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Evaluative stance in humanities: expectations and performances

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Abstract

This chapter reports on research into literacy in the senior secondary school which aims to explore the nature of the literacy requirements for success in the final years of schooling in New South Wales, Australia. In so doing, it also explores how an 'Appliable Linguistics' can contribute to the understanding of disciplinary difference as reflected in end of school examinations in this context and points towards future directions in applying linguistics to the study of school discourse.

Disciplines

Education | Social and Behavioral Sciences

Evaluative Stance in Humanities: expectations and performances

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1. Abstract

While disciplinary differences in writing have been the focus of considerable research in recent years, such studies have predominantly been situated in tertiary contexts, and have tended to focus across significant divides, such as humanities versus sciences. By contrast this study is situated in the secondary context and draws on Appraisal theory to explore differences in the expectations for writing within a cluster of subjects in the humanities, in contexts where it is perhaps assumed that differences are minor or less significant. The particular focus here is on variation in the expectations for encoding writer values and writer stance, as articulated in syllabus documents and as reflected in a small collection of highly valued instances of students' written texts. While small in scale, this investigation reveals a number of subtle but significant variations and points forward to directions for further research in this regard. It is intended that this study will make a contribution to a growing body of work in educational linguistics that supports literacy pedagogy across the curriculum in the secondary context, both in terms of specific findings, as well as in a modelling of approaches to differing expectations of stance.

2. Introduction

2.1. Rationale and Background

The nature of literacy teaching and its place in schools continues to be a source of contention and debate in both academic and public spheres with periodic arguments about falling literacy standards and debates about appropriate approaches to literacy development (Green, Hodgens, & Luke, 1997). There are also questions about whose responsibility it should be to address literacy needs of students, especially in the secondary school context. If literacy development in this context is to be the responsibility of the subject teacher, as advocated in the literacy across the curriculum movement (J. Cumming & C. Wyatt-Smith, 2001), then there is an urgent need for further research into the language demands of different subjects at different levels in the curriculum. To date, some very significant contributions towards this end include studies in the language of history (Coffin, 1996), English (Rothery, 1994b), science (Veel, 1993), the creative arts (Rothery, 1994a), maths (Veel, 1999) and geography (Humphrey, 1996). In many cases these contributions have resulted from strong collaborations between Systemic Functional Linguists and teachers. While supporting greater understanding of the language of schooling, they have also functioned to continue to build Systemic Functional Linguistic Theory, for example in the areas of Genre and Appraisal theory (Christie, 1986; Martin, 1986). To date, however, much of this work has been carried out in the primary or junior secondary sectors or in the tertiary context. Less work has been targeted specifically in the senior secondary school context (Cambourne, 2001; Joy Cumming & Claire Wyatt-Smith, 2001) although a recent study by Christie and Derewianka (2008) does make some reference to literacy across the curriculum in the senior years. There remains,

therefore, a significant unresolved area around literacy in the senior secondary context which merits investigation.

Arising from my work as a literacy educator in a senior high school, I began to find it increasingly important to investigate literacy in the context of the final two years of schooling, especially considering the high stakes nature of the final HSC examinations in NSW, which serve as a gatekeeper for students' entry in to the tertiary sector. In their final year of secondary schooling students across the whole range of senior subjects have different literacy development needs than junior students, as they are learning more complex written genres and are learning to incorporate and evaluate multiple voices and opinions within their written texts. Furthermore, anecdotal accounts from teachers in the humanities in particular seemed to indicate that the way students were required to write their 'essays' and the language they were expected to use differed substantially across humanities subjects. It would therefore benefit both students and teachers to understand more clearly how students are expected to write if they are to succeed in their final examinations.

2.2. Literature review

One important issue that emerges in the literature in relation to literacy in schooling concerns the question of how writing is modelled, taught and used in the classroom. Research into student writing conducted by Eggins, Martin and Wignell in Sydney in 1986 (Wignell, 1987) found that although writing was used to assess students' knowledge in their school subjects, students rarely engaged in writing in the classroom. Instead, class time consisted mainly of oral interaction and extended

pieces of writing were produced almost exclusively for assessment purposes. Furthermore, the language and structural features of the writing tasks themselves were often not explicitly explained to students when they were given their tasks. Student writing in the classroom, if it occurred, was mainly limited to short answers to comprehension-type questions or to copying notes from the textbook with longer, sustained pieces of writing relegated to homework or examination-style purposes (Wignell, 1987).

These findings were mirrored in Applebee's national study of writing in the secondary school in the United States (1984). He found that only 3% of students' school time (including homework) was spent on writing texts of paragraph length or longer, and when students were asked to write at length the writing 'served merely as a vehicle to test knowledge of specific content' (Applebee, 1984:2). This is reflected in his analysis of textbooks from across the curriculum which shows that roughly 90% of the tasks in textbooks assumed the audience to be the 'teacher as examiner' (Applebee, 1984). It seems, therefore, that students' writing is valued only as an assessment tool insofar as it provides an opportunity to communicate 'subject knowledge' and that the form of the writing is unimportant as very little time is dedicated to teaching students how to write.

Although these studies are now over 20 years old, there does not seem to be an overall change in the treatment of writing within schools. This is hard to determine definitively, as there have not been any more recent studies comparable to Applebee's (Hillocks, 2008). Hillocks (2008) comments briefly on his own 2002 study into the impacts of state writing tests on the teaching of writing in the United States, however

his study did not include teachers across disciplines, but only teachers of English, who could be expected to focus more on teaching writing than teachers of other subjects. With reference to this study, Hillocks concludes that

> there is an underlying similarity in the way writing is taught during the two periods. In both periods, teachers and curriculum makers assume that the knowledge necessary for effective writing is general knowledge of a few principles that are applicable to all or most writing: knowing the form that the piece of writing is to take; brainstorming for ideas before writing; knowing that effective writing requires more than one draft, and so forth. (Hillocks, 2008:316).

Anecdotal evidence and personal experience of teaching in a senior high school would also support this conclusion, as the curriculum is so crowded that many teachers struggle to 'get through the content' to prepare their students for the final end of school examinations and do not feel they have time for the teaching of literacy, which is often perceived as the domain of the English subject teacher (or the ESL specialist).

In addition to the problems of very little class time being devoted to teaching writing, and the use of writing almost exclusively as a tool for assessing the learning of 'content', feedback on students writing also does not appear to give students much help with regards to improving their writing. When students do receive feedback on their writing, teacher comments are mostly limited to comments on the accuracy or adequacy of the content of the writing (Langer, 1984) and when teacher comments do refer to form it is mostly at sentence or word level without any explanation for how to

make the writing more appropriate (Marshall, 1984). The notion of appropriateness is in itself difficult, as the syllabus documents for the subjects included in this study make several references to the use of appropriate language, but fail to indicate what 'appropriate' is in the context of each particular subject (Matruglio, 2007). While syllabus outcomes requiring students to 'communicate a knowledge and understanding of historical features and issues, using appropriate and well-structured oral and written forms' (NSW Board of Studies, 2004b:11) seem to acknowledge some form of link between disciplinary learning and the literacy skills necessary to display it, they do little to elucidate this link for the students or the teachers. Thus, many of the subject specific requirements for student writing in different subjects still remain part of the 'hidden curriculum' (Christie, 1985) in schools.

Such issues have prompted a strong assertion from researchers in educational linguistics that the teaching of language and the teaching of content cannot be separated (Columbi & Schleppegrell, 2002; Gee, 2002; Kress, 2001; Merino & Hammond, 2002). Further, there is an ever-increasing agreement that this language teaching must be explicit if students are to achieve the types of 'advanced literacy' that is demanded in secondary and post-secondary schooling today (Columbi & Schleppegrell, 2002; Scarcella, 2002). Kress states that literacy 'is not one thing evenly spread across curriculum areas. It varies with the kinds of disciplinary practices and forms of knowledge that are at issue in a school subject' (Kress, 2001:22).

Another significant issue impacting on the teaching of literacy in schooling concerns the relationship between popular or common sense knowledge and erudite knowledge.

According to Muller (2000) this distinction between ordinary and formal knowledge is the basis of modern schooling. The growth of capitalism and the split between mental and manual activity has led to the commodification and professionalisation of knowledge, which in turn has led to knowledge specialization, removing knowledge further and further from everyday meanings and resulting in discourses which are elaborated and highly technical and which exclude those who have not yet learnt them (Muller, 2000). It could be argued that schooling is the beginning of the process of initiation into these specialised groupings, and that through their study of various school subjects students begin to be apprenticed into the different ways that these subjects relate to and discuss knowledge. Students need to be aware that each school subject represents a different perspective on knowledge and that these differences have become codified to such an extent that they affect the way one reads and writes during the study of such subjects. Without such 'insider' awareness, students will struggle to write in a way that is deemed 'acceptable' and may transfer ways of writing which are highly valued in one subject to another where they are not as highly valued. To enable teachers to adequately guide and support students towards success, there is a crucial need for greater explicitness in descriptions of what sort of knowledge is valued in different subjects and the ways in which such knowledge is expected to be expressed. Students need to understand what 'appropriate' means in the context of each of their subjects, and whether this notion varies substantially from subject to subject if they are going to succeed in their HSC and progress to further study at the tertiary level.

Here too, we need to consider not just what knowledge is to be represented and how but also what kind of interpersonal stance is considered 'appropriate' towards that

knowledge. In her work on student written responses to narratives in the School Certificate examination (at the end of year 10), Macken-Horarik (2003) found that students who achieved A-range responses were able to identify, understand and discuss both implicit and explicit evaluation in the narrative texts . As students progress towards year 12 it would be increasingly expected that such resources would be <u>used </u>by students in their own writing, especially in the context of expository essays where as Schleppegrell (2004:102) argues, its effective use 'indicates that the writer is interpreting and arguing for a position.'

Recent studies of school Genres (Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Martin & Rose, 2008) have illustrated some of the differences in the literacy demands of school subjects and this study aims to further contribute to the understanding of school Genres by asking how the literacy demands of subjects vary at the level of discourse semantics. Previous studies (Matruglio, 2007, 2004) found that syllabus requirements to 'analyse', 'evaluate' 'synthesise information from a range of sources' and 'assess the significance' (NSW Board of Studies, 2004a) of ideas, theories or events require sophisticated control of resources for managing interpersonal stance and that the dual requirements of constructing an 'objective text' which also evaluates different sources in terms of reliability and accuracy can be problematic for senior school students, as can be the requirement to construct an argument integrating multiple viewpoints negotiating the same knowledge space. This study aims to investigate how attitudes are expressed in high stakes examination writing across four humanities subjects in the final year of secondary schooling and to see whether different subjects have different 'Appraisal profiles' in an attempt to make the evaluative work that students need to do for each subject more explicit.

As Elkins (2001:145) suggests '[o]ne cannot help but be impressed (and worried) by the differences in reading and writing across post-compulsory subjects. It must be difficult for students to adapt to the different roles for literacy in different classes.' It is this requirement of students to navigate and master differential literacy practices across subjects that constitutes the major motivation for the study reported here.

3. Methodology

The data for the study include the syllabus documents for the subjects Modern History (hereafter MH), Ancient History (AH), Society and Culture (SAC) and Community and Family Studies (CAFS) as well as student texts produced under examination conditions for the Trial Higher School Certificate Examination in each of the four subjects. Although four successful and two to three less successful texts have been collected for each subject, I will focus here on the analysis of just one text in each subject, which has been graded by the subject teacher in each case and is considered to be a highly successful text by the teacher/examiner. The syllabus documents for each subject were first read to identify specific reference to language and to ascertain whether a particular orientation to interpersonal language was salient in any part of the syllabus. The syllabus rationales, a section of the syllabus which occurs close to the beginning of the syllabus documents and which argues for the relevance and importance of each subject, were then analysed using Appraisal theory in order to determine which interpersonal meanings were prominent in what is essentially each subject's introduction to its syllabus. Student texts were then analysed using Appraisal

theory to investigate whether the patterns in the use of interpersonal resources in the syllabus documents was reflected in the student texts.

This study takes as its theoretical basis a social orientation to language and literacy pedagogy, beginning from a Systemic Functional Linguistics' (SFL) definition of language as a "social semiotic". The Appraisal System within SFL focuses on the expression of interpersonal meaning and offers a theoretically sound way to explore the expression of evaluation in a text at the level of discourse semantics. In particular I have used the sub-systems of Attitude and Graduation in my analysis of both syllabus documents and student texts to explore expectations for encoding writer values and stance. A brief explanation of the categories within the systems of Attitude and Graduation follows. Examples provided below are taken from the student texts unless otherwise noted.

3.1 Appraisal

The Appraisal system (Martin & White, 2005) is the system within SFL used to express feelings, attitudes and judgements about people or things (Attitude), to grade the intensity of these evaluations (Graduation) and to indicate the source of these evaluations (Engagement). Attitude can be either expressed as emotion, referred to as Affect:

CAFS 1: Parents in early stages can feel **isolated** from everyone as they aren't able to get out of the house as they are looking after the baby – feel **sad**, **depressed**, **lonely**

or as an evaluation about human behaviour, referred to as Judgement

SAC 1: They regard all Aborigines as **alcoholi**c and **not trustworthy** tenants to have in a house.

or as an evaluation of things, referred to as Appreciation:

AH 1: the last large & **beautiful** pyramid is that of Pepi II.

The system of Graduation may then be used to grade these feelings, either by amount or intensity (Martin & White, 2005) referred to as Force:

AH 2: The **lack** of discriminating evidence has led to **various** interpretations, **many** scholars suggesting that a **build-up** of events led to the once mighty and centralized government's collapse

or by strengthening or blurring the boundaries between categories, referred to as Focus:

MH 1: However, many non-governmental responses **contributed to** the collapse or **at least the modification** of Apartheid **in some ways**.

4. Analysis

4.1 Syllabus Documents

An initial examination of the syllabus documents for MH, AH, Society SAC and
CAFS showed that syllabus documents oriented more strongly to one of the three
metafunctions of language at different stages. The key competencies section of the
syllabuses seemed to focus on the textual metafunction of language, that is the
organisation and structure of language, reflected in key competencies such as
'collecting, analysing and <u>organising</u> information' (NSW Board of Studies, 2004a:13,
emphasis mine). The syllabus outcomes seemed to focus on both the textual and the
ideational (that is the subject content) functions of language, reflected in outcomes
such as 'communicate a knowledge and understanding of historical features and
issues, using appropriate and well-structured oral and written forms' (NSW Board of
Studies, 2004b:11). A reflection of the interpersonal metafunction of language,
however, seemed to be woven more implicitly through the syllabus documents as a
whole with terms such as <u>debate, justify, evaluate</u> and <u>critically analyse</u> being
commonly used in the syllabuses and with the word <u>appropriate</u> cropping up
repeatedly in phrases such as '…using appropriate written, oral and graphic forms'
(NSW Board of Studies, 1999:13). Furthermore, outcome H3.3 from both the Modern
and Ancient History Syllabuses, requires students to be able to 'analyse and evaluate
sources for their usefulness and reliability' (NSW Board of Studies, 2004a:11;
2004b). This outcome requires students to comment on the reliability of certain
historians' work and thus explicitly judge these historians while simultaneously

maintaining an academic or 'objective' voice in their writing style. Another interpersonal element intrinsic to the above syllabus documents is apparent in outcome H3.4 in both Modern and Ancient History requiring students to 'explain and evaluate differing perspectives and interpretations of the past' (NSW Board of Studies, 2004a; 2004b:11). This outcome reveals the important part that negotiating multiple viewpoints has in the history syllabuses. Students are called upon not only to integrate multiple voices into their texts, but also to evaluate these differing voices and come to conclusions about them.

A partial Appraisal analysis using the systems of Attitude and Graduation was then carried out on the syllabus rationales of the four subjects in order to determine how each individual subject presents itself and makes its claims about its own relevance. As the rationale section argues for the importance and relevance of the subject and the benefit that studying it will have for the student, it would be expected that the values expressed there would be the same values to be learnt by the students. Analysis of the syllabus rationales can thus provide an insight into what values students need to reflect in their own writing and what would be deemed 'appropriate' writing by an HSC marker. The results are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Comparison of Appraisal between syllabus rationales

	CAFS	SAC	MH	AH
Affect	2	0	0	0
Judgement	51	67	50	49
Appreciation	47	33	50	51

Force	100	100	100	100
Focus	0	0	0	0

The analysis revealed that all four subjects appeared to have similar patterns of Attitude and Graduation with Attitude split evenly between Judgement and Appreciation and graded exclusively through the use of Force, with two notable exceptions. The first of these exceptions is the use of resources of Affect in the CAFS syllabus. While the amount of Affect is small, the result is still significant as it is the only example of Affect in any of the syllabus documents. The second exception is that the SAC syllabus rationale contains significantly more resources of Judgement than any other rationale.

4.2 Student Texts

The same analysis was then carried out on one student text in each of the four subjects included in the study. As indicated above, these texts were all produced under examination conditions for the Trial Higher School Certificate and were marked and rated by the teachers as highly successful texts. These texts were first analysed to discover the patterns of Attitude and Graduation irrespective of whether these were inscribed or invoked, in order to determine whether the student texts corresponded with the distribution of interpersonal meanings expressed in the syllabus rationale documents. A second analysis was then carried out to investigate how much of the Attitude was explicitly stated and whether this varied between subjects. The question of variation between types of attitude and the impact of possible variations on the 'formality', 'objectivity' or 'appropriateness' of the writing was also of interest.

4.2.1. Overview of Attitude and Graduation

When looking at the expression of Attitude and Graduation as a whole, distinct differences began to emerge between the four subjects. One of the most striking findings was the large amount of Affect found in the CAFS text, which accounted for 40% of the total Attitude in the text. As mentioned above, CAFS was the only subject rationale containing any Affect at all, and of the students' texts, CAFS contained the most Affect by quite a large margin. The SAC student text also mirrored the use of Attitude found in the syllabus rationale as 72% of the Attitude in the text was Judgement. However, there were also significant differences between the student texts and the syllabus rationales as is evident from the figures in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Comparison of attitude and graduation in student texts - percentages.

	CAFS	SAC	MH	AH
Affect	40	2	6	11
Judgement	51	72	71	39
Appreciation	9	26	23	50
Force	95	97	69	85
Focus	5	3	31	15

In the syllabus rationales, there was almost even distribution of Attitude between Judgement and Appreciation in all of the subjects except for SAC, however this is not the case in the student texts. In the MH text, the majority of the Attitude was Judgement, and in AH there is more Appreciation than Judgement or Affect. These findings mirror earlier findings from analysis of values statements in MH and AH syllabus documents, pointing towards an apparent focus on capacity and knowledge building for students in the AH syllabus and a focus on ethics building in the MH syllabus (Matruglio, 2007). Another difference between the student texts and the syllabus documents is the use of resources of Focus in the student texts, most notably in MH. For example:

MH 2: The campaign to Free Mandela, started by the British World Campaign in 1978, **effectively** became an international solidarity movement against Apartheid. So while **it may be argued that…**

It appears from this increased use of Focus, which is mostly used in the student text to blur boundaries rather than strengthen them, that MH is less categorical than the other subjects.

4.2.2. Inscribed Attitude

In order to determine how overt the evaluation in the student texts was, the Attitude in the texts was then coded according to whether it was explicitly stated or <u>inscribed</u>, or whether the Attitude was implied, or <u>invoked</u>. Of particular interest was whether some subjects had greater amounts of inscribed attitude than others, as this could suggest that overtly evaluative language is more acceptable in some subjects than others. For reasons of comparison between subjects, inscribed attitude is presented in Table 3 as a percentage of the total words for each particular text.

Table 3: Inscribed Attitude in student texts as percentage of whole text

Subject	inscribed attitude as percentage of total words
Modern History	3.5
Ancient History	4
Society And Culture	5.1
Community And Family Studies	5.9

As can be seen from Table 3, the differences in the amount of inscribed Attitude in the four subjects are small. There does not seem to be a significant difference between

the two histories, however there is a fair difference between the amount of inscribed Attitude in Modern History (3.5%) compared to SAC (5.1%) and CAFS (5.9%). In addition to the percentage of the texts devoted to explicit Attitude, the percentage of the total Attitude which was inscribed was calculated. These results are shown in the fourth column in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Inscribed Attitude in student texts

Subject	Inscribed attitude as percentage of total words	Total attitude as percentage of total words	Percentage of attitude inscribed
MH	3.5	8.25	42
AH	4	9	44
SAC	5.1	10.66	48
CAFS	5.9	9.8	60

These figures reveal a significant difference between the amount of the Attitude that is inscribed in MH, AH, SAC, and in CAFS. Almost 60 percent of the Attitude contained in the CAFS text is explicitly stated, while only 42-44% of the Attitude is inscribed in the history texts and a slightly larger amount (48%) is inscribed in SAC. When considered in conjunction with the types of attitude most commonly expressed in these texts, CAFS stands out even more strongly from the other subjects as a subject in which more congruent and "common sense" evaluative language is acceptable. This is exemplified by the text below, which contains a large amount of inscribed Affect.

> CAFS 2: Gay + Lesbian couples with children can cause **uncertainty** in the
>
> child and they may **resent** their 'parents' or 'carers' as they are not like
>
> everyone else – cause **tension** within family can prevent them from wanting to

enter into social situations as feel **embarrassed** or **scared** of being teased –

negative impact on social wellbeing as well as emotional.

4.2.3. The interplay between inscribed and invoked Attitude

It was also important to ascertain whether different types of Attitude were more likely

to be inscribed than others and whether this varied significantly between subjects, as

this would give further indications to the type of evaluation deemed acceptable in

each of the four subjects. There is less at stake when Appreciating things than there is

when Judging people's behaviour, and academic texts therefore tend to invoke

Judgement more often than inscribing it. High levels of Affect such as those found in

the CAFS text are even more rare in academic texts in most disciplines, and a

congruent or inscribed realisation of this Affect would therefore be highly significant.

Tables 5-7 below show the number of instances where resources of Attitude were

used in the texts, and these figures enable an investigation of how much Affect,

Judgement and Appreciation is either inscribed or invoked in the case of each subject.

Table 5 shows the total instances of Attitude in the student texts, Table 6 shows

instances of inscribed Attitude only and Table 7 shows the instances of invoked

Attitude in student texts.

Table 5: Total Attitude (inscribed and invoked) in student texts

Subject	Affect	Judgement	Appreciation
MH	5	64	21
AH	9	31	40
SAC	3	76	28
CAFS	35	46	8

A number of interesting points emerge from these data. The first is that when

Appreciation occurs in a text, it is more likely than other categories of Attitude to be

inscribed. Out of the 21 instances of Appreciation in MH for example, 17 of these

were inscribed, with only 4 instances of invoked Appreciation, and in SAC a similar

pattern holds with 22 inscriptions out of the 28 instances of Appreciation. In

opposition to this, Judgement in a text is more likely to be invoked. In fact, 62% of

the Judgement is invoked in SAC (47 instances out of a total of 76), 67% is invoked

in MH (43 instances out of a total of 64) and 74% in AH (23 instances out of a total of

31).

Table 6: Number of instances of inscribed Attitude in student texts

Subject	Affect	Judgement	Appreciation
MH	0	21	17
AH	2	8	25
SAC	0	29	22
CAFS	29	21	4

Table 7: Number of instances of invoked Attitude in student texts

Subject	Affect	Judgement	Appreciation
MH	5	43	4
AH	7	23	15
SAC	3	47	6
CAFS	6	25	4

Another interesting point is that much of the Affect in CAFS is actually inscribed,

with only about 17% (6 instances out of a total of 35) of the Affect being invoked.

These differences further accentuate the differences between CAFS and the other

three subjects, with CAFS relying on much more explicit expression of attitude than

any of the other subjects.

In order to be able to obtain a clearer picture of what was happening across the different subjects, the results were also calculated as percentage figures of both total Attitude and inscribed Attitude only. The figures in Tables 8-9 below show the distribution of the Attitude in the text according to the categories of Affect, Judgement and Appreciation.

Both the MH and the SAC texts are relatively balanced in their use of explicit resources of Attitude, with approximately half of the inscribed Attitude expressing Appreciation and half expressing Judgement, while the AH text contains more evaluative language explicitly indicating Appreciation (Table 8).

Table 8: Percentages of inscribed Attitude in student texts

Subject	Affect	Judgement	Appreciation
MH	0	55	45
AH	6	23	71
SAC	0	57	43
CAFS	54	39	7

Table 9, however, shows what percentages of the total Attitude (inscribed and invoked) in each text is expressed as Affect, Judgement or Appreciation, and this makes it clear that the patterns in the distribution of Attitude vary significantly when invoked Attitude is considered together with the inscribed Attitude. The most common type of Attitude expressed in MH, SAC and CAFS then becomes Judgement, and the tendency of AH to orient strongly toward Appreciation is moderated somewhat.

Table 9: Percentages of total Attitude in student texts

Subject	Affect	Judgement	Appreciation
MH	6	71	23
AH	11	39	50

| SAC | 2 | 72 | 26 |
| CAFS | 40 | 52 | 9 |

Significantly, most of the invoked Attitude is afforded (Martin & White, 2005) and therefore arises out of the particular orientation of the subjects themselves. The following examples of invoked Judgement from Modern History demonstrate this:

MH 3: As early as the 1950's , the domestic **resistance** movement had highlighted the **Apartheid regime** in SA…

MH 4: …resulted in another 86 **deaths by police shooting** …

MH 5: The International Defence and Aid Fund helped to fund lawyers for the ANC and tried to counter the **propaganda** coming out of SA.

MH 6: The international response also reached businesses, with the Sullivan Principles, a set of **equal opportunity/right** codes for Blacks in SA workplaces…

MH 7: Ultimately, the fact that de Klerk **did not use the military power that Botha used** to suppress **Apartheid**…

and from Society and Culture:

SAC 2: Australia **likes to think of itself** as an **egalitarian** [inscribed] society…

SAC 3: In a society riddled with **social class** and **prejudice** [inscribed]…

SAC 4: After the Europeans arrived in Australia, they **took their land**, and **introduced alcohol**.

SAC 5: The majority of Aborigines are in **semi-skilled** and **unskilled** labour which is quite insufficient when they have a family to support.

These instances from the student texts give some insight into what the appropriate language and concepts (NSW Board of Studies, 2004b:11) for each subject may be. Both these subjects are focused around concepts such as Apartheid, prejudice, and propaganda that are still charged with evaluative meaning in middle-class, white Australian society and so are not completely technicalized as subject-specific lexis. The texts naturalise a reading position that is highly critical of such policies and ways of thinking and therefore indicate that the values considered important in each subject are those in opposition to such policies.

While Society and Culture and Modern History appear to be oriented more towards the expression of values and judgements about the behaviour of society and individuals, Ancient History is more concerned with Appreciation of artefacts, written evidence and historical empires. For example:

AH 3: The lack of **discriminating** evidence has led to various interpretations, many scholars suggesting that a build-up of events led to the once **mighty** and **centralized** government's **collapse.**

The interplay of inscribed and invoked Attitude also works differently with Ancient History. Whereas in both SAC and MH it is the <u>invoked</u> attitude which orients the text more strongly towards one particular category of Attitude (in their case, Judgement), in the AH text, it is the <u>inscriptions</u> which orient the text strongly in one particular direction. Table 8 shows that 71% of the inscribed Attitude for AH is Appreciation, however, when looking at the total Attitude (Table 9), only 50% is Appreciation. While Appreciation is still the most frequently used type of Attitude, the invoked Attitude in AH serves to create more of a balance in the overall type of Attitude expressed, whereas in MH and SAC the invoked Attitude serves to orient the text more strongly towards one particular type of Attitude.

To summarise the above findings, Community and Family Studies seems to operate completely differently from the other subjects. CAFS shows the most consistent distributions of Attitude across the categories when looking at inscribed Attitude only and inscribed and invoked Attitude together. While the other subjects use affordances to give them their particular 'flavour', in CAFS it is more a case of 'what you see is what you get'. CAFS not only contains much more Affect than any of the other subjects, but 83% of this Affect is inscribed. When considering inscriptions only, CAFS is oriented towards Affect, with 54% of the inscribed Attitude in the text expressing Affect, however when considering both inscribed and invoked Attitude, the text is more oriented towards Judgement, with 52% of the total Affect expressing

Judgement and 40% expressing Affect. Despite these slight changes in orientation, the distribution of Affect across the three categories varies much less sharply in CAFS than in the other texts. Furthermore, the CAFS text contains hardly any Appreciation at all, which is also a significant difference from the other texts.

5. Conclusion

Once the expectations and orientations of different subjects are made clear, teachers and students can work more effectively towards developing 'appropriate' literacy for each subject. Although these results are preliminary, arising from the analysis of only one highly rated text in each subject, interesting differences between the subjects of Modern History, Ancient History, Society and Culture and Community and Family Studies are beginning to emerge. Although an Appraisal analysis of the syllabus rationale section did not seem to indicate differences between the subjects, the analysis of student texts has resulted in the emergence of different 'Appraisal profiles' for the four subjects included in this study with each displaying a distinctive pattern of Attitude and Graduation usage. While MH and SAC are alike in their orientation towards the use of resources of Judgment, MH makes greater use of Focus to grade these resources. On the other hand, AH appears to be oriented towards Appreciation, while CAFS has almost equal amounts of Affect and Judgement and is much more explicit in its expression of attitude than the other subjects. CAFS therefore appears to be more grounded in the 'everyday' and 'commonsense', a conclusion which would be echoed by many teachers of other humanities subjects in schools, who often view

CAFS as a 'soft option' and as 'less academic' or 'less rigorous' than other humanities subjects.

As this research is ongoing, it is hoped that analysis of more student texts in each subject will strengthen these results. It is, however, beginning to become clear that there are significant differences in the way that students of these subjects construct stance through their uses of interpersonal language resources. Making these differences explicit should help elucidate what 'appropriate and well-structured oral and written forms' (NSW Board of Studies, 2004b:11) may be for these subjects.

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