing it. And we open it in half, and we look.
where are the bones. We find every single bone that makes
this fish. And the meat are your arguments, are your
examples. Alright. I don’t like this idea. But the idea of the
skeleton inside is your basic intro main body conclusion, and
how that works, ok, how the bones are connected to create
this perfect little fish. Is what we need to know. So, if you
were god and you were making a fish how would you do it?
(Writing 2, 3 February)

This comment is particularly interesting in light of Jen’s metaphor of organization as
“fleshing out” information; Sarah does not like the idea of meat as the arguments.

Despite this disagreement, both teachers used the idea of skeletons as providing the
structural base for textual cohesion.

Sarah also had a slightly different take on the necessity for mode, and specifically
internal textual cohesion and the given-new construction, than did Jen or Grace. While
she acknowledged that the logical connection of ideas is important, one explanation that
she offered for the necessity of textual cohesion was that of convenience to the reader:

Sarah: Think of it this way. A teacher, or professor, that has
to read 30 papers, wants to focus on the content. Right? I
want to know what you have to say about this. I shouldn’t
have to worry about the structure. So everyone’s structure
should be the same, and from there, the idea is, what are you
saying within that structure. And that’s why the structure is
more or less set. Intro, body, conclusion. Everyone. Do the
same thing. And that way I’m not worried about how you
wrote it, I’m worried about what you wrote. Ok? That’s academic writing.
(Writing 2, 20 January)

This attention to the relationship between the reader and writer will be discussed later in the chapter with relation to teachers’ treatment of tenor, but it is interesting to point out Sarah’s slightly different approach to socializing students into the importance of mode by tying it to the interpersonal metafunction (tenor).

Like Grace, Sarah also gave handouts to students in order to socialize them into issues of textual cohesion. She used fewer handouts than Grace, and did not dedicate as much time to discussion of them, which was indicative of the differences in priorities between the two teachers. Even though she didn’t spend as much class time on the handouts, the content of the handouts is important to mention. Two handouts were distributed; the first was entitled “Seven Steps for Writing an Academic Paper;” the second was a printout from the Purdue Online Writing Lab about higher-order concerns (HOCs) and lower-order concerns (LOCs). The former includes instructions for ensuring textual cohesion, over three pages of steps and lists. The following is an excerpt, formatted to preserve the organization of the handout itself:

Step 5a (Make explicit how pieces fit together; how the paragraphs are related to each other and to the thesis)

Think
• What is the logical relationship between the divisions/paragraphs in the paper?

Write
• To each t.s. [topic sentence], add a “reminder of the thesis” That is: Add a word or phrase (often the same language used in the thesis) to remind the reader of the central “claim.” In other words, remind the reader
that the paragraph is helping to “prove” the thesis’ claim.

Handwritten notes from Sarah: **Cohesion** can be illustrated w/ KNOWN-NEW contract (focus is on new). Taking idea you ended w/ & starting new sentence w/ old (known) info.

**Step 7**

- Have I expressed myself so the reader can see logical relationships? Do I need to hive [sic] him/her some help?

**Write**

- Add linking devices, transitions, pronouns, repeat words, use word substitutes. That is: Check each sentence to see it has some relation to the sentence preceding it; that it contains one or more references to what precedes it. Work you way back to check that each sentence has 3 or 4 things that specifically refer to the sentence before.

(Winter Writing 2, document 21)

This handout is interesting not only because of its repeated focus on logical connections between ideas, but also because its own organization is someone prohibitive to efficient use. Additionally, Sarah’s handwritten comment about cohesion and the known-new construction is an important reflection of her efforts to socialize students into mode, and her effort to adopt a consistent vocabulary, despite her own lack of socialization into the theory. It’s important to note, though, that despite the somewhat helpful information included in this handout, it was never referenced in the classes I observed.

The second handout was given to students as a guideline for peer reviews, and included the following:

When you are revising your papers, not every element of your work should have equal priority. The most important parts of your paper, often called ‘Higher Order Concerns (HOCs)’ are the ‘big picture’ elements such as
thesis or focus, audience and purpose, organization, and development. After you have addressed these important elements, you can then turn your attention to the ‘Lower Order Concerns (LOCs),’ such as sentence structure and grammar.

**Organization:**
- Does the paper progress in an organized, logical way?

(Winter Writing 2, document 30)

As mentioned previously, this handout was used as a guideline for peer review. While the combination of the explanation that students should focus on HOCs first, as well as the question about organization, does point to some focus on textual cohesion, the general terms such as “focus”, “organization”, and “big picture elements” are not specific to SFL. This again points to the teacher’s lack of socialization into SFL, and her resulting inability to articulate an appropriately consistent terminology.

Sarah’s comments on student work were often equally general when it came to textual cohesion. For example, she often commented on students’ “structures” as either “OK” or “great”.

Sarah comments to Wallace: I’ve corrected a lot of your grammar and wording, but the structure is OK.
(Winter Writing 2, document 10)

Sarah comments to Wallace: Great structure, transitions and balance of each of your arguments.
(Winter Writing 2, document 23)

Some comments also focused on the consistency of writing, thus reinforcing the class discussions about consistency in organization. These references were both explicit:

Sarah comment to Jeff: Jeff, your advantages section was much better that [sic] the disadvantages section! It stated clearly what it’s about, gave a statement and then an explanation and this was done consistently. The disadv. Section, though, did not
follow the same style. It also wasn’t as clear. The content was good, but you could’ve done a better job.
(Winter Writing 2, document 19)

and implicit:

Sarah comments to Wallace: Move to beginning of paragraph…. Good explanation from general to specific…. The first part (obj. detection) was very elaborate (which is good). Can you please elaborate equally on speed detection and mapping?
(Winter Writing 2, document 11)

While the word “consistency” is not actually mentioned in this previous comment, the call for consistency is implied in the request for equality of treatments of the topics of speed detection and mapping. This comment is also interesting because it is one of only two instances of Sarah referring to the given-new (although here it’s called general-specific) construction. The other is in the following comment to Jeff:

Sarah comment to Jeff: This might fit better in the beginning of this section. It’s general info re: recycling
(Winter Writing 2, document 26)

Sarah’s other comments about textual cohesion and organization were concerned with the ordering of topics and transitions. In SFL terms, these would be characterized as internal textual cohesion (Shleppegrell, 2004). For example, Sarah suggested to Jeff that he move one sentence: “Perhaps this would fit better in the beginning, when you compared the two” (Winter Writing 2, document 17). She also made a suggestion about paragraphing as a form of organization when she wrote the following:

Sarah comment to Jeff: Your 4 characteristics could each have their own paragraph w/ more examples, like you do in “ECONOMICAL”
(Winter Writing 2, document 28)
The component of textual cohesion to which Sarah dedicated the least attention was transitional expressions. When she did comment on them, most likely it was in the form of providing a transition, in addition to a comment, as in the case of the following.

Sarah comment to Jeff: Steel is also an ideal material according its elasticity because it behaves very closer to design assumptions than most materials. The properties of steel are uniform, which means they don't change appreciable with time as concrete structures do. (Winter Writing 2, document 22)

Summary of Winter Quarter Teacher’s Approach to Socializing Students into Attention to Mode

Sarah’s Writing 2 class showed a less consistent effort on her part to socialize students into attention to mode. This lack of consistency was especially reflected in inconsistent terminology used by Sarah. This is reflective of her own lack of socialization into SFL. Despite this, Sarah did resemble many of the teachers discussed in previous research (Kaplan and Baldauf, 2005; Mohan & Lo, 1985; Parks, 2001; Schleppegrell, 2004; Tait, 1999; Zhu, 2004) in that she did focus on “organization” in some general manner. Unlike the teachers discussed in previous research, Sarah did focus on specific aspects of mode, but she lacked the specific terminology to distinguish these. When she did discuss aspects of mode, Sarah focused on consistency in order of information presented, or the given-new construction (Halliday & Martin, 1993; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).
During his Spring quarter Writing 3 class, Jake placed a fairly strong emphasis on socializing students into attention to mode, specifically in the form of organization of ideas from general to specific (given-new), and use of transitions (internal textual cohesion). Discussions of the theme-rheme construction of texts were often framed around the idea of providing summaries and/or previews of general information and explicit, specific examples. During the second class meeting, Jake presented criteria for critiquing fellow students’ works to students, which included the following:

Jake: There’s questions you should ask as you look at the critique about the purpose, about the introductory paragraph, about arguments that are presented in the essay, what evidence they used, counterarguments, organization, and so on and so forth. (Writing 3, 31 March)

Even though “organization” is presented as one item within this list of things to look at, all of the items in this list are related to textual cohesion and mode. This is indicative of Jake’s intended focus for the class discussions.

Of all of the teachers who participated in the study, Jake is the only one who did not use metaphors to represent mode. Instead, he used the idea of “previewing” the general or given ideas on which the specifics of a text were built, as well as specific instructions to students regarding the relationships between ideas in their essays.

As mentioned previously, one focus of Jake’s socialization efforts regarding textual cohesion had to do with the given-new textual construction. Often, this took the
form of discussions of providing summaries of previous information, before giving
detailed examples of new information. For example, he suggested that one student
provide a generalization of experimental results before detailing them:

Jake: I wonder, would you be able to mention something
else there that briefly, because obviously this is a long report
– would you be able to mention something briefly about
generalizing the modifications and additions that you made?
(Writing 3, 24 May)

In a similar suggestion to summarize given information before presenting new, Jake
said the following:

Jake: You don’t need a title that says summary, but the idea
of summarizing what you’ve done in the paper is an
excellent idea for any work. Before you state your
conclusion, before you state what you’re going to do with
the information, remind your reader of where they were in
the beginning and where they’ve come. What was in the
body of the paper, and then draw your conclusion or state
your area of continued research in there.
(Writing 3, 24 May)

Even when the essay in question was not technical, Jake still made suggestions of how
to move from given to new information. The following comments made during an in-
class critique of a student’s narrative work are an example of this:

Jake: Ok, so she’s moving from something that’s a general
experience of a number of people to something that’s very
specific. She also describes it in much more detail, so [3
second pause] you might be able to [8 second pause, looking
through essay], ok, yeah. So after that sentence sort of where
[student] mentioned where you talk about how I wanted to
be a bird who has a free spirit and eat play and sleep, and
you talk about your mother. You might be able to transition
in there by saying while I wanted to be a free spirit, my
mother through her interesting activities developed a love
for reading in me. Something like that. (Writing 3, 26 April)
This comment is also interesting because it includes not only a discussion of given–new construction, but also the use of transitions to create logical connections between parts of the text, or internal textual cohesion. Transitions were another important topic of textual cohesion, exemplified by the following class comment on a student text by Jake, in which he references previous discussions of transitions as well as explaining how transitions help with the logical connections in a text:

Jake: We were talking about transitions in the last [10 second pause] ok, we were talking about transitions, and sometimes you can use them, and sometimes you can use them and sometimes you can show the change from what’s given to what’s new and you don’t need to. At this point you’re talking about something else, I don’t remember what it was, and then you’re going to talk about bonding. You state here there can be two main types of bonding at an interface, mechanical bonding and chemical bonding. I thought that sentence helped transition me as a reader from some of the other topics you were talking about to the next two that were coming. Without that sentence, I might not have seen the connection between what you’d said before and then mechanical bonding. So I thought it was good to tie the sentence there to transition me as a reader from what you talk about before to the new information
(Writing 3, 26 April)

In support of his class discussions about transitions, Jake gave students a handout entitled “Common Transition Words,” which presented 7 categories of transitional phrases: additional information (additionally, also, furthermore); time relationship or order (afterward, next, soon, finally); similarity/comparison (in the same way, likewise, similarly); contrast (conversely, on the other hand, despite this); example/illustration (as a matter of fact, to illustrate, specifically); explain/emphasize
Jake also referenced given-new organization and internal textual cohesion in his written comments on student work. For example, he wrote:

Jake-written sample critique: I liked the organization of this essay. In your introduction, you make your position clear. You also preview the two points that you discuss in the body of the essay, and by doing this you prepared me as a reader for what was to come. In all, while the introductory paragraph is not exactly snazzy, it accomplishes several things very well.

(Writing 3, document 4)

While the reference to given-new organization is not explicit here, Jake’s comment about “previewing” the two points is a compliment to the author for providing general information before moving to specific examples. The lack of explicitness of the comment speaks to Jake’s own lack of socialization into SFL, and therefore his lack of ability to articulate the importance of the given-new organization to the symbolic organization of the text.

Jake repeats this pattern of referring to given-new organization as involving previews in the following comment to Wallace:

Jake critique of Wallace writing: You’ve done a great job giving background for your paper but you could state the purpose in more detail. Also, previewing your main points, the direction of your paper, would help.

(Writing 3, document 24)

In the light of given-new organization, the previous comment could be confusing, in that it seems to compliment the author for providing the general background (given),
but also criticizes him for not previewing (or providing additional given information).

While the specifics may be confusing, the message of organization being important is clear. Later in the critique, Jake provides slightly clearer comments about the importance of given-new organization:

Jake critique of Wallace writing: The definitions and explanations of these terms would be more clear if you put the term first and then the explanation or example second. As it is, you explain the term and then give the technical name for it at the end of the sentence or in the next sentence as you do here.
(Writing 3, document 24)

While there is no specific mention of given or new, the intent of this comment, and its focus on the importance of the given-new organization to mode, is very clear. A clearer comment on this matter was provided to Chris, in the following:

Jake critique of Chris writing: You’ve done a good job of giving plenty of information about your subject area. However, it’s difficult to tell what information in the abstract is background info and what is part of your paper.
(Writing 3, document 22)

Previously, Jake had also written that the way the abstract was written “makes it sound like something that we already know about and not something new” (Writing 3, document 22). The clear references to “background” and “new” information makes the importance of given-new quite clear.

In addition to focusing on transitions and given-new organization of texts, Jake also provided comments about the necessity of providing specific examples of general concepts. Related to this was the idea of breaking ideas into small (specific) pieces. For example, in a class discussion of student writing, Jake spent a significant amount of
time (20 minutes) discussing how a student could break her essay into smaller paragraphs. The discussion included the following:

Jake: I thought that one paragraph that could have been split in two smaller ones was the first one, and then another one was the second one. In the first one,
[10 seconds]
This is what I was assuming. Your purpose was stated at the end of that first paragraph? Since I have faced the challenge of writing as an adult, and I fully understand how writing will affect my life. And I thought that was a good clear statement. And I wonder if it could be split up. At the sentence where you talk about you start off about moving to the united states from India and then some of the things that you liked to read in English, and then with the sentence even though I learned English in school I never developed an interest in the language because I did not use it on a regular basis. And then after that you start to talk about your school teachers, and for the next few sentences it’s mainly what you’re talking about is school teachers, and then you make some generalizations there at the end.
(Writing 3, 26 April)

This attention to the organization of ideas into individual paragraphs that can be related to each other was clearly important to Jake, as he dedicated a significant amount of class time to its discussion.

Another extension of the given-new organization was reflected in Jake’s comments that were precisely directed at the use of specific examples. In a sample critique, Jake wrote the following:

I liked the specific example that you gave for Ivan Sokolov’s family (p. 338, last paragraph). I thought that your other paragraphs would have been more interesting if you had a specific example for each of the other countries or areas of the world. (Writing 3, document 3)
In another sample critique, Jake made a similar comment, once again calling for specific examples to back up “sweeping generalizations”:

Jake-written sample critique: There are too many sweeping statements without supporting evidence. For example, you state that there is “a clear link between testosterone and aggressive behavior in animals and people,” but you don’t provide any evidence for this claim.

(Writing 3, document 2)

These are particularly interesting comments in light of the fact that they are in a sample critique, e.g., an example of the types of comments that students should be making about writing, and by extension, an endorsement of the types of writing students should be striving to produce. On the surface, this comment seems to address the content (or lack thereof) of the essay being critiqued, as it talks about a lack of evidence. This call for more evidence is in fact a critique of the mode of the text. It builds upon the assumption of the types of information that need to be reinforced with outside evidence, as well as the expectation that academic writing contain copious amounts of citations. It also models the given-new and general–specific organizational patterns of academic writing, as it moves from the assertion that there are “too many sweeping statements without supporting evidence” to the specific example of this in the essay. In this example, Jake is socializing his students into attention to mode by modeling it.

**Summary of Spring Quarter Teacher’s Approach to Socializing Students into Attention to Mode**

The previous examples show that textual organization and cohesion were an important topic of academic writing in Jake’s Writing 3 class. Like the other teacher participants in the study, Jake made a concerted effort to socialize students into
attention to mode. Also like the other teachers in the study, Jake had not been socialized into SFL himself, and therefore lacked the terminology to consistently socialize the students into mode. In his attention to organization as a whole, Jake resembles the teachers of previous research (Kaplan and Baldauf, 2005; Mohan & Lo, 1985; Parks, 2001; Schleppegrell, 2004; Tait, 1999; Zhu, 2004). Unlike those teachers, though, Jake addresses specific aspects of mode, such as the given-new construction of texts and internal textual cohesion.

Discussion of Teachers’ Focus on Mode

Each of the teacher participants made efforts to socialize students into focusing on mode/textual cohesion as an important aspect of effective academic writing. None of the teachers used SFL terms to refer to the organization; many of the organizational aspects to which they referred were functional in nature. This speaks to the teachers’ own lack of socialization into SFL, and their subsequent lack of ability to articulate the SFL approach to texts. Despite this lack of a grasp of technical terminology, the teachers in this study, with their focus on organization of a text, are similar to teachers and journal editors in previous studies (Kaplan & Baldauf, 2005; Mohan & Lo, 1985; Parks, 2001; Schleppegrell, 2004; Tait, 1999; Zhu, 2004). What sets the teacher participants of this study apart from the teachers and journal editors of previous studies is the attention to specific functional aspects of texts, such as the given-new construction and internal textual cohesion, as opposed to “conformity with text strategy” (Kaplan & Baldauf, 2005, p. 59) or simply “organization.”
Of note was the inconsistency between teachers in their approaches to matters of textual cohesion, the use of metaphors for organization, and the incorporation of handouts and exercises into the coverage of the subject. Previous research has not included an examination of these phenomena. Three of the four teachers used organic and inorganic building metaphors for textual organization; the fourth did not use metaphors, but often referenced the idea of “previewing.” Three of the teachers included class handouts with references to organization and transitions in their classes, and the specificity of the handouts themselves and references to them seemed to be directly related to the teachers’ specificity of reference to textual cohesion. Also of interest was Sarah’s explanation of textual cohesion and organization as something that was important for creating a relationship with the reader. The relationship between teachers’ approaches to and emphasis on mode and students’ attention to it will be discussed in the following chapter.
As discussed in Chapter 6, despite their own lack of formal socialization, the teachers tried to socialize their students into aspects of mode, or symbolic organization of the text. The teachers often used the umbrella terms of “organization” and “structure” for their discussions of the topic. As discussed in Chapter 5, the student participants did shift their focus from grammar to “organization” during the course of the Fall quarter. During their interviews, the students indicated this shift in focus and acknowledged it as a result of the teachers’ efforts. This indicates a negotiation of socialization consistent with Beckett (1999, 2002, 2005). Wallace, when asked what he learned in class during the quarter, replied simply, “I learned the structure” (Wallace interview, 9 November). Other students had more to say regarding mode. The following are interview excerpts in which the students discuss learning organization and/or structure:

Chris: The way I structure is not the level I expect it to be. I always knew there was room for improvement. So, I wanted to see what this class does different than what I knew. (Chris interview, 10 November)

Emily: While I’m taking this class, I realized, in the beginning I have to organize my thought, not just pushing, ‘I have to finish! Ok, I finished the first step, so let’s go to second step.’ That’s not it. I put my ideas into categories, and divide what is belonging to the categories, and then put by order, and then write down my final thought. The conclusion. These kind of organizations, I learned from this class. (Emily interview, 9 November)
Jeff: It’s helpful in the like topic sentence and how to list your points one by one. Make a relatively clear structure. Before that, I have this problem.  
(Jeff interview, 3 November)

Not all of the students who learned the expectations of symbolic organization agreed that it was the most interesting, efficient, or helpful way to organize a text. Kyle was an outspoken critic of the organization taught in Writing 1, as is shown in the following interview excerpt:

Kyle: The most important thing is the structure of the essay. Actually I think the structure I learned is not the best way, in my opinion. But I must follow the way that many of the people follow.

Andrea: Why don’t you think it’s the best way?

Kyle: The first thing is that, in the introduction, there are too many things in the introduction. Introduction should contain the focus, and introduces the problem, and also the introduction contains the answer! Introduction contains conclusion! Answer in the introduction! So and the body part is only the example. And conclusion is only the repetition. So, make me boring [laughs] to read the body and conclusion part.

Andrea: tell me what you think would be a better way to do it.

Kyle: I think the introduction should contain introduction only. And for the introduction must suggest a subject problem and it must raise the interesting. And then body part say that blah blah blah blah, and conclusion make some answer, but the answer must be I think something different than the reader expected.  
(Kyle interview, 10 November)

There are a few interesting things about Kyle’s critique. The first is that he begins his critique by stating that structure is the most important part of an essay; clear
evidence that Jen’s efforts to socialize students into this had some impact. His comments are also interesting because they represent a difference in focus on the part of himself and his teacher. This is indicative of the negotiations which previous research has indicated occur within the socialization process (Beckett, 1999, 2002, 2005; Beckett & Slater, 2005; Mohan & Beckett, 2003). Kyle was not fully convinced that Jen’s efforts to socialize him into attention to mode would be best for him, and therefore he openly questioned their efficacy.

Despite this dissenting opinion on how the organization of a text should be enacted, there was a general consensus of the students by the end of the quarter that organization is an important aspect of academic writing. This focus also became apparent in classroom interactions as well as written assignments. For example, Kyle, during a peer review, suggested a reorganization of his own text by order of importance:

Kyle: Well, don't you think it if ....what....if put this at the first line, and Jeff has been gaining certain experiences in America
NP student agrees
Kyle: And he came to America from China one year ago and he is now a graduate student at Midwest University. Yeah, that is, that is good idea.
NP student agrees
Kyle: Yeah, I know. [3 seconds] Actually, I...I thought about that, and, or, I chose that this is more important than this.
(Writing 1, 7 October)

Through this discussion, we see that Kyle puts deliberate thought into the organization of his texts, and that he was willing to discuss the possibility of reorganization with his
classmates. Thus, despite his belief that the textual organization taught in class was not
the best way to organize a text, he was at least partially socialized into recognizing the
importance of organization in general.

The other student participants also made comments about textual organization
during class discussions and peer reviews. These tended to occur later in the quarter, as
they became more socialized into the focus on mode. For example, Wallace commented
the following on an essay by Emily:

Wallace: She write a lot on body part. She ought to write
maybe more on introduction.
(Writing 1, 18 November)

During the same class, Emily asked a question about the structure of her own essay:

Emily: As a writer, do we have to follow the general idea, or
when we organize our writing, do you think that we should
follow general idea like you or Kyle said I have to put the
cafeteria things to relaxing time?
(Writing 1, 18 November)

This question by Emily shows attention to creating logical connections between ideas in
a piece of writing. In this case, the question is whether the idea of going to the café at
Barnes and Noble is more logical as “relaxing time,” or if it can be simply a general
reason for going to the bookstore. Thus, this discussion shows the beginning of Emily’s
socialization into the given-new organization. Here, she is negotiating moving from the
given idea “my family likes going to the café at Barnes and Noble” to providing new
information “for a relaxing time, my family likes to go to the café at Barnes and Noble.”

Chris, too, began discussing organizational aspects of writing more towards the
end of the quarter. As discussed previously (in Chapter 5), his comments at the
beginning of the quarter were almost exclusively lexicogrammatical. Later in the quarter, though, he began to discuss organization. For example, he asked Grace how a student might provide a “bridge” between two sub-topics of an essay. This is interesting because it also shows that Chris has not only been socialized to the idea of focusing on mode, but also to the specific metaphor/vocabulary which Grace used to refer to the topic:

Chris: What I mean is, how would you make a bridge between this building-related symptoms and the hypersensitivity diseases?
(Writing 2, 25 October)

Later in the quarter, Chris initiated a discussion with a student in which he suggested that further explanation of diseases caused by bioaerosols, as those specific examples would provide evidence of the gravity of the larger issue (Writing 2, 8 November). This discussion shows Chris socializing into an understanding of the usefulness of the given-new textual organization.

The student participants’ increasing focus on organization is also manifested in their writing assignments throughout the quarter. These changes become particularly apparent in a comparison of writing from the beginning and the end of the quarter. For example, Wallace’s first assignment for Writing 1 was the following paragraph

[Nancy’s Academic Life
Nancy has a very successful academic life. She is a senior student in Foreign University, [city name], [country name]. Her major is [major]. This summer, she came to Midwest University (MU) as an exchange student. She is in the college of [college name], which is very famous around the world.
]
She wants to improve not only her professional skills but also English level, so she took some English courses, too. She is going back to [country name as adjective] at the end of this quarter. When she is back, she is going to do intern in some company. After graduation, she hopes to work in Spain as a graphic designer.

(Writing 1, document 2)

This paragraph is typical of the other student-participants’ first paragraphs for Writing 1; it is a collection of sentences, all about the same subject (in this case, Nancy) with little internal cohesion. This paragraph moves from Wallace’s assessment of the subject’s academic life (“successful”), to an identification of her standing at a particular university, her major, her status as an exchange student at Midwest University, the college at which she’s studying, her decision to take English classes, a return to her home country, a future internship, and plans after graduation. Other than the fact that the sentences are all about the same person, they have nothing else providing unity.

In contrast to his first assignment is Wallace’s final essay. To show his efforts at organization and textual cohesion, the following are the first two paragraphs of the essay, along with the first sentence of the third paragraph [line underlined for reference]:

Studies show that violence in the media will attract audience, so media companies use more and more violence in their production. However, with the increase of violence in media, more and more crime, especially among younger people, has appeared. Why this happened? I think the reason is the early exposure to violence in the media, and this can lead to violence in society. Teenagers like watching TV or films, like playing video games and like surfing on the internet, so these three kinds of media are the main carriers of
First, people may be more aggressive if they watch too much violence on TV and in films when they are young. Recently, more and more family violence has happened. It may be because they watched too many violent TV programs or films when they are young. If a girl watches too many violent TV programs and movies, she will be more likely to throw things at her husband in the future; and if a boy grows up with violent TV programs and films, he will tend to be violent to his wife. It can affect any child from any family. People who watch too much of violence on TV are prone to use violence to solve conflicts and are less trusting of others. They think the whole world is hostile place to them.

Second, violence in video games is very popular among teenagers, and they may try to play the same game in the real world.

In this excerpt of Wallace’s final essay, we can see he has been socialized into paying attention to the mode metafunction of his texts. For example, he uses nominalization in line 6 (the underlined line): “Why this happened”? [emphasis added]. In this case, “this” refers to the claim stated in the previous sentence that “more and more crime, especially among younger people, has appeared.” He also carefully establishes the three topics he will discuss: TV and film; video games, and internet, and then enumerates those discussions with ordinal numbers. Additionally, his paragraphs move from given information “people may be more aggressive if they watch too much violence...” to specific, new information in the form of examples of girls and boys who watch too much TV becoming violent.
While there are still obvious problems with Wallace’s essay, it shows a vast improvement in symbolic organization when compared to his first written assignment for the same class. This is a reflection of the socialization efforts of Jen, and his socialization into attention to mode.

A similar socialization into attention to mode occurred in Chris’s writing, despite the fact that he was in a different class than the other students. As was discussed in Chapter 6, Grace’s Writing 2 class, in which Chris was enrolled during Fall quarter, also focused heavily on textual organization, specifically transitions and “linking.” The following example is the first two paragraphs of the first draft of an essay Chris submitted to class:

The polar bear or Ursus maritimus (sea bear) is found in the arctic [sic] regions of North America and Siberia. Polar bears are among the largest of the bear species. A fully gown [sic] male polar bear can grow as tall as 12 feet in height and weigh as much as 1700 pounds. Females are comparatively smaller. They grow anywhere to a height of 6-8 feet and might weigh anywhere between 200-700 pounds. Polar bears are perfectly adapted for survival in the arctic, where the winter temperature can sometimes be as low as -45°C. The polar bear has 2 layers of fur which serves a dual purpose. It not only provides camouflage but also the much need [sic] insulation. Beneath this double layer of fur the polar bear has 4-5 inches of blubber. It’s this blubber that helps the polar bear conserve most of its body warmth. Also the polar bear has characteristic small ears and tail which further helps it to conserve body heat. (Writing 2 Fall, document 6)

While the information in these two paragraphs is more technical than that of Wallace’s first assignment for Writing 1, the two first assignments share a similar problem. Like Wallace’s paragraph, Chris’s essay, as exemplified by the first two paragraphs, is also a
collection of sentences, all about the same topic, but with little internal cohesion. Chris’s essay does have a few examples of deictic expressions (“this double layer of fur,” “this blubber”), which lend some internal textual cohesion. Otherwise, there is a definite lack of symbolic organization to Chris’s essay.

The second draft of Chris’s essay, handed in two weeks after the first, shows marked improvements in his attention to mode. The following is the first two paragraphs of the essay, as revised by Chris [sentence underlined for reference]:

The polar bear or Ursus maritimus (sea bear) is found in the artic [sic] regions of North America and Siberia. Polar bears are among the largest of the bear species. A fully gown [sic] male polar bear can grow as tall as 12 feet in height and weigh as much as 1700 pounds. Females are comparatively smaller. They grow anywhere to a height of 6-8 feet and might weigh anywhere between 200-700 pounds. The polar bear has adapted to the tough artic [sic] conditions with its thick fur, excellent sensory perceptions and superb hunting skills.

In artic the winter temperature can sometimes be as low as -45°C. To help survive in this[sic] extreme conditions the present day polar bear has 2 layers of fur which serves a dual purpose. It not only provides camouflage but also the much need [sic] insulation. Beneath this double layer of fur the polar bear has 4-5 inches of blubber. It’s this blubber that helps the polar bear conserve most of its body warmth. Also the polar bear has characteristic small ears and tail which further helps it to conserve body heat.

(Writing 2 Fall, document 7)

The most noticeable change in this essay is the (underlined) last sentence of the first paragraph, which provides a “preview,” as Grace would call it, of topics to be covered by the essay (thick fur, excellent sensory perceptions, superb hunting skills). By providing those topics, as well as their relationship to the theme of the essay – polar
bear adaptation to tough arctic conditions – Chris has created much a more cohesive
text. This again shows evidence of a student being socialized into attention to mode.

Summary of Fall quarter, Writing 1 and 2 Student Attention to Mode

Students began the quarter focused more on formal grammatical elements of a
text, as discussed in Chapter 5. However, they acknowledged that they learned (or were
socialized into) “structure” or “organization” during the quarter. While all of the
students thought that this was helpful, not everyone thought that the organization
techniques taught were the most effective ones. Kyle, in particular, felt that the textual
organization as he learned it made for a boring text. This is an example of student
resistance to teacher’s socialization into functional language learning (Beckett, 1999,
2002, 2005; Beckett & Slater, 2005; Mohan & Beckett, 2003). Despite this, Kyle, like the
other student participants, finished the quarter stating that organization is one of the
most important aspects of academic writing. Thus, all of the students were socialized
into a belief that a focus on the mode metafunction of a text is important.

The students’ shift in focus from formal grammar to organization was reflected
in both their classroom discussions and their written assignments. An examination of
classroom comments shows that students discussed organization of both other
students’ and their own texts. These discussions were often centered around functional
grammatical concepts such as the given-new construction and/or internal textual
cohesion. Analysis of written classroom work shows that students moved from writing
that was a collection of sentences about the same topic to writing that included
nominalization, grammatical metaphor, and the given-new construction.
Winter Quarter, Writing 2 “I know the structure, so I know how to read things efficiently.

That’s good.”

Students continued to be socialized into a focus on mode throughout the Winter quarter. During their interviews, the students remarked upon how a focus on structure helped their writing, specifically in the area of moving from given/general to new/specific information. Chris remarked that, while he did not attend a lot of the Winter quarter classes, those that he did attend were, in his opinion, very helpful:

Chris: Those four classes were quite helpful. They helped to make more writing a bit more structured and then brought it in from previous class.

Andrea asks if when he says structure, he also means organization

Chris: Yes. What comes first, and how they move from broad to more specific.

(Chris interview, 17 March)

Chris continued his explanation of how the focus on organization was not only helpful, but was causing a change in his approach to writing, specifically the twice-monthly reports that he was required to write about his research:

Chris: I develop my ideas from, like the way it’s been taught here, very broad and then I get down to the specifics. It’s kind of become more and more ingrained in me now. So the more I write and the more I think about it, I see that change....I have the ideas before, but I just randomly put them. Sometimes it just didn’t make any sense. Now I kind of structure them, and lay my case in a logical way.

(Chris interview, 17 March)

This remark from Chris shows that the classes were causing a conscious shift in his approach to writing, that it was having an effect on his writing other than assignments for the class, and that Chris saw this shift as beneficial.
Wallace also remarked that he found the focus on organization in writing classes to be helpful in other areas of his studies. In his case, Wallace felt that learning organization helped him not only as a writer, but also improved his reading skills:

Wallace: About structure, and the…it’s very helpful for my reading. Now, when I begin to read some papers, and I read the structure first, and then just read it. It’s very good.

Andrea: it also lets you know when you have to pay attention, pay close attention to what you’re reading, and when you don’t really have to pay that much attention.

Wallace: Yeah. And, before, when I read, I read word by word from beginning to end. When I finished, I don’t know what the record response. But now I read structure and details. When I finish it, I have a very clear idea of how the paper goes.

Andrea reiterates: looking at structure and learning about structure of academic essays has helped him to read things, because he understands what the different parts are doing?

Wallace: I know the structure, so I know how to read things efficiently. That’s good.
(Wallace interview, 17 March)

Jeff also remarked that he found the focus on organization to be helpful to his reading skills. He discussed this in terms of the peer reviews done in the class, which were focused on “Higher Order Concerns” (see Chapter 6, p. 150-151). Jeff remarked that this focus on organization made him a less gullible reader:

Jeff: Lots when I’m reading I’m lost in a paper or I will easy to be misleading to there or to somewhere. And I think after stating the thesis not [****** *****] ok, this is not good, this is related to topic, this is confused, this is extra information. I feel like after the peer review I will not be tricked by others very easily.
(Jeff interview, 17 March)
These student remarks are interesting because they point to the dual advantage of learning functional aspects of a text. First, the students were able to learn the symbolic organization necessary for successful academic writing. Second, that organization, because it is functional and not formal, also helps in other areas of their studies, such as their reading skills. It is also heartening that Chris is able to identify that he has begun applying this organization to writing other than assignments for class. As previous L2 writing research (Angelova & Riazantseva, 1999; Katznelson, Perpignan, & Rubin, 2001) has discussed, it is important not to overlook the other information that students learn from their classes. More importantly, this also speaks to the benefits of socializing students into a functional, integrated-skills approach to academic language, as discussed in Beckett (2005) and Mohan & Beckett (2001), among others.

The students’ focus on mode was also evident in their classroom discussions, especially in their comments during peer review. Most of their comments on other peoples’ writing centered on organization. For example, during a peer review of an essay about the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), Jeff made the following comment:

Jeff: Actually, uh, the first paragraph, after I read it I feel like, uh, the author want to introduce a very practical [*] to English learners. To, like, how to make good use of IPA.
Sarah: ok. Good.
Jeff: And found that way. But finally I feel I was confused by that your, so, you give me two problems to think about it, for us. How to we deal with these two problems, just ignore them or focus on something else?
(Writing 2, 20 January)
This comment shows that Jeff is now focusing on the technique of enumeration or “previewing” of topics into which he was socialized during the previous quarter.

Wallace also made a similar comment about the same essay and its lack of focus:

Wallace: It’s just, just, it’s just, when you see the first paragraph you think something. And when you see the last paragraph you think something.
(Writing 2, 20 January)

These comments reinforce the students’ assertion that an added advantage of focusing on organization is that it made them more critical readers. Here, they are able to identify a lack of coherence within a sample text.

The students also focused on the idea of creating textual cohesion through the organization of ideas from given to new information. In one instance, Jeff talked through what he thought would be an ideal organization for an essay being reviewed:

Jeff: I suggest the first two paragraphs they can be combined, compact into one paragraph, so like an introduction part. And mention about the advantage, but focus on disadvantages and how to do it, just in general simple words. So after that, the two paragraphs can be used talk about the problems. Or maybe another two or one for the solutions. Then the final, uh, conclusion.
(Writing 2, 20 January)

Here, Jeff is suggesting a given-new organization of first introducing the topic (disadvantages) in “general simple words”, and then discussing specifics (problems and solutions) in three or four paragraphs, and then a conclusion. Thus, he is providing an oral model for the very organization that he had difficulty with during the previous quarter. Clearly, he is now socialized into this more functional approach to organizing a text.
Wallace also showed that he was beginning to internalize the given-new organizational style when he talked through the possible organization of his own essay:

Wallace: uh, for example, If I want to introduce radar, and I will tell you different what is radar and how radar work. And some application of radar. Those things.
(Writing 2, 13 January)

Here, Wallace is exhibiting his understanding of given-new by providing an oral outline for his essay that begins with a general introduction (“what is radar and how radar work”) and then moves to more specific topics (“some application of radar”). This shows that not only are the students able to apply the concepts of given-new to their readings of other essays, but also to the planning of their own work.

In the execution of their own work, students also showed changes in their attention to mode. As mentioned previously, the Winter Writing 2 class focused on students writing and rewriting one essay for a total of four drafts. The following is a discussion of the structural changes Jeff and Wallace made to their drafts during the course of the quarter, using sample paragraphs from the first and last drafts. The following are the last two paragraphs of the first draft of Wallace’s essay, about radar:

With the invention of synthetic aperture radar (SAR), people can use radar to take picture of an object which is far away. By collecting a sequence of data of an object by a moving radar and performing some signal processing produce, people can develop the picture of the object. Because radio wave can travel very far, we can use SAR to map the earth and other planets which can not be seen by our eyes. By using this technology, engineer build unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) to spy on enemies.
Radar is very important to us. We rely on it to tell us the weather condition and tell us driving speed, SAR can help us to see object far away. (Winter Writing 2, document 11)

In these sample paragraphs, we see that Wallace has moved from general information (synthetic aperture radar) to specific (its applications), and then back to more general information for the conclusion. The nominalization “this technology” creates a link between information about SAR and UAVs. However, the information is not as detailed as it might be, thus creating an unacceptable amount of semantic discontinuity (Halliday, 1993; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) between the introduction of synthetic aperture radar and its specific applications. Thus, the internal textual cohesion is not as strong as it might be.

In the last draft of the essay, Wallace shows a dramatic improvement in internal textual cohesion. The following are the last two paragraphs of the final draft:

With the invention of synthetic aperture radar (SAR), people can also use radar to take pictures of an object which is far away. One might think that a SAR must look like a camera which is used in our daily life. Actually, they are totally different. Cameras used in our ordinary life are also called optical cameras, which are based on the exposure of light on film, while SARs use the electrical signals collected by radar. To generate the picture of an object, we need a sequence of data, so radar engineering puts radars on moving airplanes and collects a sequence of data of the object. After we have the data, by performing a complicated signal processing procedure, we can get the picture of the object. Optical cameras use chemical solution to develop the picture, while SARs use computer to develop. Because radio wave can travel very far, we can use SARs to map the earth and other planets, which can not be seen with the naked eye. Astronomical telescopes are also based on SARs. By using this technology, engineers have also built unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) to take the pictures
of enemies’ military deployment and use UAV as the eyes of soldiers to fire missiles.

Based on the principle of echo and Doppler Shift, scientists designed radar to help people to detect remote objects, detect the speed of a moving object and map something. Radar technology is one of the most essential technologies for a nation’s defense, so most countries have spent huge amounts of money and human resources on the development of radar and this technology is developing very fast.

(Winter Writing 2, document 13)

The most apparent difference between the two drafts of the essay is the fact that Wallace has clearly added information, as the final draft is easily twice as long as the first. The bulk of the added information is directed at providing more specific information about synthetic aperture radar by comparing it to “a camera which is used in our daily life.” This comparison provides more specific information, thus reducing the semantic discontinuity. It is also an example of a technical taxonomy, identified by Halliday (1993) as an important and identifying feature of science writing. The fairly specific information about how SAR works is then moved back to more general applications (astronomical telescopes, UAVs), using the nominalization “this technology.”

The conclusion of Wallace’s final draft is still somewhat disconnected from the paragraph preceding it, but it incorporates more of the given/theme of the essay than the previous conclusion. Thus, while the execution is by no means perfect, the use of technical taxonomies to provide more information, continued reliance on nominalization, and a conclusion which refers to more of the given information of the text shows marked improvements in the attention Wallace paid to the mode of this text. This also suggests that, even though the teacher (Sarah) did not use the specific terminology of SFL when
socializing students into paying attention to the mode metafunction of a text, the students were still able to be socialized into many of the important aspects of mode.

Jeff also showed marked improvements to the symbolic organization of his texts through the four drafts. He is also the only student who drew upon orthographic conventions – headings and subheadings – to shape his organization. This will be discussed further in Chapter 9, but is worth mentioning here because of the profound effect it had on the mode, as well as the tenor, of the text. In the case of Jeff’s essay, a comparison of the last two paragraphs of first and last drafts is difficult, as much of the essay was reorganized through the course of the drafts. In the first draft, the last two paragraphs were as follows:

As everything else, steel structures have both advantages and disadvantages. Proper measures can be done to eliminate or avoid the affect of the advantages [sic]. First, most steels are susceptible to corrosion when freely exposed to air and water, so they must be periodically painted. Remember steel structures that are properly maintained will last indefinitely. In suitable design applications, using special types of steel like weathering steels even tends to eliminate the maintenance cost. Another disadvantage is that the strength of steel components will reduce greatly at high temperature which may be reached in fire, which means fireproof has to been applied.

As we see above, the ideal characteristics of steel material makes steel structures significantly different from other structural styles. Light self-weight, ease of fabrication, speed of erection and recycle save both your time and money, even though you have to pay a little for the maintenance and fireproof. Understanding this, you will understand why so many steel structures are applied in buildings in the United States. I am sure you will make a right decision.

(Winter Writing 2, document 22)
Like Wallace’s paragraphs, these paragraphs also show that Jeff has firmly grasped the concept of moving from given to new information. He has also carried over the “previewing” of topics that was emphasized during the previous quarter. So, he presents the general topic or given information – disadvantages – in the beginning of the paragraph, and then discusses the specific disadvantages or new information – corrosion and weakness at high temperatures. The transition to the conclusion refers to the “above” characteristics of steel, which creates a grammatical metaphor for the whole of the text, thus the conclusion covers the scope of the essay, rather than only the previous paragraph. The conclusion also contains the use of nominalization of the ideal characteristics of steel as “this” as a way to create internal textual cohesion. In this way, Jeff has made a successful move back to given information.

In the last draft of Jeff’s essay, the penultimate paragraph and the conclusion are given headings, which aid in the reader’s orientation to the organization of the text. The following are the revised paragraphs, with their respective headings:

**OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

As one might be aware, there are certain considerations to keep in mind regarding steel structures, but none of them are so dramatic that we can’t eliminate or avoid their effect. First, most steels are susceptible to corrosion when freely exposed to air and water, so they must be periodically painted. Remember steel structures that are properly maintained will last indefinitely. In suitable design applications, using special types of steel, like weathering steels, tends to eliminate the maintenance cost. Another consideration is that the strength of steel components will reduce greatly at high temperature which may be reached by fire which means fireproof has to be applied.
SUMMARY
The ideal characteristics of steel material make steel structures significantly advantageous over other structural styles. Light self-weight, ease of fabrication, speed of erection and recycling save both time and money, even though there is some cost for the maintenance and fireproofing. Being aware of this, clients will understand why so many steel structures are used in buildings in the world, and furthermore, make a right decision.

(Winter Writing 2, document 28)

While there is very little difference between the first and final drafts of these paragraphs of the essay, the differences do show a continued attention to symbolic organization/mode. The use of headings provides orthographic cues for the reader as to the relationships between the sections of the text. It’s interesting to note that Jeff has removed the phrase “As we see above” from the first sentence of his summary, and thus is relying solely on the heading to provide internal textual cohesion. The other interesting change is in the first sentence, from a discussion of “advantages and disadvantages” to “certain considerations to keep in mind regarding steel structures.” This is the result of corrections made by Sarah, which Jeff simply adopted.

Summary of Winter quarter, Writing 2 Student Attention to Mode

The previous writing samples, class discussion excerpts, and quotes from interviews show that students began the quarter with a willingness and desire to focus on the symbolic organization of texts. Throughout the quarter, they built upon the previous quarter’s attention to “previewing” topics and transitions, by paying special attention to given-new organization of texts, and by regularly incorporating nominalization, grammatical metaphor, and technical taxonomies into their texts. The students found this focus on functional aspects of a text to be helpful not only in their
writing assignments for class, but also for writing done for other purposes, as well as their reading.

*Spring quarter, Writing 3 “First, you should rearrange your article.”*

The students continued to focus on mode throughout Spring quarter. Their foci reflected Jake’s, in that they were concerned with the proper order of presenting information, as well as with paragraphing. Much of the in-class discussions and written critiques focused on these subjects. For example, Wallace provided the following oral feedback to a student, regarding paragraphs and placement of transitions:

Wallace: I think you can combine these two paragraphs if you want. I don’t think that transitions can end.
Jake: You don’t think the transition should be at the end of the paragraph?
Wallace: No
Jake: Ok. Where would it be, then?
Wallace: at the beginning of the next paragraph.
(Writing 2, 26 April)

Emily also made comments about paragraphing, which then extended to the overall organization of a paper by Chris:

Emily: I think in the introduction, you can divide several paragraphs. The first part, I think if you try to describe the character of composite, and later you can describe the matrix frame composite, so I don’t know, in the introduction it’s all one paragraph, even though you combine everything in one paragraph, as a reader I’m confused about what you are going to describe. And if you don’t write the report of writing, what you are going to discuss, in the beginning, for us, who don’t know the area, we can’t understand the rest.
Chris: so, what do you want me to simplify?
Emily: How about the basis for the type of matrix?
Chris: ***?
Emily: Yeah. I think that, and separate the upper part and lower part. (Writing 3, 24 May)
This commentary is interesting because it points to the students’ socialization into recognition of the relationship between smaller elements of textual organization (in this case, paragraphing) to the overall organization of a text (in this case, the point of the paper). Emily notes here that having several topics combined into a one-paragraph introduction leaves her “confused about what you are going to describe.” She suggests subdividing the topics into their own paragraphs, thereby creating more paragraphs and a more explicit purpose.

Wallace also made comments which pointed to his knowledge of the relationship between organization and specific purpose. For example, he commented on one student’s paper by suggesting the following:

Wallace: I think he should write what the purpose of this article in your first sentence of abstract. And then...this abstract is more like an outline of your article. It’s not summary, it’s outline. Outlines, they are similar, but it’s different. You should do *** a brief review of what you are going to do. What the purpose of your essay, not the outline.

Jake: One thing that Wallace is saying is maybe add the specific purpose of what he’s doing here in the abstract. And we talked a little last week about stating the purpose of your writing explicitly.

Wallace: If you just write this, I think. This reason of this article is what what what. It would be very clear your audience. And then do some explain-brief explanation and introduce the areas of carbon nanotube.

(Writing 2, 26 April)

Here again, Wallace is commenting on the specific purpose of a paper as it relates to its organization. He recommends a “brief review of what you are going to do” as the statement of the purpose of the article, followed by slightly more specific, but still
general information of “brief explanation and introduce the areas of carbon nanotube.”

Through his repetition of the word “brief,” Wallace is accentuating the necessity of
general/given information at the beginning of the essay, as contrasted with the
“outline” or “summary” which exists now, and which Wallace feels is too detailed.

Wallace made a similar critique of too much information being included at the
beginning of an essay in the following oral comments [PMC is an abbreviation for a
specific material]:

Wallace: I think, in your introduction part, you have
everything you want to say, right? You said, it is
background of whole article, right? I think PMC you should
describe it later. I mean, it’s not should not be in your
introduction part. Your introduction part is to write
something about – by the way, what’s your topic. Your topic
is not PMC, right? Your topic is how to use PMC–
(Writing 2, 26 April)

These comments point to Wallace’s sensitivity toward the given-new construct of a text,
as he advises that the description of a specific material (PMC) should occur later in the
text, after some more general information. The criticism that the introduction has
“everything you want to say” also points to Wallace’s focus on the necessity of the
introduction including general, not specific, information.

Students also used class discussion to explore unfamiliar textual structures. For
example, when one student submitted a narrative history as her paper, Jeff asked the
following:

Jeff: about the normal…what is the normal form for this kind
of writing? I mean for the narrative. So, would you like to
introduce something about this kind of writing?
(Writing 3, 26 April)
This shows that Jeff is aware of the fact that there are different conventions for structure, and that it is important to know those conventions when reading a text.

Written critiques of student writing were also focused on conforming to the overall rules of textual organization, including logical connections between sections. Sometimes these comments were fairly general, as in the following collection of comments from Chris about various students’ “sections” in their writing:

Chris critique of Emily writing: A well structured piece of writing on an interesting topic. U’r sections set the expectations right for the audience.
(Writing 3, document 14)

Chris critique of NP writing: Don’t use a different section for mentoring. Club it with the teaching experience part. It will add more substance and u will come across as someone with a broad teaching experience.
(Writing 3, document 15)

Chris critique of NP writing: Your sections set the expectation right for the reader. You spring no surprises on the unsuspecting audience. Your discussions and conclusions are to the point.
(Writing 3, document 20)

While these comments are fairly general, they are also illustrative of the fact that organization of “sections” makes the text more effective and approachable to read. These comments are also heavily focused on tenor, or creating a relationship between the reader, the author, and the text. Their focus on tenor will be discussed in Chapter 9.

Chris also made more specific comments about structure, most often having to do with the “previewing” that was emphasized by Grace during Fall quarter. For example, he wrote the following”
Chris critique of NP writing: Structure wise u need to announce the topics u will be discussing.
(Writing 3, document 16)

This is similar to one of his comments from above, regarding springing “no surprises on an unsuspecting audience.” Again, this shows Chris’s grasp of the relationship between audience expectations and symbolic organization.

Wallace, too, focused on the relationship between audience expectations and the organization of a text in his written comments. In Wallace’s case, his focus was also on sections, but more specifically on conforming to the introduction-body-conclusion format of writing. Wallace also emphasized the movement from given to new information within these sections. For example, he wrote the following:

Wallace critique of NP writing: The author gave us a very good overview of his article in the abstract section. It presented from the general to the special [sic – intended word is “specific”].
(Writing 3, document 25)

In the same critique, however, Wallace also criticized the main paper’s organization:

First, you should rearrange your article. The literature review section should be in introduction part and it is too long comparing with your body part. You’d better give a brief review in your introduction section. In the last paragraph of your introduction section, you wrote about how to define circularity. I think you should put this part in your body part because the details should not appear in introduction part. And also, you’d better give us the outline of your report at the end of your introduction section.
(Writing 3, document 25)
Here again, Wallace is showing his combined focus on the three-part writing form, as well as the movement from given to new information, especially in his comment that “the details should not appear in introduction part.”

Like their in-class and written comments, the students’ writing assignments from the Spring quarter showed a fairly sophisticated grasp of mode. For example, the following is a paragraph (with mistakes included) from one of Wallace’s assignments:

With the number of mobile users increasing, two problems appeared: one is new call blocking, the other is handoff blocking [3]. Suppose a man wanted to make a call to his girlfriend in the downtown of Cincinnati. Unfortunately, all channels in this area are occupied, the call was blocked. This was called new call blocking. He tried again and again. After dialing ten times, he talked with his girlfriend in the end. While he was talking with his girlfriend, he got on a bus to go home. After two stops, his call suddenly dropped. He was very angry and decided to close this phone service. Why was the call dropped? That was because he entered into a new service area while he was going home. He needed a new channel in this area, but the channels in this area were not available at that time. So he was blocked again. This was called handoff blocking. The handover failure probability is one of the major criterions to evaluate the quality of service (QoS) of a wireless network [4]. When a BS [base station] receives a call request from a new user or a handoff user, it can decide whether to assign a channel to him or not. The kind of policy that we should use to achieve the best QoS is called admission control problem. There is much literature talking about how to solve admission control problem in wireless networks. In the following, they will be introduced and compared in details.  

(Writing 3, document 24)

This paragraph very deftly moves from the general example/given information of a man trying to call his girlfriend, to specific explanation/new information of what is happening, and then to a more specific identification/new information of the problem.
as one of “admission control.” He uses nominalization and grammatical metaphor (“that was because;” “this was called handoff blocking”) to provide textual cohesion.

Finally, he moves to the purpose of his paper through a clear preview for his audience (“in the following…”). While there are undeniably minor formal grammatical problems with this paragraph, it exhibits a close attention to the symbolic organization of the overall text.

Chris’s writing also showed dramatic changes as a result of the year spent focusing on mode. The following is the abstract of an article that he submitted during Writing 3. Like Wallace’s writing, there are some formal grammatical problems (such as the first sentence, which was a topic of discussion in Chapter 5), but it also shows that the author has paid deliberate attention to the symbolic organization of the text:

Carbon fiber reinforced copper matrix composite is considered a promising material used as electrical contact devices, such as electrical brush, sink, owing to its high electrical conductivity and thermal conductivity, and in space applications because of excellent wear resistance and high specific strength. In this review, fabrication and properties of carbon-copper composites have been discussed. One of the major problems with this system is the weak bonding between carbon fiber and copper which results in poor mechanical properties. A lot of work has been done on ways to strengthen the fiber-matrix interface which has been addressed. Of all the means, alloying other elements into copper matrix is a simple and effective method and has been used by many investigators. There are different methods of production of carbon fiber-copper matrix composite including liquid metal infiltration, powder metallurgy, electrodeposition, squeeze casting and diffusion bonding. The influence of additives on the diffusivity of carbon atoms has been presented. During higher temperature processing of these composite systems, spheroidization of copper coating takes place. There is
significant variation of thermo-mechanical and tribological properties of carbon fiber-copper matrix composites in parallel and perpendicular directions to fiber orientation. These variations have also been discussed. (Writing 3, document 22)

This abstract is admittedly technical, but the movement from given to new information is clear and deliberate. First, Chris introduces the material in question - carbon fiber reinforced copper matrix composite - its uses, and the reasons for its appeal. This provides excellent background/general/given information, but definitely should be done in more than one sentence! Next, Chris moves to the slightly more specific information of fabrication properties of the previously introduced material. Then, more specific information about problems in the fabrication process - poor bonding - is presented as the focus of the paper. The abstract moves progressively through more specific topics to be covered: additives as a solution to poor bonding; and finally problems caused by the additives, including spheroidization and variation of properties. As the level of specificity increases, so does the use of technical taxonomies.

This is a sophisticated (and highly technical) piece of writing which shows the culminating effect of an academic year of socialization into, whether it is explicitly named as such or not, mode.

*Summary of Spring Quarter Writing 3 Student Attention to Mode*

Throughout the spring quarter, the students continued to focus on and discuss the symbolic organization of texts. Their classroom comments and written critiques focused even more finely on the given-new construction of a text, and began to explicitly acknowledge the relationship between organization (mode) and creating a
relationship between the author, the audience, and the text (tenor). Student writing also reflected a more sophisticated approach to mode, especially in terms of given-new organization, nominalization, grammatical metaphor, and technical taxonomies.

Discussion of Student Socialization into Attention to Mode

Students began the academic year slightly resistant to the idea of focusing on symbolic organization of a text more than on formal grammar. This resistance is similar to that of students previous studies focused on language socializing students into functional language (Beckett, 1999, 2002, 2005; Beckett & Slater, 2005; Mohan & Beckett, 2003). By the end of Fall quarter, the resistance had diminished, and the teachers’ socialization efforts began to be successful, as students began to acknowledge the usefulness of focusing on organization, especially “previewing” information and providing logical links in the form of transitions. However, the students still indicated that they believed that formal grammar was either equally important or more important than a focus on mode.

Student writing from Fall quarter shows a movement from collections of sentences about the same topic to deliberately organized essays. During Winter quarter, students focused on organization, especially the logical ordering of information from given to new information. They also continued their foci from the previous quarter on transitions and “previewing” information, and began incorporating nominalization and grammatical metaphor (Halliday, 1993; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Schleppegrell, 2004) into their writing. By the end of Winter quarter, students were wholly focused on “organization” or “structure,” as they referred to it.
There was no mention of formal grammar made during interviews at the end of Winter quarter. What was mentioned in these interviews was the “added benefits” of their socialization into attention to mode – improved reading skills. Wallace and Jeff both specifically mentioned that the focus on “structure,” as they called it, helped them to become more efficient and effective readers. Chris mentioned that his mandatory twice-monthly research reports were easier to write and that he was better able to “lay my case in a logical way.”

These changes in the students’ attention to mode, and the effect this had on both their writing and their other academic pursuits, is interesting in light of previous L2 writing research (Angelova & Riazantseva, 1999; Katznelson, Perpignan, & Rubin, 2001) which focused on academic skills which students developed along with academic writing skills. What this adds to this previous research is a functional, rather than a cognitive or social, view of what these skills are. This is important because, as discussed in previous research about functional, content-based education (Beckett, 1999, 2002, 2005; Beckett & Slater, 2005; Mohan & Beckett, 2003), socialization into functional aspects of language raises student awareness in all aspects of language, and therefore improves their overall language skills, not just an isolated skill such as writing or reading. The improvements that these students identified as occurring outside of the ESL classroom, in addition to the improvements that are evident in their writing for the class, lend support to the idea that language education should be functional and integrated.
Students continued to focus on organization during Spring quarter, especially on the given-new text construction. They also began to explicitly acknowledge the relationship between organization/mode and the relationship between the author, the audience, and the text, otherwise known as the tenor metafunction. This focus on tenor will be discussed in the following two chapters. First, Chapter 8 will describe how teachers socialized students into attention to tenor. Chapter 9 will then describe the students’ attention to tenor.
Chapter 8 – How Teachers Socialized Students into Attention to Tenor

According to Halliday (1993), tenor refers to the role structure created in the text, or how the author(s) portrays levels of authority in relation to the audience and other texts. Author approach to information contributes to the tenor of a text – does the author give or negotiate information? Does the author amplify his/her own ideas in order to establish greater authority? Schleppegrell (2004) has added to this description of tenor by suggesting that the tenor of academic language differentiates it from interpersonal language through use of declarative mood, and interpersonal or attitudinal stances created by methods other than shifting moods. Instead, stance is created through lexicogrammatical (nouns, verbs, adjectives, clause constructions) and orthographic (indentations, spacing, font) resources. Lemke (1990) found that the implied rules of tenor are established through discussions of avoidance of first and second person pronouns, serious and dignified tone, and avoidance of colloquialisms (p. 133).

While the teachers who participated in this study did not use the term “tenor,” they did spend class time and written comments on the interpersonal aspects of academic writing. Their coverage of this topic centered around discussions of audience expectations, use of pronouns, documentation styles as a way to establish authority, orthographic conventions (including the proportions of a text) and tone.

*Writing 1, Fall Quarter.* “It helps the reader follow.”

The majority of Jen’s oral and written comments about the interpersonal aspects of academic writing centered on audience expectations and orthographic conventions.
Orthographic conventions received more attention at the beginning of the quarter, and less as the class progressed. Audience expectations was a more constant topic; this was often tied to the idea of textual organization/mode. For example, Jen often told students that following rules of textual organization is necessary to meet audience expectations, such as in the following comment to Emily:

Jen comments to Emily:
Remember that readers expect a clear statement of your topic and what you are going to say about it.
(Writing 1, document 9)

While this comment could also be construed as focused on mode/textual cohesion, the focus on meeting audience expectations, and therefore creating a relationship between the author, the audience, and the information, also suggests a focus on the interpersonal aspects/tenor of the text.

Another concern about audience had to do with interest, such as a class discussion about the formal grammatical practice of sentence combining. During the discussion, Jen mentioned that two reasons for combining sentences are to make the text easier to read, and to make it more interesting (Writing 1, 14 October). A similar attention to audience interest and ease is exhibited in the following comment Jen made to Kyle:

Jen comments to Kyle:
I really think readers would be much more interested in reading your paper and find it easier to follow if your introduction/thesis provided some of the wit and substance that you present in the final paragraph.
(Writing 1, document 15)
Again, this comment combines attention to the organization of the text 
(introduction/thesis…final paragraph) with remarks about the relationship between the 
author, the reader, and the topic. In this case, Jen commented on the audience’s interest 
level and ability to “follow” the text. It’s interesting to note that Jen is calling for more 
“wit and substance” in Kyle’s writing, which could be in contradiction to Lemke’s 
(1990) finding that teachers emphasize academic writing as avoiding humor.

As previously mentioned, Jen consistently reminded students of the importance 
of audience interest in and ease of reading texts. During a peer review session in the 
middle of the quarter, she reminded students of the criteria for review, including the 
following reminder:

Jen: Remember, we want to leave the reader with a good 
impression and a clear statement of what we’ve said. 
(Writing 1, 18 November)

This is a reiteration of her emphasis on audience interest and comfort being an 
important part of the interpersonal aspect/tenor of a text. Later in the same class, she 
reiterated this point by explaining that a clearer thesis statement in a students’ essay 
would help her as a reader to follow the essay:

Jen: It helps the reader follow. Tell me what you’re going to 
say. Tell me, give me the main idea of your essay. And then, 
that will help me follow along as I read. So, the more explicit 
or clear that he is in his thesis statement, the easier I can 
follow along with what he’s saying. 
(Writing 1, 18 November)

This emphasis of the importance of creating an easy relationship between the subject 
and the reader was reinforced with a comment Jen made during the last class meeting:
Jen: I’ve enjoyed your writing. I’ve learned a lot about you, it’s been just really wonderful, wonderful writing. So that’s been a lot of fun.
(Writing 1, 2 December)

Once again, this reinforces Jen’s belief in the importance of the interpersonal aspect of a text being created through the author’s attention to the reader’s interest and comfort.

This belief seems to be grounded in the idea that textual conventions exist because of audience expectations. When Jen was asked during her interview whether or not writing classes should be required of international graduate students, she answered yes, suggesting that the classes should be used to tell students “this is what we’re going to expect from you in the future” (Jen interview, 2 December).

Orthographic conventions, another aspect of tenor, were also discussed and commented on by Jen. The criteria for orthographic conventions were most often discussed during peer review sessions, as Jen’s guidelines for peer review often included orthographic considerations. These criteria were most focused on paragraph and essay format, such as spacing, indentation of paragraphs, and margins. For example, the first peer review session included the following discussion:

Jen: okay, well what's the purpose? What's the purpose of asking for a double space or...
NP student talks
Jen: yeah, basically
Kyle: the paragraph should look as large...so,
Jen: exactly, looks better, doesn't it, huh? It makes it look like you have more information, makes you look better. Yeah, ok.
(Writing 1, 7 October)

This is an interesting conversation because it suggests that orthographic conventions such as double-spacing can help to make the author “look better” (i.e., appear more
professional and/or learned). Later in the class, Jen reiterates that, when students hand in their revised papers, they should be double-spaced.

While double-spacing was the orthographic convention explicitly discussed during peer review, the grading criteria for this assignment also included the following:

**Evaluation Criteria for Assignment 1**
- Is correct paragraph form used? (indentation, margins, spacing, one sentence following another)

(Writing 1, document 1)

A later peer review session (21 October) included a brief discussion of the same criteria as above, as well as a written reminder of them on the board. Thus, through focusing on orthographic and organizational conventions as a way of relating to the reader about the subject, Jen introduced her students to the idea of interpersonal aspects/tenor of a text.

*Writing 2, Fall Quarter. “We are not obligated to read anything.”*

Grace’s focus on interpersonal aspects/tenor of texts tended toward orthographic convention (such as length of sentences and paragraphs, double spacing, working within space constraints of a text), tone, and audience interest. In general, these issues were presented as important to establishing the credibility and/or authority of the author. A secondary focus of these comments was audience interest and ease of reading. As mentioned in Chapter 6, textual organization/mode was the central focus of Grace’s classes; therefore, comments about interpersonal aspects/tenor did occur, but they did so with much less frequency than those regarding central focus.
Grace made very few comments about conforming to orthographic conventions of a text, but the comments she made are worth examining because of their focus on establishing the credibility of authors through their ability to conform to the conventions. For example, when Chris commented that double spacing seemed to be a restrictive convention, and a waste of space, Grace replied that it must be managed. “If the assignment needs to be double-spaced, then it needs to be double-spaced” (Writing 2, 18 October). This idea that the author simply must follow the rules in order to be regarded at all was the central point of Grace’s discussion of orthographic conventions.

Other comments about orthographic conventions had to do with “balance” of paragraphs, by which Grace literally meant the equality in size. This was intended as a measure of the balance or equality of information given in each paragraph, but was discussed as a visual aspect of the text, such as when she asked the class about a particular essay: “Can we say it’s balanced out? Right? It looks like a balanced paper?” (Writing 2, 8 November). When a paper had “imbalanced” paragraphs, Grace would suggest divisions, in order to present a more visually consistent essay. Like her attitude toward double-spacing, this attention to proportion seemed to be framed as a display of the willingness and/or ability of the author to conform to previously-established conventions, and therefore project an air of authority and competence.

In addition to her comments about orthographic conventions, Grace also referred to interpersonal aspects of the text through discussions of audience expectations, specifically with reference to the focus of the paper. The idea behind these comments was that the reader needed to be interested in the writing in order to read it, and it is the
author’s responsibility to create this interest through a clear and precise presentation of
the topic from a position of authority. Grace explained this point of view in the
following comment:

Grace: So we need to narrow our topic down to a fine aspect
that at the same time could be interesting for our readers.
Most of the time, we are not obligated to read anything,
right? It’s the introduction paragraph or the very beginning
of the essay that lets us decide if we want to keep on reading
it or not. The exceptions are the class, right, we have to read
each others’ essays. But most of the time, it’s up to us to
decide, right, if we want to go on with the essay or not.
(Writing 2, 11 October)

Thus, Grace’s emphasis was similar to Jen’s in that she believed that the author has a
responsibility to write about the topic in such a way as to create reader interest, while
still being informative and relevant. She combined this idea with that of following
orthographic constraints in the following:

Grace: But you need to narrow it down so you need to
cover, we can cover comfortable, right? In our case two
pages, so that we can manage this aspect, right? How to do
it in two pages, and, at the same time, so that we give our
readers, however limited our aspect is, that we give our
readers the sense that they have a whole picture, right? That
they get a –a-whole picture to understand this aspect of our
topic.
(Writing 2, 11 October)

This comment is interesting because it includes both the necessity of working within the
established orthographic constraints (in this case, a maximum length of two pages), as
well as the importance of projecting a thorough knowledge of the topic to readers
through an appropriate focus.
The idea of focus was also an important aspect of Grace’s coverage of tenor. As in the previous example, she framed appropriate focus and narrowing of topics as a way of demonstrating expertise. The suggestion was that only authors who are deeply familiar with a topic can choose appropriate foci to engage reader interest and provide useful information. During a class discussion of a student essay, Grace commented:

Grace: You cannot just put down everything you know about the polar bear. There needs to be a common theme to it. It would call my attention then. So, I would have a reason to read the paper.
(Writing 2, 8 November)

By providing her perspective as a reader, and her relationship to the text, Grace made it clear to the author that focusing the topic is necessary to create reader interest in the topic.

In other class discussions, Grace sometimes referred to focusing a topic for reader interest as “sharpening,” as in the following example:

Grace: How to sharpen it up so that the reader knows exactly what is our main point and what supporting information, what information you’re going to develop in the essay. So again the topic today, giving our essay our composition a very clear focus.
(Writing 2, 11 October)

Once again, the focus of the comments is on creating reader interest in the text by choosing an appropriate stance on the topic, and meeting reader’s expectations about the information to be presented.
Summary of Fall Quarter Teachers’ Approaches to Socializing Students into Attention to Tenor

Both Jen and Grace focused on the importance of creating a relationship between readers and texts through interest and meeting expectations. While neither teacher considered the interpersonal aspects of a text to be the most important, they make repeated references to both creating interest/meeting audience expectations and orthographic conventions to suggest that they wanted students to recognize the importance of the interpersonal aspects/tone.

Jen’s and Grace’s efforts to socialize students into attention to readers’ ease of reading and enjoyment of a text is important to note in terms of the findings of previous research (Casanave, 1998; Flowerdew, 1999a, 1999b; Gosden, 1992; Mišak, Marušić, & Marušić, 2005) suggesting that a weakness in L2 writers is their attention to audience, appropriate tone, and clarification of stance. Clearly, Jen and Grace are socializing students into paying attention to these elements of academic writing, despite their own lack of socialization into the SFL concept of tenor. The fact that this previously-described area of weakness in L2 writing is covered in ESL writing classes also suggests the benefit of such classes to ESL students.

Writing 2, Winter Quarter. “Originality. That’s something they’re not familiar with.”

Of all of the teachers who participated in this study, Sarah was the one who focused on and emphasized the interpersonal aspects/tenor of texts the most. Her focus was similar to other teachers’ in that she focused on audience expectations, but it was also somewhat different from other teachers, in that she focused on using documentation of other sources as a way of establishing an author’s authority on a
subject. During her interview, Sarah spoke about her focus on students’ documentation of sources as an issue of originality:

Sarah: I guess an emphasis on originality, is what I’m trying to get to. Altogether. Even with the quotes and everything, an emphasis on you use a quote to keep the original flavor of the other author, because you don’t want to taint that, you write something because you want to say something about it that’s different, or say it differently. Originality. That’s something that they’re not familiar with.
(S interview, 5 April)

This statement by Sarah reflects her belief that an important part of academic writing is an author’s ability to establish him or herself as an authority on a topic both through referring to other experts and through extending those experts’ ideas.

In class, Sarah’s focus on documentation of sources as a way of establishing an authoritative stance was reflected in two assignments. The first was an exercise on quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing from the Purdue Online Writing Lab. This exercise provided definitions of each of the three actions, and a rational for using them, which included the following reasons:

Provide support for claims or add credibility to your writing
Refer to work that leads up to the work you are now doing
Expand the breadth or depth of your writing
(Winter Writing 2, document 29)

These reasons all highlight the function of using other sources to strengthen an author’s position, whether it be in the form of support, credibility, breadth, or depth. Students were also required to put these actions into practice by completing an exercise in which they read a short essay, summarize it, paraphrase important points, and choose at least
two passages to quote. The exercise was reviewed during an entire 75-minute class period.

In addition to the exercise on incorporating outside sources into their writing, Sarah also had students learn their particular disciplines’ documentation styles. For this, students were given a handout to complete entitled “Practice for Documenting Sources,” which included the following questions:

1. What is the documentation style used by your department called?
2. What is the name of the style manual? Where can you buy it? How much does it cost?
3. In this documentation style, what is the list of sources at the end of a paper called? (In APA, it’s titled “References.” In MLA, it’s “Works Cited”)  
4. How do you write the bibliographic information for a book?
5. How do you write the bibliographic information for a journal article?
6. How do you write the bibliographic information for a chapter in an edited book?
7. How do you write the bibliographic information for an edited volume?  
(Winter Writing 2, document 25)

Students were graded on this assignment, and a short amount of class time was spent reviewing them.

These two assignments, taken together, point to the importance that Sarah placed on the idea of documentation of sources and citation styles as a method of authors establishing their stance toward a particular topic, and communicating that stance to their readers. It is also similar to Grace’s and Jen’s attention to orthographic conventions, as it is a visual way for authors to show a commitment to and discipline
about the subject area. This idea of conforming to standards was reinforced by a comment Sarah made to class, in response to a student question about academic journals having different requirements:

Sarah: so, if you’re going to-exactly. So if you’re going to write a paper for that journal, then you have to comply with their standard. Right? So, that goes again back to the context. Who am I writing for? Ok? Who’s my audience? And therefore it’s up to me to write according to their expectations. (Writing 2, 20 January)

In addition to documentation and citation styles, Sarah also emphasized the importance that academic writing meet audience expectations and create interest. In a previously discussed example, she explained that one reason authors should be mindful of textual organization/mode is to make texts easier for readers:

Sarah: Think of it this way. A teacher, or professor, that has to read 30 papers, wants to focus on the content. Right? I want to know what you have to say about this. I shouldn’t have to worry about the structure. So everyone’s structure should be the same, and from there, the idea is, what are you saying within that structure. And that’s why the structure is more or less set. Intro, body, conclusion. Everyone. Do the same thing. And that way I’m not worried about how you wrote it, I’m worried about what you wrote. Ok? That’s academic writing. (Writing 2, 20 January)

Thus, Sarah is suggesting to students that one of the jobs of an author is to create a text that is easy for the audience to read, so that they can engage more deeply with the topic, without having to negotiate peculiarities of the author.

Another way that Sarah addressed the interpersonal aspects/tenor of texts was through the idea of establishing a clear focus in order to meet audience expectations.
This was similar to the foci of both Jen and Grace, in that it was directed at authors clearly communicating their stances. The following are examples from the same class of

Sarah explaining the importance of meeting audience expectations:

Sarah: So in every...every time you’re talking to an audience, you have to make it apply to them. And not only to them, but also just tell them where this applies, so if we’re talking about...computers, or computer science, what is its application. When do I use computer science.

(Writing 2, 13 January)

Sarah: Because a thesis also helps not only you, but your audience to stay on focus, why I’m reading this paper. Especially a dissertation that’s this big. Ok, so a thesis is necessary, even when you’re describing something, so they know why they’re reading. Ok?

(Writing 2, 13 January)

The fact that these comments are both from the same class points to the frequency with which Sarah referenced audience expectations. They also show the different explanations that Sarah used for the same basic concept of meeting audience expectations. In both cases, she is pointing out that authors must create a relationship between the topic, the readers, and themselves that is clear, interesting, and appropriate to the audience. Also in both cases, she emphasizes the author’s responsibility to establish the usefulness or appropriateness of the topic to the audience.

Unlike her class comments, many of Sarah’s written comments about tenor were focused on the formality of language, especially pronoun use. Her comments about this were inconsistent, though, and therefore perhaps more confusing than helpful to students. For example, the following are comments provided to Wallace:
The phenomenon of echo often happens around us. When one shouts into a well, the echo of the voice will come back a moment later.

(Winter Writing 2, document 10)

A note at the end of this essay read as follows:

Also, avoid the use of “you” in academic writing. Replace it with “one” (impersonal). The same goes for “I” and “we”. Use the passive voice to get around this. For example, “we use radar for many reasons” – “Radar is used for many reasons”.

(Winter Writing 2, document 10)

These comments and corrections are lacking an explanation by Sarah as to why she is discouraging the use of the second-person pronoun; however, we can assume that it is because the convention of academic writing as taking an impersonal, authoritative stance toward a topic. Perhaps because an explanation is not provided, Wallace does not make all of the corrections. Wallace’s actions will be discussed in the following chapter; however Sarah’s comments on the subsequent draft are of interest, particularly in light of the fact that Wallace did not omit second person pronouns. On this draft, Sarah marked a portion of the text as “Good!” despite the fact that it included the second-person pronouns she had instructed Wallace not to use:

The sound is sent by the car and you are moving corresponding to the car. Doppler told us that the frequency of sound received by you will change according to your relative speed and the changing of the frequency is called Doppler shift.

(Winter Writing 2, document 11)

In the next draft of the essay, the use of second person pronouns is once again addressed in Sarah’s comments:
Sarah comments to Wallace: Suppose a car passes your location. If the car is driving towards you, you can hear a higher tone whistle than if the car is stationary; when it moves away from you, the tone of the whistle will be lower than if the car is still. Why are the tones of whistle different? Doppler told us that the frequency of sound received by you will change according to one’s relative speed to the sound source and the difference of the frequency is called a Doppler shift. (Winter Writing 2, document 12)

This revision includes some comments about using the second person, but not all of the instances of its use are remarked upon. The first two sentences contain several instances of usage of “you” which go unremarked upon, while the use of “he” instead of “it” in reference to a car is corrected. Sentence four also includes a correction of the use of “you.”

In the next, and final, draft of the essay, Sarah’s comments about the use of “you” becomes even more inconsistent, as she praises Wallace for an appropriate use of the pronoun, without an explanation either (1) why its use in previous drafts was inappropriate, and (2) why the subsequent use of “your” in the same paragraph of the same draft is unacceptable:

Sarah comments to Wallace: Suppose a car passes your location. If the car is driving towards you, you can hear a higher tone whistle than if the car is stationary; when it moves away from you, the tone of the whistle will be lower than if the car is still. Why are the tones different? If one is stationary relative to the source, one can hear exactly the same tone as the original one. Since the sound is sent by the car, the driver is still corresponding to the source and he will hear the original tone; however, one are moving corresponding to the source and the tone of horn you hear will be different than the original one. Doppler told us that the frequency of sound received by you will change according to one’s relative speed to the sound source. The difference of the frequency is called a Doppler shift. (Winter Writing 2, document 13)
Again, Wallace seems to be receiving somewhat mixed messages from Sarah regarding the use of second-person pronouns. Her first comment, directed at the first two sentences, remarks that the use of “you” is well done, while another comment is has changed “your” to “one’s.”

In contrast to Sarah’s work with Wallace on eliminating first- and second- person pronouns from academic writing, is her work with Jeff on his multiple revisions of an essay. The first draft of the essay includes both first and second person pronouns, and Sarah praises the writing:

As a client, what type of structure would you choose for your building? Maybe you never think about this before or you think it should be considered by civil engineer. Let me tell you you will benefit a lot from choosing the right type. In my opinion, a steel structure is one of the best choices for you because it has perfect properties and it is economical and recyclable.

(Winter Writing 2, document 22)

Later in the same draft, Sarah’s comment also reflects a tacit acceptance of the informal tone that Jeff has chosen to use:

Since you are being so unofficial in your tone, you can say something like “As you might be aware, there are some disadvantages to steel structures, but none of them are so dramatic/threatening that we can’t avoid”….

(Winter Writing 2, document 22)

This comment suggests that Sarah is accepting the use of first- and second-person pronouns because the tone of the essay is informal; in other words, the author has clearly indicated his stance toward the subject. In the next draft of the essay, Sarah does comment on the use of second- person pronouns, by criticizing the tone of the writing as too informal:
As a client, what type of structure would you choose for your building? Maybe you never think about this before or you think it should be considered by civil engineer. Let me tell you, you will benefit a lot from choosing the right type. In my opinion, a steel structure is one of the best choices for you because it has perfect properties and it is economical and recyclable.

(Winter Writing 2, document 23)

This draft also includes a note at the end of the essay, from Sarah to Jeff:

When you revise this for your final assignment, I would like you to try and formalize the voice a little; imagine that you are writing a letter to a magazine audience, or to the major corporation rebuilding the World Trade Center. Although your personal voice gives the essay character, it’s not very academic.

(Winter Writing 2, document 23)

In the next draft of the essay, Jeff has eliminated the first- and second- person pronouns.

Sarah’s comments then shift focus on another aspect of tenor: documentation as a means to establish oneself in a community of practice:

Choosing the proper type will benefit clients significantly. However, many clients may not think about this because they don’t realize the importance of choosing the proper structural style. Actually, which type of structure should be applied usually depends on many factors. From experts’ study, a steel structure is one of the best choices for buildings, because it has perfect properties and it is economical and recyclable.

(Winter Writing 2, document 26)

The final draft of this essay maintains the deletion of first- and second- person pronouns, and tries to negotiate the documentation of sources by establishing the author (Jeff) as an expert. Sarah’s comment suggests that Jeff not say anything about his experience, but instead let the declarative statement “a steel structure is one of the best...” stand as its own form of authority. Thus, the focus of Sarah’s comments shifted from the use of pronouns, to
informality of stance, to creating a more authoritative stance toward the subject. The
instructions, though, were not terribly explicit, and it may not be clear to the author that the
comments were regarding the interpersonal aspect of the text:

Choosing the proper type will benefit clients significantly. However, many clients may not past about this because they don’t realize the importance of choosing the proper structural style. Actually which type of structure should be applied usually depends on many factors. From experience, a steel structure is one of the best choices for buildings, because it has perfect properties, it is economical and can be recycled.
(Winter Writing, document 28)

Summary of Winter Quarter Teacher’s Approach to Socializing Students into Attention to Tenor

Of the teachers who participated in the study, Sarah dedicated the greatest amount of class discussion and written comments to the interpersonal aspects of the text. Similar to the fall quarter teachers, some of Sarah’s socialization efforts were directed at meeting audience expectations, and ease of reading. As previously discussed, this is an important part of socialization because of the findings of previous research (Casanave, 1998; Flowerdew, 1999a, 1999b; Gosden, 1992; Mišak, Marušić, and Marušić, 2005) that L2 writers have difficulty adopting the appropriate tone and stance in their writing. Additionally, Sarah socialized her students into attention to orthographic conventions, especially in the form of documentation styles. This speaks to the importance identified by Lemke (1990), Schleppegrell (2004), and Halliday (1993) of authors taking an authoritative stance toward the subject matter. Effectively implemented documentation styles are a way of establishing (and declaring) one’s place
within a particular discipline – an important part of tenor. Sarah, despite her lack of formal socialization into SFL and the concept of tenor, was nonetheless able to identify the importance of socializing her students into this textual metafunction.

In addition to classroom discussions and activities focused on socializing students into tenor, Sarah’s written comments were centered on socializing students into an appropriate level of impersonality in their writing through avoidance of first- and second- person pronouns. As identified in previous works, (Halliday & Martin, 1993; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2003; Lemke, 1990; Schleppegrell, 2004) avoidance of personal pronouns is an important method of creating author authority regarding a subject. Again, despite her lack of formal socialization into SFL, Sarah is socializing her students into attention to tenor.

Writing 3, Spring Quarter. “It might help readers if…”

The comments about interpersonal aspects/tenor of texts by Jake during Writing 3 were less frequent than other teachers’. Comments about tenor tended to fall into two categories: audience expectations and tone. The matter of meeting audience expectations tended to come up during class discussions of student writing, whereas comments about tone tended to be in written comments on student critiques. Neither aspect of tenor was an area of particular focus of the class.

An interesting phenomenon that occurred in the Writing 3 class was that students had to negotiate two different types of relationships with readers, because they were writing two different types of text. The first type of text they wrote was academic – these were the works that students submitted to the whole class for discussion and critiques. The second
type of text that students were required to write were critiques of other students’ papers. These critiques required more attention to the emotions of the readers, and thus required a more interpersonal tenor than the academic texts. Jake discussed the emotional aspect of critiques, and how to negotiate it, during the second class of the quarter:

    Jake: When you’re going to be critical of someone else’s work or someone else is going to be critical of your work, it’s hard to do. Sometimes people don’t want to say anything at all, and just want to say “Oh, that was a great wonderful job” and you don’t want to say anything critical because you’re afraid of hurting someone’s feelings. And we want to get over that hurdle because everyone’s here to improve their writing, and every time you read another student’s writing in class you assume they want me to be critical of their writing. On the other hand, we don’t want to go too far to the other extreme, and as is mentioned up here in the first paragraph there, we don’t want to go to the other extreme and just be negative. “Your paper stinks, and your dissertation will never get published, and here are my top 10 reasons why.” We don’t want to do that. We want to be encouraging each other as writers. And when we point out mistakes, we want to point them out in the context of this is how you might improve your paper. This is something you can do to make it better. Ok.
    (Writing 3, 31 March)

In addition to providing this class comment on the importance of negotiating the emotional aspect of critiques, Jake also provided sample critiques to students, in which he exhibited proper tenor. Furthermore, he provided written comments on students’ critiques (critiques of critiques!), in some of which he addressed the critique author’s tenor.

    One way that Jake modeled an attention to a critique reader’s emotions was through the use of open-ended questions. The questions posed in his critiques were used not to preface a display of information, but to actually draw answers from the reader:
Jake written critique: Are you trying to inform your readers that the American system of naming is relatively new? Are you trying to convince your readers to join in an effort to change the American system of naming? If the first is true, you could state it more specifically in your first paragraph. If the second is true, you could state it in the intro, and you could conclude with an application or a call to action.
(Writing 3, document 3)

This example critique also uses the modal “could.” The combination of the use of questions and the use of “could” provides for the possibility of the reader refusing either the validity of the critique author’s suggestions.

Another way in which Jake modeled attention to the readers’ emotions was through the use of colloquial language, including first- and second-person pronouns:

Jake-written critique: I liked the organization of this essay. In your introduction, you make your position clear. You also preview the two points that you discuss in the body of the essay, and by doing this you prepared me as a reader for what was to come. In all, while the introductory paragraph is not exactly snazzy, it accomplishes several things very well.
(Writing 3, document 4)

Using the pronouns “I” and “you” creates a more personal relationship between the reader and the author of the critique. Additionally, the use of the word “snazzy” – not a particularly academic term - to describe the introduction provides another more informal engagement with the text in question.

The previous sample critique is also an example of how Jake drew attention to the tenor of the academic papers as related to making the content of papers something with which it was easy or pleasant for readers to engage. In the previous example, this is done through his positive comment that the introduction “prepared me as a reader.” This was
also a common comment that was made during in-class discussions, and probably the most explicit references that Jake made to the idea of tenor. For example, during a critique of a student essay, he suggested that the author divide paragraphs:

Jake: And, so she doesn’t have to split it up, but for the sake of her readers, for the sake of making it more manageable pieces of writing, it might help readers to be able to go through the text a little easier if the paragraph’s split up.

(Writing 3, 26 April)

In this instance, the division of the paragraphs is not as much because of reasons of textual organization/mode, but for the comfort of the reader in relating to the information/tenor.

In another instance of referencing reader comfort with an essay, Jake suggested that Chris provide a brief summary:

Jake: You don’t need a title that says summary, but the idea of summarizing what you’ve done in the paper is an excellent idea for any work. Before you state your conclusion, before you state what you’re going to do with the information, remind your reader of where they were in the beginning and where they’ve come. What was in the body of the paper, and then draw your conclusion or state your area of continued research in there.

(Writing 3, 24 May)

Like previous examples, this suggestion is directed at making the information of the paper easier for the reader to engage with, by packaging the information in such a way as to remind the reader of the previous information before moving to new information. In this way, Jake’s comments are similar to those of other teachers, in that they are directed at the relationship between textual organization/mode and interpersonal aspects/tenor.

Similar to Sarah during Winter quarter, Jake also addressed documentation styles as an aspect of the tenor of the text; however, it was discussed with much less frequency in
Jake’s class. Of the nine classes observed, only one instance of discussion of documentation styles is recorded. This instance, though, is worth discussion because of explicit reference to documentations styles creating a relationship between authors, readers, and information. The discussion was initiated when Chris asked if a citation of the quote “I think, therefore I am” was necessary, as he believed it to be common knowledge that it was Descartes. Jake then answered:

Jake: Well, if it’s a quote that’s well-known, that everybody knows, for example Patrick Henry said give me liberty or give me death, that would be one thing, but I don’t know if everyone reading this would know who it was. So there’s nothing wrong with putting it in, and it would help someone who wanted to read a little bit more of the context or something like that or find out where she got it from. (Writing 3, 26 April)

Unlike Sarah’s approach to documentation styles as a way to show authors’ willingness to conform to textual norms and as a way to lend credibility to an author, Jake approached them as a way to ensure readers’ ease of access to information. It is interesting that, while both teachers’ approaches to documentation styles can be described as addressing the tenor of the text, they in fact addressed different aspects of tenor. One addressed author credibility and authority, while the other addressed the reader’s relationship to the information in the text.

The written comments that Jake provided to students about tenor were somewhat inconsistent. In general, they were focused on the students’ critiques, and the attention that students paid to the critique subjects’ emotions. In particular, this had to do with forms of address, specifically referring to authors by name, rather than in the third person (“the
The author has done a very good job; however, there still have some points which can be improved.
(Writing 3, document 25)

[Student name] took on the difficult task of explaining how to use “reinforce mechanism for short fiber polymer matrix composites (PMC)” to modify the surface of carbon nanotube. Unfortunately, he did not help me easily understand the topic by his words. This article would have been more readable if the author had written in the following way.
(Writing 3, document 27)

While the idea of creating a more personal tone in critiques through direct address of the author is a good technique for negotiating readers’ emotional reactions toward a criticism of their writing, Jake does not provide an explanation for his suggestions. This is reflective of the fact that author-reader-information relationships were not a prioritized topic in the Writing 3 class.

**Summary of Spring Quarter Teacher’s Approach to Socializing Students into Attention to Tenor**

In general, the tenor of texts was not something that was prioritized or explicitly discussed during Writing 3. When the topic was covered, it was focused on creating audience comfort with the topic or ease of reading. The most explicit discussions of tenor occurred in class discussions, with particular attention to organizing information for ease of reading. This is similar to the approach of the other teachers, and was important for socializing students into the importance of creating a relationship with
the audience – something which previous research (Casanave, 1998; Flowerdew, 1999a, 1999b; Gosden, 1992; Mišak, Marušić, and Marušić, 2005) has identified as a weakness in L2 writing.

Of interest in the Writing 3 class was the fact that students were required to write critiques of other students’ writing, a task that required particular attention to the emotional state of critique readers. The need for sensitivity to reader emotions was discussed once during class time, and modeled by the teacher through two sample critiques; however, continued explicit discussion of the negotiation of emotional sensitivity in writing did not occur.

Discussion of Teachers’ Socialization of Students into Attention to Tenor

Interpersonal aspects of texts did not receive as much attention from teachers as textual organization/mode. When teachers did focus on tenor, the foci tended to be on meeting audience expectations, conforming to established orthographic conventions, and use of pronouns. While this does not cover the gamut of all of the textual moves that can be discussed regarding tenor, it does show a concerted effort on the part of the teachers to socialize students into attention to the relationship between author, audience, and text.

Previous research into advanced L2 writing has shown that areas in which these writers struggle is in establishing an appropriate tone (Flowerdew, 1999b; Mišak, Marušić, and Marušić, 2005), using orthographic conventions effectively (Gosden, 1992), and even simply considering the audience when composing (Casanave, 1998; Gosden, 1996; Johns & Swales, 2002). While the teachers in this study were not formally
socialized into SFL, and therefore were not prepared to socialize their students into all
of the particulars of tenor, the fact that they were able to raise student attention to this
important aspect of texts at all is clearly beneficial.

In addition to socializing students into a general attention to audience, the
teacher did also socialize them into attention to some specific aspects of tenor. For
example, during Winter Quarter, Sarah socialized her students into attention to
orthographic conventions and avoidance of first- and second- person pronouns. Both of
these conventions are important for establishing an author’s authority in relation to the
audience and the subject matter, as discussed in previous studies (Halliday & Martin,
1993; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2003; Lemke, 1990; Schleppegrell, 2004). Jen and Grace,
during Fall quarter, also discussed the importance of conforming to orthographic
norms.

In all, the teachers’ attention to interpersonal aspects/tenor of the text was not
nearly as consistent, systematic, or explicit as their attention to textual
organization/mode. For example, during the Fall quarter, Jen encouraged Kyle to add
more humor to his writing, something which Lemke (1990) identifies as explicitly
discouraged within academic writing. During Spring quarter, students were
encouraged by Jake to adopt an informal tone in the critiques that they wrote to their
fellow students. While this was an important lesson in the difference between
interpersonal and academic writing (as detailed in Schleppegrell, 2004), it is important
to examine whether or not this led to confusion on students’ parts. The next chapter will
examine how students understood teacher’s discussion of tenor and how they incorporated those discussions into their writing.
Chapter 9 – Student Socialization into Attention to Tenor

As discussed in Chapter 8, teachers’ coverage of tenor centered around discussions of audience expectations, use of pronouns, and documentation styles as a way to establish authority, orthographic conventions (including the proportions of a text) and tone. In particular of those things, students found the focus on documentation styles to be particularly helpful. Students were also more likely to consider audience expectations of a text as the year progressed. Some attention was also paid to tone. This is interesting in light of the findings of previous studies (Flowerdew, 1999a; Flowerdew, 1999b; Gosden, 1996; Johns & Swales, 2002; Tait, 1999) which found that students were unlikely to consider their audience when writing texts.

*Fall Quarter, Writing 1 and Writing 2 “I don’t know why they cannot understand.”*

In general, there was not a lot of attention paid by students to the tenor aspect of texts during the fall quarter. Student references to tenor tended to be general to the point of vagueness, and even seemed incidental, at times. When students did consider tenor, it was most likely in relationship to audience expectations about textual organization and/or the tone of a text. Their attention to audience expectations often seemed more like concern about audience judgment of a text, rather than the relationship between the audience, the author, and the text. For example, during a discussion of his topic sentence with another student during peer review, Kyle observed to her, “You are not satisfied” (Writing 1, 7 October). In this case, Kyle is more concerned with his reader’s reaction to, rather than relationship with, the text.
Emily portrayed a similar approach to audience during another class discussion. The discussion was about whether there is a difference between the sentences “Joshi is a son and a father” and “Joshi is a son and father.” When Jen stated that she did not believe there was a difference between the sentences other than the omitted article before father, and that therefore either sentence was acceptable, Emily asked “People cannot say it’s wrong?” (Writing 1, 14 October). Like Kyle in the previous example, Emily is concerned here with the audience’s perception of the correctness or accuracy of the text.

Jeff also exhibited a belief that meeting audience expectations was a matter of escaping negative judgments. During a class discussion, he told a story about writing an email to his former employer:

Jeff: yesterday, I asked her, my former boss, to write a reference letter. He is a British. Of course, his English is pretty good. So when I write him, I have to think, there’s no grammar mistake. How about the topic sentence [laughing]. Is it clear. Everything related. Ok, does it make sense. Then, finally I say, If I’m missing some information, please let me know. And then I think, before I sign I think, in conclusion…[laughs]. So, it helped a lot. I’m sure. (Writing 1, 2 December)

Jeff’s comments are interesting because they show that, by the end of the quarter, he had an understanding of the idea that authors should consider their audiences when writing, but he still frames his discussion of audience in terms of “audience as judge” rather than “audience as participant in creating textual meaning.” It is because his former employer’s English is “pretty good” that Jeff is careful when writing his email. This does, however, also reflect Jen’s emphasis on the interpersonal aspect of a text being created through the author’s attention to the reader’s interest and comfort.
As exhibited by the previous example, students seemed to move away from the idea of reader expectations as judgments as the quarter progressed. They began making comments about positionality and about engaging readers, rather than simply pleasing them. For example, Jeff made the following comment during peer review regarding positionality in a student’s text:

Jeff: Ok, here is some, some piece, this summer she went to university of [Midwest] as exchange student. If somebody else would read the sentence is ok, it just it doesn't matter, I mean for us, I think she came to-[laughs] is better. She came to [Midwest University].
(Writing 1, 7 October)

Jeff is making a distinction here between a general audience and an audience of students attending the university: for the general audience, the author should write that the student “went to” the university; for an audience of university students, the author should write that the student “came to” the university. Jeff’s comment on this deictic feature of the text shows his sensitivity to the effect an audience has on the tenor of a text.

Despite the fact that students did spend a large amount of class time discussing tenor-related aspects of a text, remarks during their end-of-quarter interviews show that the teachers’ efforts to socialize them into attention to tenor did have some effect on the students’ approaches to texts. For example, Chris remarked that he had noticed that “there is a specific pattern to be followed. That a general audience expects, I guess subconsciously, but I didn’t know” (Chris interview, 10 November). Wallace mentioned
that he learned that, in essays, “the first thing is attract the audience” (Wallace interview, 9 November).

During the last day of Writing 1, Jeff summed up what he had learned about tenor as follows:

Jeff: What’s the audience? What do you want to show to them? I never think about this question. Like we write the final essay, violence for media. Which do you want to show this for? I find that I want to show to my classmates and my teacher. Yes, exactly. But you have to focus on something like… In this class I don’t feel like we have very…position. How position writing. Who? For this essay, who do you want to show? What purpose do you want to have? But now, I think in the classes we just focus on the structure. We have some basic idea. But maybe for further class, we will have information like this.
(Writing 1, 2 December)

So, according to Jeff, Jen has socialized him into realizing that he must pay attention to audience and position, something which, as he said, “I never think about.” Jeff is also able to clearly state that he now recognizes that there is the audience, the topic, and the author.

Kyle was also able to articulate the relationship between author, reader, and text during his end-of-quarter interview. Oddly enough, his discussion of tenor occurred during his critique of the organizational style that he was taught during Writing 1 (see chapter 7).

Andrea: Can you tell me why you think American academics use the pattern that you think is stupid? [Explains more: he said that organization of US papers is not good, but why does he think it’s done like that?]
Kyle: According to your explanation, Americans differ on patience [laughs]. What I feel like is there are many many
many writings, and one reader came here, and he must select what he want. And he read only the introduction, “Oh, it’s not my ****” and select and read it to the conclusion.

Andrea: do you think that’s true? [clarification: in his experience in the US, does that make sense to him?]
Kyle: Yeah. I think it’s true.
(Kyle interview, 10 November)

Thus, while Kyle believes that the textual organization pattern that he was taught is somewhat stupid, he recognizes its mutually influencing relationship to audience.

Not all students ended the quarter with a less restrictive idea of the relationship between audience, text, and author. In particular, Emily still approached the tenor of a text as a matter of, as she put it, “greeting the professor’s requirement” (Emily interview, 9 November). She remarked that she sometimes had to change writing that she found perfectly comprehensible in order for others to understand it:

Emily: Then, we have to make it up. We have to make sentence to make the English tutor or professor understood, but sometimes it not hard. I don’t know why they cannot understand [laughs]
(Emily interview, 9 November)

It’s clear from her remark that she doesn’t know why they cannot understand that Emily does not regard these changes as a negotiation between author, text, and audience; rather, she is changing her text because of a directive.

Despite her somewhat cynical perspective on matters of tenor, Emily’s writing for the Fall quarter showed a definite shift in her attention to tenor, especially in the form of the use of personal pronouns. For the first assignment of the quarter, a
paragraph describing a classmate, Emily’s paragraph concluded with the following four sentences:

After Wallace get his PhD degree, he is planning to have working experiences at universities or research labs. His wife is considering her future career while she is studying. I believe Wallace’s family is sincere and positive. I hope their dream come true soon and enjoy their lives in America.

(Writing 1, document 3)

What is interesting about these sentences is that they reflect a choice on Emily’s part to interject a personal voice and use of personal pronouns into an otherwise objective essay. As mentioned in Halliday and Martin (1993), Lemke (1990), and Schleppegrell (2004), the use of personal pronouns and personal opinions is frowned upon in academic writing. Thus, in her first assignment of the quarter, Emily clearly does not have a firm grasp on the conventions of tenor in academic writing.

By the end of the fall quarter, Emily’s writing includes fewer personal pronouns. When a pronoun is used, it is plural, thus including the audience in the information discussed in the text. For example, the introduction to her final assignment, an essay about violence in the media, is as follows:

The Effect of Media Violence on adolescents
Mass media contributes to the enormous development in modern technology. It gives us a myriad of information everywhere and in short time. On the other hand, there are not only merits to mass media but also negative aspects to it. Since people are exposed to media violence, they get easily angry and feel bored soon. Especially, media violence affects adolescents their personalities, demeanors, and morals. The adolescents will lead our society in the future. We need to think of the results from long term exposure to media violence on adolescences.

(Writing 1, document 20)
The majority of this introduction maintains the impersonal tone and lack of first-person pronouns identified by previous research (Halliday & Martin, 1993; Lemke, 1990; and Schleppegrell, 2004) as desirable in academic writing. When she does use a first-person pronoun (“we” in the final sentence), it serves the purpose of creating a link between the audience, the author, and the topic – an important aspect of tenor.

This development in Emily’s writing is similar to other students’. For example, Kyle’s final essay has very few instances of personal pronouns, and those that are used are the first person plural: “We know the number of casualties in Gaza Strip by yesterday’s conflict, current stock indexes in Wall Street, and tomorrow’s weather in Beijing” and “our troop’s invasion to other nation” and “our weapons keep the peace of the world.” In these cases, Kyle, like Emily, is using the pronoun to create a relationship between the audience, the author, and the topic.

Chris’s essays also showed changes in his approach to tenor, although his changes were more subtle, as he began the quarter with a firmer grasp on the impersonal tone of academic writing. He was also the only student to make an effort during Fall quarter at documenting sources. The following is the last paragraph and references of his first essay for Writing 2:

Polar bears are fat [sic] becoming extinct. There are currently anywhere between 22,000 and 27,000 polar bears in the world. Global warming, slow breeding cycle, their slowly shrinking environment coupled with the inexorable hunting my [sic] man is causing a rapid decrease in their numbers. If quick and decisive preventive measures are not taken soon, then these [sic] magnanimous species will be wiped out from the face of the earth in a matter of years.
The last sentence of the paragraph is of particular interest when compared to Emily and Kyle’s end-of-quarter essays from Writing 1. In his last sentence, Chris is creating a relationship of responsibility between the audience, text, and author by using the conditional if-then construction. In contrast, Emily and Kyle still rely upon the pronoun “we.”

Chris’s attempt at naming his references, while flawed, is also an acknowledgment on his part of the importance of referencing as a way of establishing the author’s credibility to the audience. As mentioned previously, Chris was the only student to make an effort at documentation during Fall quarter.

Chris rewrote the previously quoted essay, and in addition to correcting most of the typos, he also added a phrase, in italics below:

Polar bears are fast becoming extinct. There are currently anywhere between 22,000 and 27,000 polar bears in the world as compared to 400,000 at the beginning of the 20th century. Global warming, slow breeding cycle, their slowly shrinking environment coupled with the inexorable hunting my [sic] man is causing a rapid decrease in their numbers. If decisive preventive measures are not taken soon, then these [sic] magnanimous species will be wiped out from the face of the earth in a matter of years.

References
1) Discovery channel.
2) National geographic books.
(Fall Writing 2, document 7)
This addition is important because it speaks to Chris’s awareness that a comparison would strengthen readers’ understanding of the statistics he is presenting. Thus, this addition serves the purpose of increasing the audience’s engagement with the topic as a whole through use of a shocking statistic. The use of the statistic also increases the author’s credibility, thereby additionally strengthening the effect of the text. So, through this small addition, Chris is exhibiting his understanding of the importance of creating a relationship between the author, the audience, and the text.

Summary of Fall Quarter, Writing 1 and 2 Student Attention to Tenor

The students began the quarter with very little knowledge of or concern for the importance of tenor. Their first approach toward audience expectations of a text was to consider the audience as a judge, and the job of the author as predicting and mitigating audience’s negative reactions to the text. Thus, there was little focus on tone, attitudinal stance, and manipulation of orthographic resources. As the quarter progressed, students began to acknowledge the role of the audience in shaping a text, and their comments and writing showed more negotiations of the author-text-audience relationship. By the end of the quarter, most of the students noted the importance of working with and for an audience when writing, but they did not explicitly discuss specific skills for doing so. This pattern of growing attention to tenor is interesting in light of findings of previous research (Flowerdew, 1999a; Flowerdew, 1999b; Gosden, 1996; Johns & Swales, 2002), which suggests that students do not focus on relationship with audience in their writing. The students’ shift in attention throughout the quarter, coupled with the teachers’
socialization efforts (discussed in Chapter 8), suggests that students can be socialized into attention to audience.

Winter Quarter, Writing 2 “The referencing was good.”

According to the students, the most helpful and important thing that they learned during Winter quarter was documentation of sources. When asked what they learned in class during the quarter, one of the first things mentioned by the students was documentation styles. For example, Chris explained that learning documentation styles was not only helpful, but something that he had not been taught before:

Chris: The referencing was good
Andrea: Documentation styles?
Chris: Documentation styles, yeah.
Andrea: Had you learned that before?
Chris: No. I mean, I don’t know if she taught in the later classes or not, but I midway right? From Grace. So I don’t know if she taught about documentation or not. I don’t think she taught about it.
Andrea: But you didn’t learn it, like, in the college of engineering
Chris: No, I mean, we just follow the papers that we have. We have this one paper that we use as reference, and that’s the way we keep our references.
(Chris interview, 17 March)

Jeff also said that learning documentation styles was helpful, and something he had not learned before:

Jeff: I didn’t have ideas about it. Because at that time I focused on whether my homework would be returned or not….So at least I got an idea. This is the right way. And this is not the only way.
Andrea: So the class helped you understand the documentation style of your department a little more deeply, like really understand what it was and why to use it. Is that fair to say?
Jeff: Actually I cannot say I really understand it. But at least the details, yeah.
Andrea: And you know where to look. For help.
Jeff: Yeah. Yeah. This is the way.
Jeff: If a teacher tell me to do something, to write something, or I was told write something some style, maybe if I don’t take this class, of course, some style I never heard of. Maybe I never heard of the feature. But at least I see their style. I get the meaning, what does style mean, what’s the difference, because I reviewed the sheets from [other students].
(Jeff interview, 17 March)

Both Chris’s and Jeff’s comments about documentations styles are interesting because they show that both students gained knowledge not just of the methodology of documenting sources, but the reasons behind it. In Chris’s case, he had previously been able to mimic the documentation style of his department by following a model paper, but now he indicates that his approach is different. Jeff, too, indicates that he now feels confident that he understands the idea of documentation styles and what they “mean.” Thus, both students seem to have moved toward an understanding of the importance of documentation styles as one way of manipulating orthographic resources to indicate an author’s attitudinal stance toward a topic, as a way of situating oneself within a community of practice, and as a way of establishing credibility.

The students’ grasp of the importance and use of documenting sources was reflected in their writing assignments, as well. At the beginning of the quarter, Wallace practiced documenting a source by the author Roger Sipher in the following manner:

The author also thinks that the abolition of the compulsory-attendance laws would not harm the public education but improve its quality. (Roger)
(Winter Writing 2, document 8)
This is an interesting example because it not only shows Wallace’s confusion regarding the format of documentation, but it also shows an incomplete grasp of the necessity of formal, impersonal tones in academic writing (Halliday & Martin, 1993; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Lemke, 1990; Schleppegrell, 2004) by referring to the author of the source document by first name.

At the end of the quarter, Wallace had clearly learned his subject area’s documentation style and incorporated it into his writing. The following is an example of how his citations appeared within the text, as well as how his references appeared at the end of the paper:

“In 1887, a German scientist, Heinrich Hertz, first discovered radio wave in his laboratory [1].”

References:

This efficient and detailed use of references shows that Wallace has clearly made a leap in his understanding of the importance of documentation styles to the tenor of academic writing.

As mentioned in Chapter 8, an additional focus of the winter class was meeting audience expectations. Sarah emphasized the need for authors to create a relationship
between the topic, the readers, and themselves that is clear, interesting, and appropriate to the audience. She also emphasized the author’s responsibility to establish the usefulness or appropriateness of the topic to the audience. This is something on which the students also focused, and which manifested most frequently in classroom discussions. For example, in a discussion of a sample essay, Jeff remarked:

Jeff: The author give a question and this catch the reader attention. And very – uh, actually, the introduction paragraph is very good.
(Writing 2, 20 January)

In this comment, Jeff is demonstrating an understanding of the fact that something which can “catch the reader attention” is an effective tool in creating a relationship with the audience.

Wallace indicated his developing understanding of the necessity of relating to the audience through the text. The first is in a written assignment about the advantages and disadvantages of peer review, in which he wrote the following:

As a writer, you must try your best to help the reader, not just yourself, understand what you write about easily
(Winter Writing 2, document 6)

This clearly shows Wallace’s understanding of the necessity of paying attention to audience. He also demonstrated this in a class discussion in which he asked his intended audience what they would like to read about his topic:

Wallace: I want to write something about radar. What do you want?
Sarah: about what?
Wallace: radar.
Sarah: Radars. Ok.
Wallace: What do you want?
Sarah: I don’t know. Who are you writing it for?
Wallace: for you [I think this is the collective you, i.e., the class]
(Writing 2, 3 February)

This latter example is a rather funny indication of the fact that Wallace sometimes found it difficult to negotiate the tenor of a text. For example, in his multiple drafts of an essay, Wallace struggled with ways of addressing the audience when using hypothetical examples to explain a particular phenomenon. As discussed in Chapter 8, Sarah was inconsistent in her feedback about these drafts, but tended to comment negatively on the use of first- and second-person pronouns. He includes three different examples to explain technical concepts: one example to explain “echo,” one to explain Doppler shift, and one to explain synthetic aperture radar. In the first draft of the essay, only echo is explained, and the third-person impersonal pronoun is used [in all of the following examples, pronouns are italicized for emphasis]:

The phenomenon of echo often happens around us. When one shouts into a well, the echo of his voice will come back a moment later. Because the radio wave takes a round trip, the product of the length of time between the signals sent and received and the speed of the radio wave are twice the distance between the radar and the object. Using this relation, we can calculate the distance between radar and object which is called the range of the object.
(Winter Writing 2, document 9)

In this example, Wallace shifts between pronouns, thus confusing his own stance toward the topic. His use of the first-person plural pronouns indicates a move (similar to those of Emily and Kyle at the end of Fall quarter) to directly involve readers with the topic and the author, while still maintaining a somewhat impersonal tone. The use
of “one” and “his,” though, muddles this effort, as it creates more distance between the
readers and the author.

In the next draft of the essay, echo and Doppler shift are both explained through
eamples, with a change to a more personal tone through the use of second-person
pronouns:

Echo:
The phenomenon of echo often happened around us. When
you shout into a well, echo of your voice will come back
moment later. Because radio wave take a round trip, the
length of time between the signals sent and received
multiplies the speed of radio wave are twice of the distance
between radar and object. Using this relation, we can
calculate the distance between radar and object which is
called the range of the object.
(Winter Writing 2, document 11)

Doppler shift:
Doppler shift is also a very common phenomenon. When a
man is driving a car and driving toward you, you will hear a
higher tone horn than the original one; when he moving
away from you, you will hear a lower tone horn than the
original one. The sound is sent by the car and you are moving
corresponding to the car. Doppler told us that the frequency
of sound received by you will change according to your
relative speed and the changing of the frequency is called
Doppler shift.
(Winter Writing 2, document 11)

The more informal tone that is accomplished by the use of “you” is contradicted by the
occasional use of “us.” The second-person pronoun creates distance between the author
and the audience in relation to the text, while the first-person plural pronoun unites the
author and the audience in relation to the text. The fact that both pronouns are used in
the same paragraph shows that Wallace has not fully grasped the interpersonal functions of a text.

The third draft of Wallace’s essay adds a description of synthetic aperture radar (SAR) to the same examples (with the exception of an added question – “Why are the tones of whistle different?” – in the Doppler shift example) from the second draft:

You may think that SAR must look like a camera which is used in our daily life. Actually, they are totally different. The camera used in our ordinary life is also called optical camera which is based on the exposure of light on film, while SAR used the electrical signals collected by radar. To generate the picture of an object, we need a sequence of data, so radar engineering put radar on a moving airplane and collect a sequence of data of the object. (Winter Writing 2, document 10)

Once again, the mixing of pronouns creates an inconsistent relationship between the author, audience, and text.

The final draft of the essay includes all three examples, with some changes in pronoun use:

Echo:
The phenomenon of echo often happens around us. When one shouts into a well, the echo of his voice will come back a moment later. Because the radio wave takes a round trip, the product of the length of time between the signals sent and received and the speed of the radio wave are twice the distance between the radar and the object. Using this relation, we can calculate the distance between radar and object which is called the range of the object. (Winter Writing 2, document 12)

Doppler shift:
Suppose a car passes your location. If the car is driving towards you, you can hear a higher tone whistle than if the car is stationary; when he is moving away from you, the tone of the
whistle will be lower than if the car is still. Why are the tones of whistle different? Doppler told *us* that the frequency of sound received by *you* will change according to *your* relative speed to the source and the difference of the frequency is called Doppler shift.

(Winter Writing 2, document 12)

*One* might think that SAR must look like a camera which is used in *our* daily life. Actually, they are totally different. Cameras used in *our* ordinary life are also called optical cameras which are based on the exposure of light on film, while SARs use the electrical signals collected by radar. To generate the picture of an object, *we* need a sequence of data, so radar engineering put radar on moving airplane and collects sequence of data of the object.

(Winter Writing 2, document 12)

In this draft, the first and second examples maintain the previously established inconsistent approach to tenor. The third, example, though, is fairly consistent in the use of the first-person plural pronoun, which creates a feeling of mutual involvement between author, audience, and text. This consistency suggests that Wallace is beginning to grasp the skills necessary to put his understanding of tenor into practice, despite the inconsistent written feedback he received from Sarah.

*Summary of Winter Quarter, Writing 2 Student Attention to Tenor*

There was a general consensus among the students that learning documentation styles was the most helpful part of the winter quarter. Their approach to documentation styles shifted from simply reproducing sample texts to an understanding of the usefulness of documentation styles to establishing an author’s credibility and standing within a community of practice. This attention to documentation styles is an interesting combination of the manipulation of orthographic resources (Halliday, 1993; Halliday & Matthiessen,
2004; Schleppegrell) and establishment of a formal attitudinal stance (Halliday, 1993; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Lemke, 1990; Schleppegrell, 2004) that is important to tenor. In addition to documentation styles, students also focused on tenor in the form of meeting audience expectations by establishing a relationship between the audience, the author, and the text. In this area, students were still inconsistent, but they showed definite attention to this, both in their classroom remarks and in their writing. This student attention to audience suggests that the inattention discussed by previous research (Casanave, 1998; Flowerdew, 1999a and 1999b; Gosden, 1996; Hinds, 1987; Johns & Swales, 2002; Riazi, 1997) can be addressed through socialization in writing classes.

Spring Quarter, Writing 3 “LOL.”

As mentioned in Chapter 8, there was not a lot of explicit attention paid to tenor during Writing 3. Students did make remarks in class and in their written critiques that showed their attention to the matter, but it was not widely discussed. When it was discussed, it sometimes involved the citation and documentation styles that the students had acquired the previous quarter. For example, Chris raised a question about whether or not a commonly known quote needed to be cited:

Chris: But tell me, do you really need this? Do you really have to cite that? Because when you say, when you quote it in Descartes I think therefore I am, you don’t have to say which website you picked it up from, right? It’s pretty well-known. Say it’s Alexander Graham Bell. You don’t have to say which website. That I found a bit odd. (Writing 3, 26 April)

This is an interesting example because Chris’s question not only raises the issue of when to document, but it also relates to how much an author can assume about an audience. It’s
clear from his comment that he found the citation superfluous, and in a way condescending to the audience: shouldn’t everyone know the source of common quotes? In this way, Chris is still exploring how to establish an author’s authority on a subject while still acknowledging the audience’s capabilities.

Wallace also commented on documentation styles, but his comment was in a written critique:

Second, the “works cited” part is very unprofessional, I do not know which kind of style the author used. I think you should use APA style…. The citation part is the only problem and she should take time to study the style of citation and use them correctly.

(Writing 3, document 26)

This comment, specifically the criticism that the style seemed “unprofessional,” reflects Wallace’s grasp of the concept that documentation style is a way of establishing membership in a (professional) community of practice.

A more common topic of class discussions about tenor was audience expectations. Some of these comments were general statements about making texts more approachable to readers. The following are examples of such comments:

Wallace: If you just write this, I think. This reason of this article is what what what. It would be very clear your audience.

(Writing 3, 26 April)

Chris: One more quick comment. When you’re actually using equations to describe something, it helps if you actually write out the equation. Rather than use all the summation blah blah blah, stuff like that. Write it out. I mean it’s just as [***] using all those symbols. Right, it helps to understand it, and you don’t get bogged down in all that
summation signs and all those Greek characters. It makes for an easier read, actually.
(Writing 3, 26 April)

Emily: I don’t know, in the introduction it’s all one paragraph, even though you combine everything in one paragraph, as a reader I’m confused about what you are going to describe. And if you don’t write the report of writing, what you are going to discuss, in the beginning, for us, who don’t know the area, we can’t understand the rest.
(Writing 3, 24 May)

It’s interesting to note that in the last two comments, Emily and Chris are commenting on an audience’s comfort level with technical terminology. This points to their emerging understanding of the importance of field, or the ideational aspects of a text, in relation to tenor. Chapter 11 will include an in-depth look at students’ attention to field, but it is important to note here that Emily, Chris, and Wallace are all remarking upon the importance of making a text approachable to audience, which is an important part of the tenor of the text.

During the quarter, students began showing that their decisions about tenor were thoughtful and deliberate, and based on feedback they had received from the class. Sometimes, they found the feedback frustrating, as in the following example of Chris:

Chris: No, I mean, doesn’t the title say everything? Because, you all seem to think differently than me and that was kind of [laughter drowns out rest] I don’t know, I mean, ok.
(Writing 3, 24 May)

Chris is clearly frustrated here that his audience is not as engaged with his text as he is, and, while he tries at first to argue, he relents to his audience’s needs. This shows that he has begun to realize the importance of having an audience that’s willing to read his work! Later
in the same discussion, in an exchange with me, he actually asks where in the text he should put his statement of purpose:

Chris: And you want me to put it somewhere in the introduction?
Andrea: Usually that
Chris: Or it should be in the abstract.
Andrea: I always go for both.
Chris: Because if the audience reads the abstract first…
Andrea: Right, right.
Chris: ok.
(Writing 3, 24 May)

This shows Chris not only tailoring his text to his audience, but also exhibiting an understanding of how the organization suggested by the researcher will foster the audience’s engagement with the text.

Emily also showed her knowledge of the importance of tenor when she asked Jake if she should include a glossary with the final draft of her essay:

[Emily asks a question about the final paper – whether he needs to have terms defined for him]
Andrea: She’s asking if you want a glossary with her paper
Emily: Because during our discussion, a lot of people asked for the paper to describe what, to explain the terminology.
(Writing 3, 24 May)

Emily is clearly reflecting upon her previous experience of the audience’s engagement with her text, and, finding it unsatisfactory, is willing to change the text in order to foster more engagement. It is important to note that, once again, this is related to technical terms, which fall into the field of a text, and will be further discussed in Chapter 11. Here, though, Emily is focused on creating a text that is accessible to her audience.
A particularly interesting phenomenon that arose in Writing 3 was the need for students to negotiate two different types of writing with two drastically different requirements of tenor: academic papers and critiques. As discussed in Chapter 8, the critiques required more attention to the emotions of the readers, and thus required a more personal tenor than the academic texts. The students’ approach to this necessity of personalization of texts was interesting, and reflected their overall grasp of tenor. In particular, Wallace and Chris both took opposite approaches to the tone of their critiques, with Wallace tending toward a tone so formal as to seem directive, while Chris adopted a tone so informal, his critiques sometimes appeared to be text messages.

In the case of Wallace, the effort that he made to be more informal took the form of referring to the author by name, rather than as “the author,” after Jake commented on this in the first critique, in which Wallace repeatedly referred to “the author,” as in the following:

I also like the way the author explained the equations. He gave us very clear explanation of every variable.
(Writing 3, document 25)

In subsequent critiques, Wallace showed a concerted effort toward referring to the author by name; however, this effort was often short lived, as in the following paragraph from a critique:

[student name] took on the difficult task of explaining how to use “reinforce mechanism for short fiber polymer matrix composites (PMC)” to modify the surface of carbon nanotube. Unfortunately, he did not help me easily understand the topic by his words. This article would have been more readable if the author had written in the following way.
(Writing 3, document 27)
By the third paragraph of this critique, Wallace has returned to his formal, distanced reference to “the author.” Despite Jake’s continued comments that Wallace should “address the reader directly,” Wallace continued to refer to authors as “the author.” This shows that his approach to tenor is not yet a flexible one.

In contrast to Wallace, Chris’s critiques became more and more informal throughout the quarter. Most of his critique used the abbreviated language of text messaging, and in fact they resembled text messages to the author. His first critique is the most formal, and also includes a reference to the importance of documenting sources to establish credibility:

A well structured piece of writing on an interesting topic. U’r sections set the expectations right for the audience. No surprises there. Also you reference prominent scientists who have done previous work in this area. This lends credibility to your work.

(Writing 3, document 14)

This critique does include one abbreviation (“U’r” instead of “your”), but otherwise is a good example of Chris’s ability to adopt a personal tone, through consistent use of second-person pronouns. Subsequent critiques grew more and more informal, such as the following, which also includes a reference to audience engagement with the text, but is otherwise less substantive:

Hmmm, I like the narrative style of u’r writing. I use it quite often as I believe it helps in establishing a rapport with the reader….LOL. U need to explain in class about the comics u referred to. These were the staple diet of my summer hols before archies and Batman took over.

(Writing 3, document 18).
This critique is clearly informal, but may in fact be somewhat distancing to readers who are not familiar with the conventions of “text English” such as LOL (laughing out loud). Chris is clearly exhibiting a masterful grasp of informal, colloquial tenor here, but it also comes at the expense of content. There is very little in this critique which will help the author reflect upon or improve her writing. Thus, while Chris clearly can master informal tone, his attention to tenor – the relationship between himself, his reader, and his text, with attention to the usefulness of the text to the reader – is not masterful.

*Summary of Spring Quarter, Writing 3 Student Attention to Tenor*

Discussions of tenor were infrequent, but when they occurred, students continued to pay attention to tenor in the form of documentation styles and audience engagement with texts. Students showed that they were reflecting on comments on their texts by discussing changes they had or would make to their texts based on feedback they had received. This shows that they not only were making deliberate choices about tenor, but that they had come to believe that audience engagement with a text truly is important. This suggests that students who do not consider audience when writing, such as those discussed in previous research (Casanave, 1998; Flowerdew, 1999a and 1999b; Gosden, 1996; Hinds, 1987; Johns & Swales, 2002; Riazi, 1997) can be socialized into attention through ESL writing classes.

Despite this belief in the importance of audience engagement with a text, students still struggled to master the negotiations of tenor in their writing. This was highlighted by students’ negotiations of the critique-writing component of Writing 3, which necessitated more personal writing than academic texts. Students were not
successful in their efforts to couple an appropriately personal tone with helpful, engaging information. This supports the findings of previous research ((Flowerdew, 1999b; Johns & Swales, 2002) that students have difficulty finding the balance between establishing authority and engaging the audience’s interest.

Discussion of Student Socialization into Attention to Tenor

Students began the academic year with little concern for the interpersonal aspects of texts. During the fall quarter, they began to recognize the importance of meeting audience expectations of a text and of creating audience interest in a text. This suggests that the teachers’ socialization attempts were successful. Previous research (Casanave, 1998; Flowerdew, 1999a and 1999b; Gosden, 1996; Hinds, 1987; Johns & Swales, 2002; Riazi, 1997) suggests that students tend not to focus on relating to the audience; however, the actions of the students in this research suggest that students can be socialized into attention to tenor through ESL writing classes.

During the Winter quarter, students learned the documentation styles of their subject areas, something which they found immensely helpful to establishing the tenor of a text. Previous research has not focused on citation and documentation as an aspect of the tenor of a text, but the experiences of students in this study suggest that it is an important part of establishing their understanding of tenor. To a lesser degree, students also continued to focus on the previous aspects of tenor, in the form of creating a relationship between the author, the audience, and the text. This often took the form of negotiating pronoun use as an indication of author and audience positionality in relation to the text (Halliday & Martin 1993; Schleppegrell, 2004).
Spring quarter provided an opportunity for students to continue to focus on tenor by discussing audience engagement with a text and documentation styles. The quarter also provided an interesting opportunity for students to negotiate writing critiques, which require a more personal tone than academic writing. Students struggled to negotiate adopting a personal tone while still maintaining engaging and useful content. This difficulty supports the findings of previous research (Flowerdew, 1999b; Gosden, 1992; Johns & Swales, 2002; Mišak, Marušić, & Marušić, 2005) that students have difficulty finding the balance between establishing authority and engaging the audience’s interest.

As they became more concerned with audience engagement with a text, students began to take a more deliberate and considered approach toward use of technical terminology. Especially during Winter and Spring quarters, students’ discussions often explored the intersection between audience expectations, audience engagement, and technical terminology. This technical terminology falls into the ideational, or field, function of a text. The following chapters will provide a view of how teachers (Chapter 10) and students (Chapter 11) negotiated field.
Chapter 10 – How Teachers Socialized Students into Attention to Field

Field refers to the social action of the text, or how it can be identified as part of a particular discipline or discourse community. According to Halliday (1993) the field of a text is contributed to by technical terms, acronyms, specific names, and measurements. Schleppegrell (2004) and Lemke (1990) also name technical terms as important aspects of field, but both also referred to the types of relationships described in texts – causal (Lemke, 1990), relational, and material (Schepegrell, 2004) as important aspects of field.

Of the functional grammatical characteristics of texts that were covered by the teachers who participated in the study, field was by far one to which the least amount of attention was paid. When teachers did refer to the field of texts, these references were most commonly in the form of technical terminology. Technical terminology was an issue in the classes because of the fact that many students’ texts for class were papers from their subject areas. Given the fact that all of the students were graduate students, the information in their work was quite technical, with terminology specific to their subject areas. The teachers’ engagement with this technical terminology varied from forbidding its use, to discussing it as best they could understand it. The differing attitudes of the teachers toward the subject-area specific terms is interesting to examine in the light of the findings of Tait (1999) and Zhu (2004) regarding the purview of writing teachers as general writing, with technical content being the responsibility of content-area teachers.
Writing 1, Fall Quarter “word choice/vocabulary”

The focus of Writing 1 was on smaller pieces of writing that tended to be less academic and more of what Schleppegrell (2004) identifies as personal writing – recounts and reports. The reason for this focus is because it is a beginning-level writing class, and the course was following the pattern identified by Christie (2002a) and Schleppegrell (2004) of assigning personal writing tasks to less experienced writers. Despite the lack of technical focus in the assignments for Writing 1, field was something that was occasionally covered in comments from Jen on student writing. Sometimes those comments specifically addressed nuances of meaning in vocabulary:

Jen comment to Wallace: remember what I said about the adjective “good” – it doesn’t really tell me much, be more specific, descriptive
(Writing 1, document 13)

In contrast to the above comment, Jen’s feedback about terminology was sometimes quite vague, as in the following:

Jen comment to Kyle:
Language points to discuss
word choice/vocabulary
(Writing 1, document 4)

Because of the lack of focus in the class on technical, subject-area writing, the discussions of the necessity for authors to establish themselves as members of a discourse community were understandably few and far between. Instead, discussions of terminology focused on use of precise, descriptive language, such as a discussion of the difference between a house and a home (Writing 1, 18 November), or a discussion of what “identical elements” means (Writing 1, 14 October).
Writing 2, Fall Quarter “it cannot be too dense”

Grace began her Writing 2 class by asking students not to use technical terminology:

Grace: The topic is up to you. [5 seconds]. Just, please remember we are gonna be your audience so it cannot be too dense. Right, if you want to choose a topic of your (field of study), then you need to (choose) the basic language, right? (Writing 2, 11 October)

She spent the rest of the quarter criticizing student writing that included too much discipline-specific language. She took the position that the class was a general writing class, and that neither she nor the other students in class were an appropriate audience for overly technical papers. Thus, the majority of her comments relating to field were criticism of overly technical language. For example, she commented that one student essay included too much “jargon”:

Grace: It’s too dense. Too complex. There are lots of examples of jargon. A lot of terminology. There’s too much terminology that’s vocationally specific. Or maybe the author didn’t do a good job explaining things. But I think there’s too much jargon. (Writing 2, 25 October)

This comment is interesting because Grace briefly allows for the possibility that the author simply didn’t explain things well, but then concludes that the problem really is just too many technical terms.

Grace’s comments sometimes made suggestions for alternatives to technical terminology, such as in the following example. This suggestion in particular is interesting because it frames the use of technical terminology in terms of the
interpersonal aspects of a text, or tenor, but the focus is still on the technical terms, or field.

[Grace says that she thinks that the problem is that the assumed level of knowledge should be low, because it’s for a general audience, and therefore the definition of bioaerosol should be stated in simple terms: “Something along the lines that the bioaerosols are sprays…I mean, using the words that mean something to us. A very general audience. Using very simple words so we can relate to the definition. And we don’t feel bad about not being experts in the field.”

(Writing 2, 25 October)

An interesting way in which Grace socialized students into attention to field aspects of a text in her class was to focus on the appropriate narrowing or focus of a topic. This was something to which she dedicated two classes at the beginning of the quarter. The discussion of narrowing topics was discussed from two perspectives: the first was the appropriateness of a topic to the space restraints of the text, and the second was the appropriateness of the topic in and of itself. In both cases, then, the narrowing or focus of a topic was discussed in terms of its appropriateness to the discourse community broadly defined as “academic writing.”

To support her discussion of the appropriate focus or narrowing of topics, Grace distributed two handouts to class. One has four columns from left to right, titled too broad, still too broad, less broad, and still less broad. Three general topics and two examples of each topic for each category are presented. The following is an excerpt of the handout, with the original formatting retained, showing the handout’s information for one topic:
Too broad  Still too broad  Less broad  Still less broad

II. Pollution  pollution    pollution   pollution caused of the air   of the air   by wood stoves in the home

pollution of the water acid rain the controversy between the U.S. and Canada over acid rain

Excerpt of handout on limiting topics (Fall Writing 2, document 3)

The second handout regarding narrowing of topics contains a list of five “limited topics” and a “possible thesis statement” for each of them. For example, the second limited topic is “effects of jogging on the body,” and the possible thesis statement is “Despite its many advantages, jogging can cause serious injuries to the feet, the knees, and the back” (Fall Writing 2, document 2). It’s interesting to note that the class discussion of this handout was centered on thesis statements and their organizational function within a text, rather than as the topics and thesis statements as expressions of appropriate topics for the discourse community of academic writing. This again speaks to Grace’s general lack of socialization efforts relating to field.

Summary of Fall Quarter Teachers’ Approaches to Socializing Students into Attention to Field

Both teachers’ approaches to field involved a discussion of vocabulary. In Jen’s case, this meant a discussion of using precise words, but not a discussion of technical terminology. In Grace’s case, this meant a discussion about technical terminology as inappropriate for a general audience. Also in Grace’s class, field was discussed in terms of choosing an appropriately focused topic. Thus, in both classes teachers’ efforts to
socialize students into attention to field were indirect at best, but centered on precision:

precision of language, and precision of content.

*Writing 2, Winter Quarter “I would understand the writing part”*

During Winter quarter, in Writing 2, Sarah did not forbid the use of technical
terms, and in fact encouraged students to write their essays on subjects from their fields
of study. This sometimes led to a bit of confusion, especially in Sarah’s negotiation of
technical (and not-so-technical) terms:

Wallace: uh, for example, If I want to introduce radar, and I
will tell you different what is radar and how radar work.
And some aspects of radar. Those things.
Sarah: Ok, and then why do I want to read the rest of the
paper. What’s the point of your paper. Is your whole point
to describe rita?
Andrea: radar
Sarah: So that’s the whole paper? Is that what you’re saying.
Wallace: uh huh
Sarah: Then, you would probably want to say in the
beginning of the paper, “Rita is a” I don’t even know what
this is
Andrea: radar
(Writing 2, 13 January)

Despite the occasional difficulty with such terms, Sarah was very clear about her
willingness to try to negotiate terms, as well as her limitations. When a math student
expressed reservations about submitting a paper from her subject area to Sarah, because
it would be full of formulas, Sarah replied:

Sarah: But I would understand the writing part. So you
could do that.
(Writing 2, 3 February)
Sarah also sometimes used technical terms in class herself, as when she wrote the abbreviation “ELL” on the board during a class discussion, and then explained to students:

> Sarah: English language learner. Ok? Popular terminology in the field I’m a student in.
> (Writing 2, 20 January)

She also assigned a reading of an excerpt from *Foreign Language Annals* to the class for discussion, and a discussion of that article began with the following:

> St says I don’t know
> Wallace: Second language acquisition
> Jeff: but you said last time it was.
> Sarah: I did? I thought I said something about it, but ok. SLA is second language acquisition. So it’s learning a second language. The process, the theories behind it, and all that.
> (Writing 2, 3 February)

Through her willingness to use technical terminology from her own field, Sarah socialized students into the use of technical terms to establish membership in a discourse community. She also stated and showed her willingness to negotiate students’ terminology to the best of her ability.

**Summary of Winter Quarter Teacher’s Approaches to Socializing Students into Attention to Field**

Sarah’s approach to field centered on technical terminology. She encouraged students to write essays within their subject areas, and was willing to negotiate their technical terminology. Additionally, she modeled the use of discipline-specific technical
terminology through introducing terminology from her own field of study (TESL) into the classroom.

*Writing 3, Spring Quarter.* “I didn’t understand everything you said, but…”

Like Sarah, Jake was also willing to negotiate technical terminology in student writing, and acknowledged that “different language” (as he put it) existed in different fields of study. At the beginning of the quarter, he told students:

Jake: So, as we think about our classes, we think about writing and the different ways that people write and especially using academic language. There is different language that’s used in different fields, and there’s different language that’s used in different contexts even within one field. Different language that’s used in class, different language that’s used during office hours, different language that’s used in writing such as communicating on [online course software], and then different language that’s used in the pieces of writing that you’ll be bringing to class. Whether those are essays or part of a lit review or part of a methods section from something your writing or resumes and so on and so forth. Because I know there’s other possibilities of writing that you’ll be bringing in. So, we want to be aware of that as we look at the writing that other students bring into class.

(Writing 3, 31 March)

Thus, from the beginning of the quarter, Jake socialized students into being mindful of the role language and vocabulary use played in their discourse communities. The previous comment is also interesting because it was brought about by discussion of a *TESOL Quarterly* article that Jake shared with the class. By bringing the article into discussion, Jake modeled the use of technical terminology within a particular discourse community. Discussion of the article included the following explanation of terminology
specific to the study, and how it was relevant to engineering (the most common
discipline of the students in the class):

Jake: another one was expression of persuasion or lack of
expression of persuasion. Expression of persuasion would be
when the for example when a writer is trying to persuade
others to agree with his argument, or when an instructor is
speaking in class and trying to persuade students to agree
with the point that he or she is making. And the – Biber and
the others who conducted this study noticed that in the field
of engineering, persuasive speech was used, or expressions
of persuasion were used much more than other fields that
they looked at. And so words such as command or insist,
must and should were all used more – came up more
frequently in the language used by engineers than in other
fields.
(Writing 3, 31 March)

Through this discussion, Jake is socializing students into incorporating technical
terminology into the discourse of a particular community.

Because of his encouragement that students should use field-specific terminology
in their writing, Jake sometimes encountered difficult negotiations during class
discussions. For example, during one class, Jake asked about the term “guess value,”:

“Is guess value a mathematical term?” A few minutes of discussion between students
knowledgeable in the field followed, with the students reaching the consensus that
“guess” and “guess value” were synonyms (Writing 3, 24 May). Jake’s professed
ignorance caused a discussion of the particular term, and a deliberate choice of another
term that was more appropriate to the discourse community for which it was intended.
A similar result occurred when Emily asked Jake whether she should include a glossary
with her final assignment. Jake answered that if a glossary is something they want to do
and incorporate into the paper, they can, but that it does not need to be done separately.

Students are writing the paper for the original intent and purpose that they wrote it
(Writing 3, 24 May). Once again, Jake emphasized the importance of field through use
of appropriate terminology.

The highly technical nature of some students’ essays did have drawbacks, as Jake
was not always able to designate terminology as appropriate or inappropriate. For
example, when Jake asked a student about generalizing a technical part of a text, the
student answered with a technical explanation of why that would not be possible. Jake
replied:

Jake: I didn’t understand everything you said, but
something more specific than the existing text might be
helpful.
(Writing 3, 24 May)

Despite his encouragement of students to focus on field aspects of their texts through
appropriate use of technical terminology, Jake’s comments were sometimes inconsistent
in his approach. For example, he said the following:

Jake: You don’t use so much language that it’s difficult to
understand at the beginning.
(Writing 3, 24 May)

Despite this slight inconsistency, it’s clear that Jake tried to socialize students into the
use of appropriate technical terminology. He also modeled appropriate use, and
therefore drew students’ attention to the field aspect of academic writing.
Summary of Spring Quarter Teacher’s Approaches to Socializing Students into Attention to Field

Like Sarah, Jake focused his socialization efforts on technical terminology. All of the students within his class wrote papers that were within their field of study, and therefore were highly technical. Some class time was dedicated to discussing these terms, and some of Jake’s written comments to students were directed at technical terminology. Also like Sarah, Jake modeled use of technical terminology by introducing some terms from his field of study (TESL) into the classroom.

Discussion of Teachers’ Approaches Socializing Students into Attention to Field

In general, field was the least-discussed aspect of academic writing in each of the classes; however, the classes later in the year (Winter Writing 2 and Winter Writing 3) did dedicate more discussion to field than the Fall quarter classes. Teachers differed slightly in their approach to field, but all of their attention to this aspect of the text centered on technical terminology (Halliday, 1993; Halliday & Martin, 1993; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2003). This is similar to the findings of Lemke (1990) and Schleppegrell (2004).

Those teachers who did welcome the use of technical terminology (Sarah and Jake) also modeled its use to their students. Previous research has not examined language teachers’ use of technical terminology from their own fields as examples of negotiating field to students. However, studies of content-based instruction (Beckett, 1999, 2002, 2005; Beckett & Mohan, 2003; Beckett & Slater, 2005; Lemke, 1990), have shown that modeling of functional language in the classroom does socialize students
into discipline-related norms. The chief difficulty that teachers had regarding discipline-
specific vocabulary was the fact that much of it was outside of their purview as
language teachers. This is similar to the beliefs of the teachers in Tait (1999) and Zhu
(2004); however, this was not necessarily a detriment to the students, as predicted by
those studies, as teacher questions about specific terms sometimes caused students to
reflect upon their choices and then make deliberate decisions.

The following chapter will examine the relationship between the teacher
comments and discussions of field to students’ engagement with field aspects of written
texts.
Chapter 11 – Student Attention to Field

As discussed in chapter 10, field was the functional aspect of academic writing least-discussed by teachers. Not surprisingly, it was also the aspect least discussed by students, as well. When students did discuss the field of texts, it was generally in relation to technical terminology. Their attitudes toward technical terminology changed somewhat during the year, mirroring the attitudes of their teachers. So, during Fall quarter, students tended to avoid technical terms and criticize writing that used too many of them, while during Winter and Spring quarters they were more accepting of technical terminology. As such, the students did begin to discuss technical terminology as the year progressed and when they had teachers who were more receptive to its use. This suggests an emerging understanding by the students of the importance of technical terminology in establishing the place of a text within a field of study.

Fall Quarter, Writing 1 and Writing 2: “pay attention to this difference of the meaning.”

As discussed in Chapter 10, neither Jen’s Writing 1 class nor Grace’s Writing 2 class focused on the field aspects of writing. In the case of Writing 1, Jen occasionally commented on students’ word choices, specifically addressing nuances of meaning. Despite the fact that this was not a focus of the class, Jeff explained that this focus on nuances of meaning was helpful to him, and not something he’d had before:

Jeff: But somehow, we don’t focus much on I mean, the meaning, and the difference of meaning. Even the very small difference. Yeah. Like I always use require instead of ask. It makes people feel like “Why required?” But when we first learn in Chinese, it’s the same. Somehow they mean the same. Now I know that required is a very strong way. Not ask, or, it’s totally different. But unconsciously I will use that
one. So I think this class make us, or let us-help us to know more about to pay attention to this difference of the meaning. (Jeff interview, 3 November)

Kyle also explained how Jen’s comments about word choices and nuances of meaning were different and helpful to him, as his experience in engineering is that people don’t use many words:

Kyle: in the engineering area, they use very small number of words, and they don’t use to make expressions. (Kyle interview, 10 November).

So, despite the fact that there was little focus on the teacher’s part on the field aspects of a text, the students still finished the Writing 1 class with an understanding of the importance of specific terminology and precise meaning.

In her Writing 2 class, Grace was highly critical of student papers that included too much technical terminology. During his time in the class, Chris also made negative remarks about technical terms and concepts. For example, he had the following discussion about a student essay, in which he repeatedly criticizes the student’s use of “arcane words”:

Chris: It’s too technically confusing. A lot of words were hard, there are a lot of arcane words. [Grace asks for examples] Chris: second paragraph. No, wait, second page, 1st paragraph, last three lines: It talks about endotoxin, myotoxin, and beta…glu-glutens and umm….
He or she just uses too much technical knowledge, but that’s it. I didn’t come away with anything I didn’t know. (Writing 2, 25 October)
This criticism is interesting because Chris is not only criticizing the use of technical terms, but also saying that the essay is too reliant on them. Chris does not understand the place of technical terminology within the text, and cannot make suggestions to the author of how to make the terminology easier to navigate.

In addition to criticizing use of technical terminology, Chris also sometimes questioned the veracity of content of a piece of writing, as in the following comment about a sample concluding paragraph:

Chris: I mean what does conquering of AIDS have to do with conquering of nature, because AIDS doesn’t exist naturally in nature like typhoid or cholera.
(Writing 2, 11 October)

The fact that Chris was critical of the content of the sample paragraph, rather than looking simply at its function as a conclusion, is evidence that he understands the importance of the ideational aspect of a text. His criticism of the use of technical terminology, though, suggests that he is not completely aware of the methods of establishing the importance of the ideas of a text within a particular discipline.

*Summary of Fall Quarter, Writing 1 and Writing 2 Student Attention to Field.*

In general, students paid little attention to the field aspects of a text. When they did, it was in the form of nuances of meaning (Writing 1) technical terminology (Writing 2) or veracity of content (Writing 2). The few comments that students did make about field aspects of writing and texts suggested that they recognized its importance, but did not know how to negotiate it. This lack of knowledge about how to negotiate
the field of a text was most likely compounded by the Fall quarter teachers’ ambivalence toward the subject.

Writing 2, Winter Quarter: “I always think about writing easier.”

Because Sarah was more accepting of technical terminology in her Writing 2 class, the students were able to engage in more open discussions of the use of technical terminology and its place in various disciplines. What the students found was that the terminology sometimes made reading difficult to understand, and therefore excluded readers who were not from the same discipline as the author. Because there was a strong focus on meeting audience expectations in the Writing 2 class, the students found that there was a conflict between writing technical papers from their field and making it appropriate for an audience of ESL students from various disciplines. Wallace expressed this concern in the following discussion with the researcher:

Wallace: Another thing is, what if I try write some topic in my field. In this class. I always think about writing easier.

Andrea: I don’t think that – I personally don’t think that you need to do that. The way that I address engineers and writing about engineering is that I should be able to understand the main point of the paper. But there may be sections of it that are very technical…. I don’t think that you should try to make it easier. Just because there are some people from [College name] in your class.

Wallace: So, I write for class. So I need to think about the audience. But you do think it’s best to write it as if I would submit it to a professor or some publication.

Andrea: Mmmhmm. Because not every single part of an engineering paper is technical. There’s a lot of things that normal people can understand. It’s not that you’re writing it in a completely different language. Right?
Wallace: If they cannot understand, they…how do you call…it will be boring for them.
(Wallace interview, 17 March)

This discussion shows that Wallace understands the place of technical terminology in his writing (and presumably, academic writing in general), but that he has trouble reconciling it with the necessities of negotiating the tenor of the text, as it has been taught to him by Sarah. Therefore, because attention to audience has been given more consideration in class than has use of technical terminology, Wallace seems to be assuming that, if technical terminology makes a text difficult for an audience, it should be left out.

Jeff also ended the Winter quarter with questions about using technical terminology; however, he approached it from the experience of a reader:

Jeff: In our group, [two student names] they are both from [college name], so if read each other’s paper, they two concentrated on music, and I was lost in the terms, I had to check it.

Andrea: In the dictionary?

Jeff: Yeah. For some people, like [student name], she write like a [discipline name] style.
(Jeff interview, 17 March)

It is interesting to note that both Jeff and Wallace finished the Winter quarter – the first quarter in which technical terminology was addressed to some extent – with concerns about how to negotiate the use of technical terminology. Both students felt that the technical terms could possibly alienate an audience, and they had been clearly taught that one of their responsibilities as a writer was to create interest for readers. They also
understood, though, that technical terminology established a text as belonging to a particular field of study, as is shown by Jeff’s reference to “musician style” writing.

**Summary of Winter Quarter, Writing 2 Student Attention to Field**

Because students were allowed by Sarah to include technical terminology in their writing, this raised questions of how to fit the terminology into their essays without alienating their audience. Both Wallace and Jeff expressed concern about this. Their difficulty in negotiating these two textual metafunctions (field and tenor) suggests that uneven attention to functions of a text creates dilemmas for student writers, as they interpret uneven attention as a form of pedagogical triage: teacher talks about audience more, so audience is more important. Despite their professed confusion about using technical terminology, the fact that the students are thinking about and discussing it suggests that they have come to recognize the importance of it in establishing the validity of a text within a particular discipline.

*Writing 3, Spring Quarter: “Some terms in your introduction cud use some explanation.”*

While Jake did not focus any more on the field aspects of a text than the other teachers, the Spring quarter class required more negotiation of field on the students’ parts because there were students from many different majors in the class. As described previously, the students were encouraged to submit writing that would be useful to them in their degree programs, and thus the writing that was reviewed in class was quite technical. For example, Emily submitted a paper about developing intervention plans for Autistic children; Chris submitted a paper entitled “Fabrication and Properties of Carbon Fiber Reinforced Copper Matrix Composites;” and Wallace wrote about admission
control for wireless networks. Given the obviously technical nature of the student papers that were discussed in class, a negotiation of terminology was important. In general, students grew more comfortable with both using and reading technical terminology throughout the quarter. For example, in his comments on a student essay entitled “Thermodynamic Review of the ZrO$_2$-CeO$_2$ and ZrO$_2$-CeO$_{1.5}$ Binary System,” Chris wrote the following comments:

Some terms in your introduction cud use some explanation like-Martensite, tetragonal, monoclinic phases, etc. These words are very specific to the field of metallurgy. As such it wud help if you cud explain these terms as and when u use them. U did a good job on explaining why one shud use zirconia.

(Writing 3, document 20)

These comments are interesting to contrast with Chris’s comments from the Fall quarter, in which he criticizes a text for being “too technically confusing.” Here, the text is undeniably technical, and most likely somewhat confusing; however, Chris addresses specific terms and requests clarification, rather than eradication, of them. This shows that he has come to realize the place of technical terminology within the text.

Emily also made comments about use of terminology in which she asked for clarification, rather than suggesting that the terms should be removed:

Emily: if you don’t write the report of writing, what you are going to discuss, in the beginning, for us, who don’t know the area, we can’t understand the rest.
Chris: so, what do you want me to simplify?
Emily: How about the basis for the type of matrix?

(Writing 3, 24 May)
Here again, Emily has not criticized Chris for using technical terms, but rather has asked that he clarify their use.

Wallace, too, showed his understanding of the place of technical terminology in academic writing when he praised a student for clearly explaining a very technical equation:

\[
H(x) = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \theta(q_i(x)) \gamma(q_i(x))
\]

the author gave us the definition of every component in this equation and he also told us how \(\theta(q_i(x))\) and \(\gamma(q_i(x))\) changed with \(q_i(x)\).

(Writing 3, document 25)

Thus, it seems that, through the necessity of reading and commenting on highly technical papers from many different fields of study, students were able to come to understand the place of technical terminology in establishing the field of a text, and how to negotiate the relationship between field and tenor.

**Summary of Spring Quarter, Writing 3 Student Attention to Field**

Throughout the quarter, students became more accepting and less critical of technical terminology within texts. Their own writing was also more technical than before. As they negotiated the highly technical and discipline-specific writing of their classmates, the students seemed to grow more comfortable with technical terminology. Rather than suggesting that it was unacceptable for a particular audience, the students moved toward suggesting that authors sometimes needed to include further explanation of their technical terms, especially for non-technical audiences.
Discussion of Student Attention to Field

Students began the year giving very little attention to the field of texts. This could be because of the fact that the teachers also paid little attention. During the Fall quarter, mention of field took the form of discussions of the nuances of meaning, or discussions regarding the unacceptability of technical terminology. Despite this lack of focus, students finished the quarter with an idea that specific and accurate meanings were an important part of successful academic writing. This suggests that the students were beginning to be socialized into attention to field in the form of specificity of information, as discussed by SFL textual analyses (Halliday, 1993; Halliday & Martin, 1993; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2003).

During the Winter quarter, students were not forbidden from using technical terminology, and the teacher sometimes modeled it. However, the focus of the class was on meeting audience expectations. This led to some confusion on the students’ parts, and they finished the quarter with questions about how to negotiate the audience expectations that a text be interesting and engaging in combination with disciplinary expectations that a text be technical and accurate. This speaks to the findings of previous research discussed in Chapters 8 and 9 (Flowerdew, 1999a; Flowerdew, 1999b; Gosden, 1996; Johns & Swales, 2002; Tait, 1999) that students have difficulty negotiating audience expectations and tone, and are not as concerned with technical terminology.

During the Spring quarter, students were once again encouraged to include technical information in their class assignments. They also had to negotiate the very technical writing of their classmates. It seems to be this negotiation that led students to
move toward a more accepting attitude toward technical terminology. Their comments moved from criticism of the terminology itself, to criticism of the authors' lack of explanations of the terminology. This was also how students negotiated the tension between the necessity of the audience engaging with the text and the use of technical language. This suggests that, once students learn to negotiate technical terminology without feeling that they are alienating their audience, they become quite comfortable with including technical content in their writing.

The experience of students needing to learn to negotiate both tenor and field at the same time speaks to the interconnectedness of the metafunctions of texts. As discussed in previous research (Beckett, 1999, 2002, 2005; Beckett & Mohan, 2003; Beckett & Slater, 2005; Kramsch, 2003; Mohan, 1987; Schiffrin, 2004) and as found in this study, socialization into isolated language skills does not allow students to address the multiple, “extravagant” (Halliday & Martin, 1993, p.23) aspects of written academic English.
Chapter 12- Conclusions and Implications

Summary of the Study

The present study examined how graduate English as a Second Language (ESL) students are socialized into Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) features of academic writing. The research questions asked were: What functional aspects of academic writing are prioritized by teachers in graduate-level ESL writing classes? How are teacher priorities reflected in their classroom interactions (including class discussions, oral and written comments on student writing, class handouts and assignments)? To what functional aspects of academic writing are graduate ESL students socialized throughout one academic year of ESL writing classes? How is the student socialization process reflected in students’ classroom comments, written work, and interview responses?

A study of graduate ESL students’ socialization into writing is important because of the large number of graduate students attending U.S. graduate schools, as well as the high stakes associated with many graduate-level programs. At the university where the research took place, 8,350 students (23.5%) were graduate students (university website). These graduate students go on to become professors, researchers, and teachers, and their contributions to their chosen fields can only be strengthened by their facility in academic writing. One way to identify better methods for serving their specific needs is to study how these students are socialized to the academic writing, and what role (if any) ESL classes play in the socialization process.
Previous studies of ESL students learning to write academic English have begun to provide insight into how students learn and teachers teach ESL writing; however, the studies have been too narrow in their focus. In other words, the studies have lacked the “extravagance” (Halliday & Martin, 1993, p.23) necessary to fully describe and understand the socialization process. Rather than focusing on the many different aspects of socialization, these studies have focused on one or two. For example, some studies focused on student experiences of the socialization process (e.g., Currie, 1998; Johns & Swales, 2002; Riazi, 1997; Spack, 1997) or teacher perspectives (e.g., Mohan & Lo, 1985; Pally, 1999; Tait, 1999; Zhu, 2004). Others have examined the views of gatekeepers such as journal editors (e.g., Burrough-Boenisch, 2003; Gosden, 1992; Kaplan & Baldauf, 2005) or have provided analyses of academic language (e.g., Connor, 1987; Hinds, 1987; Lemke, 1990; Schleppegrell, 2004). What these studies lacked was a holistic view of the socialization process.

The present study undertook to fill the methodological and theoretical gaps of previous studies by observing and interviewing six ESL graduate students and their three writing teachers during the course of one academic year. Data collected included classroom observations, student writing, teacher writing, course documents, and interviews with students and teachers.

Two major findings emerged from data analysis. The first is that both the teachers and the students came to realize that a focus on formal grammar was not sufficient to socialize students into academic writing. That is, despite a lack of training in an approach to writing other than formal grammar, both students and teachers came...
to realize the formal approach was insufficient for the level of writing they hoped to achieve.

The second major finding was that, despite this lack of socialization into functional approaches to texts, teachers did socialize students into the textual metafunctions of field, tenor, and mode, albeit using an alternative vocabulary. Thus, in spite of their lack of ability to articulate an alternative approach to socializing students into academic writing, the teachers did, in fact, socialize the students into addressing texts on a functional level. In other words, students finished the academic year with knowledge of the metafunctions of texts, but without the specific vocabulary used to describe that knowledge.

Theoretically, these findings can be explained in three ways. First, they point to the strength of the language socialization model of learning. As discussed in Chapter 1, theories of language socialization suggest that the goal of language learning is mastery of social norms; the successful language learner can communicate in the language of his/her chosen community and act according to social norms (Kramsch, 2003, p. 13). This is in contrast to the language acquisition theory, which emphasizes the acquisition of formal features of language. Thus, as teachers, and then students, came to realize that a formal, grammar-based approach to teaching writing was insufficient for the needs of graduate-level writing, they also moved away from a focus on acquiring language. By focusing on functional features of student texts, teachers were providing students with the opportunity for socialization, rather than acquisition.
A second theoretical explanation for these findings is from the perspective of legitimate peripheral participation. As shown in the findings chapters, all of the students began the academic year needing to improve their writing skills. Because of this, they were extremely peripheral participants in the written discourse of their communities of practice, namely American academia and/or their chosen disciplines. Throughout the academic year, the students moved toward more full participation in the academic community by improving their ability to interact with culturally mediated artifacts – in this case, written academic texts - in socially acceptable ways. The students' socially situated interactions within the classroom served to help them move toward full participation.

What is interesting about the students' movement from extremely peripheral toward full participation is the fact that “old timers” (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 29) with whom they interacted were language teachers who in many ways were only marginally less peripheral participants than the students. So, rather than the students being socialized into full participation by full participants, they were instead socialized by less peripheral participants in the American academic community. Thus, the teachers were enacting their culturally-defined roles as “experts” or “old timers” (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 29), but in fact, because of their inexperience as writing teachers, they were not experts. Instead, they were less peripheral participants than their students.

A third theoretical explanation for the findings points to the usefulness of a functional approach to language. As discussed previously, an SFL approach to language allows for an engagement with language on the textual level, rather than on
the level of sentences, clauses, or parts of speech. As shown in the findings chapters, the students in this study were well-versed in formal grammatical terminology and usage; however, their writing was still inadequate for an American academic context. This alone points to the inadequacy of a solely formal grammatical approach to writing. As the year progressed and writing classes shifted focus to textual metafunctions, students’ writing improved. This speaks to the fact that, in the context of American academia, students benefit from a focus on the whole text, rather than a focus on parts of a text.

By definition, formal grammar focuses on the micro-level of texts, such as the sentences, clauses, and parts of speech. As shown in the findings chapters, a focus on formal grammar reduces discussions of texts to discussions of sentences, words, or punctuation. This does not allow students and teachers to address the macro-level of texts or the scope of writing that is required of graduate students. For (a somewhat extreme) example, this dissertation includes approximately 77,000 words in 2,000 paragraphs. A formal grammatical approach to this, such as an examination of the meaning-expressing function of each word or sentence, would be tedious at best. A functional approach, however, would provide a unified, cohesive, yet “extravagant” (Halliday & Martin, 1993, p. 23) view of how meaning is made in the text as a whole. Given that graduate student writing tends more towards dissertations and less towards sentences and paragraphs, this functional approach is much better suited to the type of writing that is expected of students within the context of American academia.
Conclusions

The following is a discussion of the two major findings, their relationship to previous studies, and their implications for research methods, theory, and practice.

Conclusion 1: Formal Grammar is not Enough

Both students and teachers came to realize that addressing the formal grammatical elements of texts was not sufficient to improve students’ writing. These realizations point to tension with the practices described by previous research such as Gosden (1992), who found that journal editors tend to focus on grammatical accuracy, rather than larger textual issues, when reviewing articles for publication. Other researchers have also found that students (Gosden, 1996), established ESL scholars (Casanave, 1998; Flowerdew, 1999a; Flowerdew, 1999b; and Gosden, 1996), and teachers (Mohan & Lo, 1985; Tait, 1999; Zhu, 2004) tend to focus on formal grammatical elements of a text. If this attention is, in fact, not effective in improving academic writing when used in isolation, it is important to identify additional approaches.

In the case of this study, the approach to texts that was adopted by the teachers, and then the students, was the more text-based approached of SFL. This supports the findings of Kaplan and Baldauf (2005) which suggest that what at first appears to be surface-level or simple management textual issues, are in fact issues of organized language management. This also supports the findings of Mišak, Marušić, and Marušić (2005), that suggests that NNS writers often need assistance beyond simple grammatical issues.
Another reason that these findings are interesting is because they provide insight into teachers’ and students’ roles in the socialization process. In this case, the teachers were the first to realize that focusing on formal grammar was not sufficient to improve students’ writing. They then had to convince the students, who remained skeptical for some time. These findings support the findings of other studies of classroom interactions, such as Beckett (1999), which suggest that part of the socialization process is teachers convincing students of the usefulness of a particular approach.

Theoretically, they also speak to the culturally defined roles of teachers as experts or old-timers and students as peripheral participants. The teachers/old-timers socialized the students/peripheral participants into a broader, more extravagant approach to texts. As the students were socialized into this approach and thereby became less peripheral participants in the culture of American academia, they also became less skeptical of a functional approach to texts.

Findings of the present study also suggest that neither the teachers nor the students knew how to appropriately articulate another approach to texts. Thus, because they had not been socialized to functional approaches to a text, the teachers were not able to explicitly socialize their students into such an approach. As will be discussed in the following sections, despite the teachers’ lack of socialization into functional approaches to a text, they still socialized their students into many of the functional aspects of texts, but struggled to articulate this approach with systematic (or systemic) vocabulary.
Conclusion 2: Despite Not Having Been Socialized into SFL, Teachers Socialized Students into the Textual Metafunctions of Field, Tenor, and Mode.

As discussed in Chapters 4, 6, and 8, teachers socialized students into the mode metafunction through discussions of organization; the tenor metafunction through discussions of audience and documentation styles; and the field metafunction through a discussion of technical terminology. Because of their not having been socialized into SFL, the teachers did not provide students with an exhaustive overview of the functional approach to writing. In spite of this, the students finished the year with much more complex, sophisticated and effective texts, and with a firmer grasp of the norms of American academic writing.

This finding – that teachers and students found a functional approach to texts to be more effective than a “formal-only” approach for socializing students into academic writing – is in support of previous SFL research such as Lemke (1990), Halliday and Martin (1993), Schleppegrell (2004), and Achugar and Colombi (2008). As discussed by these authors, a functional approach to language socialization provides an “extravagant” (Halliday & Martin, 1993, p.23) view of language, which provides for more depth in students’ and teachers’ approaches to writing. This depth is reflected in the change in classroom discussions from, for example, coordinating conjunctions (Writing 1, 14 October), to discussions of “generalizing modifications and additions” (Writing 3, 24 May).

Student writing samples also reflect this change, as they increased in complexity and sophistication throughout the year. During the beginning of the academic year,
student writing samples were paragraphs focused on subjects such as a favorite person or a memory. As discussed in Chapters 7, 9, and 11, these paragraphs showed little attention to textual metafunctions. As the academic year progressed, student writing samples became essays, then parts of articles, within their subject areas. These longer writing samples also showed attention to the textual metafunctions, especially internal textual cohesion through given-new constructions (mode), establishment of a relationship with the audience through documentation styles (tenor), and negotiation of use of technical terminology (field).

This finding about attention to textual metafunctions is in contradiction to previous research which suggested that ESL teachers and advanced learners tend to focus on more surface-level or formal aspects of a text (Flowerdew, 1999b; Gosden, 1992 & 1996; Kaplan & Baldauf, 2005; Tait, 1999; Zhu, 2004). The finding also points out a weakness in contrastive rhetorical approaches to texts (Connor, 1987; Eggington, 1987; Ostler, 1987; Hinds, 1987; Carrell, 1987). Attention to the functional aspects of the text, rather than solely on the cultural ones, was helpful in socializing students into academic writing. Thus, the findings of this study suggest that paying attention to the cultural norms of organization which students bring with them to American academia is not a sufficient approach. Teachers and students should focus on the functional aspects of the “target” text, which also allows for attention to the cultural norms embodied within it.

Overall, this finding provides evidence of the inadequacy of isolated-skills approaches to text, whether they are focused on formal grammatical elements or cultural norms of organization, for graduate-level academic writing. As discussed
above, students’ writing samples became more complex and sophisticated as the
writing classes shifted focus from formal grammatical elements to functional textual
elements. This seems to suggest that SFL can advance students’ existing knowledge by
providing a framework to focus on the text as a whole, rather than on elements or
pieces. This also suggests that SFL provides both the breadth and depth necessary for
the level of writing expected of students like those in this study.

**Implications**

The findings of this study suggest that being socialized into the functional
aspects of a text is helpful to ESL graduate students as they move toward meeting the
rigorous writing and publishing demands of American academia. They also suggest
that it is important to focus on both teachers’ and students’ participation in the
socialization process, in order to provide a holistic view. The following is a discussion
of the implications of this study for program design, teacher training, pedagogy, and for
further research.

**Implications for Program Design**

Regardless of their area of study, ESL graduate students need support in
academic writing as they work through American graduate programs. The participants
in this study began the academic year with serious gaps in their writing skills; however,
after one year of writing classes, they showed marked improvement. As suggested by
previous studies (Angelova and Riazantseva, 1999; Casanave, 1998; Flowerdew, 1999a
& 1999b; Gosden, 1992 & 1996; Johns and Swales, 2002; Parks, 2002), students who do
not receive support in academic writing not only have difficulty in their classes, but
they also have difficulty in their professional lives after they graduate. The stakes of graduate school are high, and success is often measured in written products such as research reports, published articles, comprehensive exams, etc. In order to provide the best support for graduate students, academic writing must be addressed on the institutional level.

University ESL programs should include courses designed specifically for graduate students. These courses should be integrated into the students’ courses of study, and should cover the types of academic writing required by their programs. This integration of subject-area studies and ESL writing classes would allow students to focus on the functional, meaning-making aspects of writing.

There are two possible methods to integrate ESL writing classes into courses of study. The first is to actually integrate an ESL program into each program offered at the university. Each program would have ESL specialists within it, and these specialists would be responsible for teaching writing classes and/or workshops to students. These classes and/or workshops should be credit bearing, in order to allow students the time and space necessary for improvement of their academic writing. This model of ESL specialists embedded in each program would allow greater discipline-specificity, but is also least viable due to ever-present budget constraints.

A second possible method for integrating ESL writing class and discipline-specificity is to create a flexible program which encourages students to seek out the necessary information from their programs of study, bring this information back to their ESL writing classes, and receive guidance and support as they integrate these
characteristics into their writing. An example of this is the documentation styles assignment given by Sarah during the Winter quarter Writing 2 class, in which students were to identify the documentation style of their field of study, and identify elements of that documentation style, such as format of in-text citations, where bibliographic information is placed, etc. Graduate-level ESL writing classes should mandate more student information-seeking about specific functional characteristics of writing within their disciplines. This would add to the students’ already existing formal grammatical knowledge. Teachers should then provide support to students as they socialize into these characteristics.

The case of documentation styles discussed above is one example of how functional characteristics of writing can add to students’ already existing knowledge. Many of the formatting guidelines associated with documentation styles do not draw upon formal grammatical knowledge; however, as discussed in chapters 8 and 9, proper use of documentation styles is a way of showing membership in a community of practice. If students only focus on formal grammatical elements of a text, they do not learn the significance of documentation styles as a method of creating a relationship between the author, the information in the text, and readers. As student comments indicated, they found this information—information about the function of a text—helpful.

It’s important that ESL writing classes, whether they be offered by a specialist embedded within a particular program or through an ESL center, be credit-bearing classes. As discussed in Beckett (1999), among others, students often think that classes
focused on functional language, rather than isolated skills, are not really language classes, and as a result, they don’t take the classes seriously. As the findings of this study show, when the students were extremely peripheral participants at the beginning of the academic year, they were skeptical of an alternative approach to academic writing. It was only after students, as a result of their teachers’ efforts, began to move toward more full participation that their skepticism began to dissipate. Some of this skepticism can be overcome by attaching graduate credit (which goes along with a GPA-affecting grade) to a course. Part of the burden also rests on teachers, whose responsibility it is to socialize students into an understanding of the applicability of a functional approach to language.

Implications for Teacher Training

In this study, the teachers recognized that a focus on formal grammar was not sufficient for improving academic writing as a whole; however, they were not able to appropriately articulate an additional approach. As discussed in previous research (Halliday & Martin, 1993; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Mohan & Beckett, 2001; Lemke, 1990; Schleppegrell, 2004), SFL provides a framework for teachers to engage with meaning on a textual level. Thus, writing teachers should be socialized into the specifics of SFL, so that they can more explicitly socialize their students into its uses. This socialization of writing teachers into SFL would address the tendency discussed in previous research (Mohan & Lo, 1985; Tait, 1999; Zhu, 2004) of some teachers to focus only on one or two aspects of a text, such as formal grammar or organization. Thus, SFL would provide an additional approach to texts to their already-existing knowledge. As
suggested by the findings of this study, this additional, functional method would provide teachers with a way to articulate a more text-based approach to students’ texts. The students, in turn, would benefit from an articulation of text-based approaches by being provided with an addition to the formal grammatical approach. As discussed previously, this additional approach would allow for students to move toward creating more sophisticated and complex texts.

In order for teachers to effectively socialize students into a functional approach to language, they must first be socialized into a familiarity with SFL and its manifestations in classroom language and written texts. They should be provided with clear, consistent guidelines on how to socialize students into functional aspects of a text. One of the difficulties of a functional approach to language is the inter-connectedness or extravagance of it; it is sometimes difficult to know where to begin. Teachers should be provided with guidelines of not only where to begin, but also how to approach the interconnectedness without overwhelming either themselves or their students.

Because of the importance of academic writing being integrated into students’ programs of study, it is also important for teachers to either be trained as program-area specialists, or to be provided with overviews of the specific functional characteristics of particular programs. Even in the small number of students who participated in this study, teachers were faced with several different programs of study. It is imperative that teachers have at least a passing familiarity with some of functional features of writing within their students’ programs of study, so that they can more effectively socialize the students into those features.
Implications for Pedagogy

Students should be socialized into a functional approach to writing, so that they, too, could focus on meaning at the textual level. Formal grammar should not be abolished, but should be acknowledged as a surface-level aspect of a text, which is accomplished through creating meaning. It is important to recognize that students who are studying at the graduate level in a second language are, by default, sophisticated linguists. They should be taught an equally sophisticated and “extravagant” (Halliday & Martin, p. 23) approach to their written work. This would most likely reduce the frustration discussed in previous research (Angelova & Riazantseva, 1999; Burrough-Boenisch, 2003; Currie, 1998; Johns & Swales, 2002; Riazi, 1997) that students sometimes feel as they are negotiating writing for an American academic setting.

As suggested regarding program design and teacher training, it’s important for discipline-specificity to be brought into the ESL writing classroom. Teachers should focus on guiding students through individual explorations of the functional aspects of their chosen disciplines’ written texts. After covering the bare basics of SFL with their students, teachers should provide them with opportunities for textual analyses of written work within their field. Then, the results of the analyses could be used as a template for grading and/or commenting on student-produced texts. This discipline-specificity would provide students with the opportunity to move toward full participation in their chosen discipline.

It is important to emphasize that graduate-level ESL students should be introduced to the basic concepts of SFL. As mentioned in chapter 3, the student
participants were all graduate students in the Master's and doctoral programs that require international students to pass linguistic proficiency tests such the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Given this, it’s reasonable to assume that these students met the linguistic proficiency requirement of their respective programs. In spite of this, these students needed ESL writing classes. This suggests that the formal linguistic knowledge they brought with them (as demonstrated in Chapter 5) was not sufficient for them to be successful in their programs of study, and that they would benefit from an additional approach to language that could advance their written language to a level necessary for their success. The findings of this study suggest that SFL may be introduced into ESL programs to provide students with that additional approach.

Another important thing to remember with regards to socializing students into functional approaches to text is the role of the classroom in the socialization process. As discussed in Lantolf and Appel (1994) and Wertsch (1998), among others, social context is an important contributor to the socialization process. It is important for classrooms to be a place where students are apprenticed into a community of practice, and where they can move, with the help of teacher/experts/old-timers as well as less-peripheral students, toward less-peripheral (or more full) participation. Therefore, teachers must strive to foster classroom atmospheres that allow for student discussion of and engagement with the functional aspects of their own writing, writing within their discipline, and writing within other disciplines.
Implications for Further Research

As discussed in Chapter 2, many studies of the socialization process neglect to include classroom observations in their data collection. This study has shown that the primary place in which the socialization process begins is the classroom; this is where students are introduced to, discuss, and negotiate new ideas. Therefore, it is important to conduct more research which includes classroom observations, such that done by Lemke (1990), Spack (1999), and Schleppegrell (2004).

In addition to including the classroom in language socialization research, it is also important for future research to focus on using multiple data sources in order to provide an extravagant and more nuanced view of the socialization process. These multiple sources of data are an important method of data triangulation in order to establish rigor (Patton, 2002). They also provide insight into Spradley’s (1980) three aspects of human experience: cultural behavior, cultural experience, and cultural artifacts.

Another important consideration for future research is the focus on graduate students rather than lower-level students (Christie, 2002a and 2002b; Dubcovsky, 2003; Woodward-Kron, 2002) or established scholars (Casanave, 1998; Flowerdew, 1999a; Flowerdew, 1999b; and Gosden, 1996; Parks, 2002). As discussed in Chapter 1 and the beginning of this chapter, the number of ESL graduate students in the United States and their possible future contributions to society are important reasons for examining how best to support their academic endeavors.
Finally, future research might also examine how students are socialized into the functional aspects of academic writing by teachers who are knowledgeable of SFL. In this particular study, the teachers had not been socialized into SFL. What if they had been? Would the socialization process be different? More explicit? These are important questions to examine as the field moves toward a more nuanced understanding of the complexities of language socialization.


Appendix A – Classroom Observation Guide

THE TEACHER
- How does the teacher relate to students?
- How does the teacher correct students?
- How does the teacher convey information about academic language?
- How does the teacher show subject matter knowledge?
- How does the teacher provide good speech models?
- How does the teacher provide good writing models?

THE STUDENTS
- How do the students relate to the teacher?
- What is the nature of the students’ participation in class?
- How do the students practice written academic language?
- How do the students practice oral academic language?

CLASSROOM MATERIALS
- How do the classroom materials convey information about academic language?
- How does the teacher use the classroom materials?
- How do the students use the classroom materials?
Appendix B - Transcription Conventions

1. Information added or changed by the author in order to help readers’
   understanding of the passage or to maintain anonymity are enclosed in
   brackets [ ]

2. Oral comments are preceded by the speaker’s pseudonym

3. Written comments are preceded by the speakers pseudonym and the words
   “written comments”

4. Due to the fact that observations took place in classes that had non-
   participating students, non-participating students’ speech is designated as
   “NP” and italicized. Only NP turns in discussion are indicated; content of
   their speech is not

5. Interrupted speech is indicated by a – where the interruption occurs

6. Italicized speech indicates emphasis from the speaker

7. Duration of long pauses is indicated by number of seconds of the pause in [ ]

8. Short pauses are indicated by …

9. The source of the transcription is indicated in ( ) following the passage

10. [*] represents a word that is unclear on the audiotape, and therefore
    untranscribable. More than one * represents more than one word.
Appendix C – Interview Guides

Student interviews

Guide for first interview.

i) Expectations about College Life
   (a) Workload
   (b) Teachers
   (c) Other students
   (d) Course content

ii) Concerns and Strengths
   (a) Oral Skills
   (b) Writing Skills
   (c) Interpersonal Skills

iii) Beliefs about writing
    (a) Expected content of writing class
    (b) Usefulness in other classes
    (c) Should writing classes be required?
    (d) Writing skills important for students
    (e) Teacher as expert writer
    (f) Purposes of writing at the university
    (g) Problem areas of student writing
        1. Ramifications of student problem areas

Guide for other interviews.

iv) Revisiting Topics from Interview 1/previous interview(s)

v) Elucidation of Observations
   (a) Classroom
   (b) Discourse Samples

vi) Writing Classes as Places of Socialization
   (a) Oral
   (b) Written
   (c) Other
   (d) Interpersonal
   (e) Institutional/Bureaucratic
   (f) Research Skills
Teacher interviews

(a) Perceptions of Student
   1. Class participation
   2. Homework
   3. Other
      i. Interpersonal skills
      ii. Bureaucratic negotiation
(b) Beliefs about writing
   1. Should writing classes be required?
   2. Expected content of writing classes
   3. Usefulness in other classes
   4. Writing skills important for students
   5. Teacher as expert writer
   6. Purposes of writing at the university
   7. Problem areas of student writing
      i. Ramifications of student problem areas
(c) Elucidation of Observations
   1. Classroom
   2. Office hours
(d) Student papers & emails