

A GENRE ANALYSIS OF WRITTEN ACADEMIC FEEDBACK

by

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Abstract

This thesis sets out to investigate two aspects. First, to explore written academic feedback as a genre and second, to use corpus approaches to investigate any significant strategy revealed by the genre study. Feedback reports were gathered from two Humanities departments from undergraduate students who were doing an English programme in a UK higher education institution. The first aim of this research is to identify the rhetorical structures or functions of feedback by analyzing its moves, steps, and acts structure. A genre analysis was carried out with 100 feedback reports. Although both departments used different templates in giving feedback, the findings from the genre analysis show some distinctive patterning of feedback, indicating that written academic feedback is a genre. The second part of this research was developed in the process of genre analysis where one of the distinctive features of feedback is in tutors' use of hedging. The EdEng corpus was compiled from the set of feedback reports, constituting 35,941 words. From the findings of the corpus study, hedging is often expressed through four sub-components: modal verbs, vague language, stance adverbs, and submodifiers. Through the findings of this study, I hope to be able to raise awareness of the current feedback writing system and to provide salient ways for tutors to give feedback in essays. The findings of this research will also provide a framework of written academic feedback as a reference guide for Initial Teacher Training Programmes.

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List of abbreviations used in genre analysis

Moves	Abbreviations
Initiation	I
Problem	P
Solution	S
Conclusion	C
<hr/>	
Steps	
Focus	FO
General Impression	GI
Highlighting Strength	HS
Indicating Problem	IP
Overall Judgement	OJ
Suggesting Ways of Improving	SWI
<hr/>	
Acts	
Calling Attention to Weakness	CAW
Embedded Problem	EP
Embedded Solution	ES
Exemplification	EX
Follow-up Reinforcement	FR
Meta-statement	MS
Mitigation	MI
Positive Judgement	PJ
Recommendation	RE

Note:

All **moves** are emphasised in font size 14, colour-code: **dark purple**;

All **steps** are emphasised in font size 13, colour-code: **aqua**;

All acts are emphasised in font size 12, colour-coded accordingly throughout analysis.

List of abbreviations used in corpus analysis (grammatical patterns)

ADJ	Adjective (examples: good, interesting, useful)
ADV	Adverb (example: probably)
ART	Article (examples: a, an, the)
gen-DET	General determiner (examples: these, some)
INT	Intensifiers (examples: extremely, very)
MOD	Modal (examples: can, could, may, might, must, should, will or would)
NEG'N	Negation (examples: not or contracted form, <i>n't</i>)
NP	Noun Phrase
PN	Proper Noun (examples: author's name)
PPN	Personal Pronoun (examples: you, it)
pos-DET	Possessive Determiner (example: your)
SADV	Stance adverbs (examples: generally, rarely)
Sub-mod	Submodifier (examples: quite, really)
TO-inf	to-infinitive
VB	Verb (examples: read, say)
VP	Verb phrase (example: have extended)
VL	Vague language (examples: some, few)
wh-ADV	wh-adverb (example: how)
wh-DET	wh-determiner (examples: what, which)

CODING ABBREVIATIONS USED IN ANALYSIS

POS	Positivity
NEG	Negativity
SUG	Suggestion
[...+] or [...+]	this pattern can either be used or omitted
[POS +] or [+ POS]	preceded with positive comment or followed by positive comment
[NEG +] or [+ NEG]	preceded with negative comment or followed by negative comment
[+ NEG/ SUG]	one or the other is used
[MIT]	Mitigation (phrases such as, <i>I take your point</i> , or <i>I understand where you are coming from</i>)
ADJ[POS] or	positive adjectives such as <i>good</i> or <i>clear</i>
ADJ[NEG]	negative adjectives such as <i>too general</i> or <i>too reliant</i>
<...>	the subsequent pattern(s)
Examples:	
<NEG+SUG>	negative comment + suggestion
<END>	end of comment
<NEXT CRITERIA>	end of present comment, moving onto commenting the next criteria
<POS+NEG+MIT>	positive comment + negative + mitigation

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This thesis begins by specifying the aims of the research, followed by the motivations for the current research, and the study's significance.

1.1. General aim of this thesis

The general aim of this thesis is to investigate written academic feedback as a genre, identifying the rhetorical structures or functions of feedback. In the process of genre analysis, the way the tutors were hedging their comments was a very striking feature which invites further investigation. Hence, this thesis forms a bi-fold research: firstly, a genre analysis of written academic feedback. Secondly, a corpus study on how tutors hedged their comments. The research questions for this thesis can be stated as follows:

- 1) Is feedback a genre? If yes, how is it a genre?
- 2) What are the distinctive features of language used in written academic feedback?

1.2. The motivations and rationale for the current research

Giving feedback is one of the most important of the daily responsibilities of educators, especially in higher education (Hyland, 1998a:255; Hyland, 2006:103; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006:200). However, from my past experiences as a student in Brunei Darussalam, from secondary to higher education, essays were given marks or grades and returned with short feedback. Essays feedback, particularly in the higher education, was not as comprehensive as the feedback undergraduates were receiving in the United

Kingdom. Feedback consisted largely of short comments, primarily general evaluations, such as: *good work*, *this is a very good essay*, or *work harder*, as opposed to highlighting any strengths and weaknesses of the essay or recommending ways for students to improve. Feedback, to some extent, was not considered a valuable component of the teaching and learning process. This is reflected in the early days of my teaching career when I was approached by a parent voicing her dissent over my comments in her child's book.

The interest in doing this research on feedback arose therefore from my past experiences either as a student or tutor, where feedback was often neglected. Through this research, I hope that students as well as tutors, including teacher trainees, will be able to understand the genre of feedback and arrive at a more effective means of delivering feedback on students' essay thus achieving a higher success rate for students' essay submission. The findings of this research can also be used as a learning tool, particularly in the grammatical patterns of feedback and the means of conveying hedging in order to avoid sounding too negative.

The first part of this research on genre analysis will provide tutors with a framework of written academic feedback which can be presented as a hierarchical structure (at the move, step, or act levels).

In the second part of this research on corpus analysis, the findings will enable tutors to identify the linguistic feature of hedging, in mitigating their statements. In the corpus analysis chapter, I have also presented various grammatical patterns of the linguistic use of hedging. These patterns can be beneficial to both teacher trainees and learners who may

use the patterns, particularly in second language contexts, where they can see the different patterns and explore ways to use the patterns.

1.3. Significance of the thesis

This research is significant as it is one of the few studies to investigate written academic feedback as a genre. In addition to the genre analysis, this research is complemented with a corpus study looking at the language use in feedback, specifically in the area of hedging. The research allows us to exploit the feedback genre for the purpose of reflective practice but most importantly, for initial teacher training purposes. We will be able to raise awareness in both tutors and students on how essay feedback is generally conveyed and at the same time develop their abilities to focus on the language used in the feedback. Tutors can be helped by being made conscious of the appropriateness of written comments on students' work while assisting the students to interpret the texts and make sense of the feedback in order to become more proficient writers. Although the findings and results from this research derived from a particular cultural context, UK tertiary education, the results can be used as a guide to be adapted in different cultural contexts, such as Brunei Darussalam, rather than as a fixed template.

1.4. Outline of the thesis

Chapter 2 begins with a detailed literature review on academic feedback. The chapter looks at the notion of feedback, feedback's purposes, tutor's roles in giving feedback and the ways in which feedback has been categorised in previous research. In addition to these, the literature review also discusses the ways feedback should be given as proposed by experts

in this field and the advantages and disadvantages of giving feedback. This is followed by looking at the previous research which has been done in the area of feedback, particularly in the common misperceptions of tutors and students towards feedback. The chapter ends with a section on the challenges experienced by tutors in giving feedback as well as the students in receiving the feedback.

Chapter 3 looks at the literature review on genre, looking at the notion of genre based on the three approaches – the Australian School, English for Specific Purposes, and the North America or New Rhetoric approach. This chapter also looks at feedback as an occluded genre. This is followed by the approaches of genre analysis before looking at the process of analysing genre where the moves, steps, and acts are discussed. The final section of this chapter looks at the pedagogical implications of genre.

Chapter 4 discusses on the notion of politeness theory which is a key element in written academic feedback. It then looks at a brief survey of the literature on hedging looking at the four sub-components of hedging derived from the data analysis – modality, vague language, stance adverbs, and submodifiers. This is then followed by a discussion on ‘why do authors opt to hedge their writing?’.

Chapter 5 outlines the methodology for this thesis, starting off by outlining the history of the research project which leads to the present research. This chapter also describes the research context and the participants, as well as the ethical considerations which were taken into the research process. The EdEng corpus is introduced in this chapter along with

the framework of written academic feedback which was developed from the genre analysis of the written academic feedback. The corpus-based methodology is also outlined in this chapter where the hedging and non-hedging features were specified.

The findings and discussion of the research are discussed in Chapters 6 and 7. Chapter 6 presents the findings on the genre analysis of feedback where all the moves, steps, and acts patterns from the genre analysis were outlined. The full analysis of each of the feedback reports is also available in electronic form (see attached CD). Chapter 7 then discusses the main findings on genre analysis looking at the more significant patterns.

Chapters 8 and 9 look at the findings and discussion from the corpus study. Chapter 8 presents the findings from the corpus analysis, beginning with the top 50 nouns, adjectives and adverbs in the EdEng corpus. This is followed by hedging where the four sub-components of hedging – modals, vague language, stance adverbs, and submodifiers, were further investigated. The more prevalent patterns of feedback were then outlined. Chapter 9 then discusses the main findings of the corpus study.

The final chapter, Chapter 10, assesses the thesis as a whole. This chapter considers the strengths and limitations of the present study, together with recommendations for future research in this area of study.

What I am going to do in the next chapter is to review feedback.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON FEEDBACK

This research sets out to investigate academic content written feedback to English Language undergraduates as a genre. Most research in the area of feedback is concerned with language feedback to second language or foreign language learners but there is also some research on content feedback to L1 students. The literature in this chapter will look only at previous research carried out in the area of feedback in L1 settings. There will be a discussion on the notion, issues, and purposes of feedback. This will be followed by the types of feedback identified across research and the categorisations which have been used to classify the comments acknowledged by researchers over the years. I shall then discuss the different roles which tutors could employ in giving feedback exploring the advantages and disadvantages of using feedback in students' essays. The differences of perceptions between tutors and students will be discussed.

Because of the use of different terminologies used to refer to participants in previous research, a little clarification is necessary. Firstly, the term 'tutor(s)' will be used most of the time in this chapter to refer to all teaching staff in general, with respect to lecturers in higher education or teachers in secondary or primary schools. Similarly 'students' will be used to refer to students in general, including undergraduate students (UGs), postgraduate students (PGs) as well as secondary students or primary pupils. In addition to this, 'freshman', a term generally used to refer to first year students enrolled in colleges in the United States will also be referred as students (UGs) in this research. The term 'university' will be used in reference to students attending higher education, as opposed to the use of college, a term often used in the United States. I will try to make clear distinctions to differentiate these groups of participants in their respective contexts. Apart from tutors' [6]

written feedback, it is also important to note that feedback is also presented in other forms such as oral feedback, peers' feedback, audio feedback, or electronic feedback. As the present study is investigating written feedback, other feedback modes will not be discussed in detail.

2.1. The notion of feedback

Giving feedback to students is an important task for tutors. Mutch (2003:24) stated that little research has been carried out in the area of feedback but since his article, feedback has developed into a significant area of study. Yelland (2011:218) shows the increase in the number of published articles in the journal, *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, carried out in the area of feedback, in particular feedback to students (as shown in Figure 2.1.). Until 1982, little research had been done in feedback. In a conference paper by Ziv (1982), she stresses the limited research in the exploration of how students perceived tutors' written comments. Sommers (1982) also mentions there is no means of telling whether feedback on students' writing has been effective. Studies over the years looking into feedback in language classrooms, exploring how feedback should be delivered, the effectiveness of feedback, the impact it had on tutors and students, as well as their perception of feedback have brought researchers to study in depth the whole notion of giving feedback. The research has been carried out at different levels of education, ranging from secondary level to higher education. Even though the research is carried out in different classroom contexts with a range of students, it is interesting to discover the similarities they share towards feedback.

Figure 2.1. The increase of journal articles on feedback to students since 1976
(Statistics from Yelland, 2011:218)

<i>Journal: Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education</i> (1981 - current)		
Formerly known as: <i>Assessment in Higher Education</i> (1975 - 1980)		
1976 – 1995	0 (out of 371 articles)	0%
1996 – 2005	8 (out of 371 articles)	2.2% increase
2006 – 2011	24 (out of 265 articles)	7.1% increase since 1996 – 2005

Throughout the years, various terms for feedback have been applied across the research. Apart from the use of “feedback”, some researchers refer to it as “written feedback” or “written comments” while others wish to refer to it as “teacher’s commentary” or “teacher’s response”. On the other hand, Jackson (1995:2) calls it “formative evaluation” because the comments are often made in the margins in most students’ essays, or what Jackson refers to as “marginal comments”. The term, feedback, or more formally, written academic feedback, will be used in this study. Researchers who are looking at feedback for language learners over the years include: Connors and Lunsford (1993); Ferris, Pezone, Tade, and Tinti (1997); Mutch (2003). Researchers who are focusing on feedback for non-language learners include: Hyland and Hyland (2001); Keh (1990); Sommers (1982); Ziv (1982) (see also Table 2.1. in Chapter 2, and Table 5.4. in Chapter 5 for other research on feedback).

Although there are various terminologies for feedback, researchers have shared similar definitions of feedback. Keh (1990:294) defines feedback as “input from a reader to a writer with the effect of providing information to the writer for revision”. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006:208) define feedback as “a source against which students can

evaluate progress and check out their own internal construction of goals, criteria and standards”. Hyland (2006:313) defines feedback clearly as:

“[t]he responses from teachers, peers or computers which students receive on their language performance and which is designed to support learning, convey and model ideas about good performance, develop a linguistic metalanguage and encourage familiarity with new literacy practices”

(Hyland, 2006:313)

According to Keh (1990:294), feedback basically constitutes statements about the strengths and weaknesses of individual students, at the same time offering ways in which students can improve in subsequent writings. Harmer (2001:99) shares a similar view towards this in which “feedback encompasses not only correcting students, but also offering them an assessment of how well they have done...”. As feedback comprises information to help students to become better writers and enable them to improve, it is believed that tutors’ comments are one of the important elements in students’ writing processes (Irons, 2008:1; Keh, 1990:294). Gibbs and Simpson (2004:7) corroborate this when they claim that feedback has the strongest influence on students’ achievement. Earlier research by Ziv (1982:2) also shows not only that ‘comment’ is one of the most important tasks tutors undertake, but it is actually one of the most effective methods in enhancing students’ writing competency. Hyland (2006:102-103) confirms this when he indicates one of the ways students are able to improve their writing competency is through the written feedback they receive from their tutors. Apart from making judgements of students’ progress, the way feedback is given to students’ work will depend not only on mistakes students have made, but will also depend on the task that students are assigned (Harmer, 2001:99). Mutch (2003:25) later supports this when he points out that feedback “demands attention to not only the text but also to the conditions of production, distribution and reception”.

Feedback is often regarded as an element of assessment as it is frequently given on a piece of student's writing. Jackson (1995:2) voiced similar thoughts when he classified feedback as a form of "formative evaluation" in assessment. Irons (2008:1) indicates that feedback is an important aspect of assessment and through it students should be able to learn more effectively. Although feedback is accompanied by assessments of writing and to enhance students' writing capability, Ferris (2003:123) points out that tutors' feedback is considered most effective when it is given at the intermediate stage (secondary school students or students in higher education level) where students are able to understand and attend to the feedback, especially on writing requiring drafts. Having said that, Peterson and Portier's (2012) recent research based in Canada focusing on peer and teacher feedback on grade one students' writing (ranging between 6-7 years old, equivalent to Year 2 in the United Kingdom) found improvements on students writing proficiency and development from giving and receiving feedback either from their teacher or peers. As the current study is looking into written academic feedback in a higher education institution, the effectiveness of feedback on primary or secondary school students will not be discussed further.

As we can see from this part of the discussion, feedback is an important element in the teaching and learning process, and in developing students' writing competency (Harmer, 2001:112; Hyland, 1998a:279,281). Bitchener and Knoch's studies on the effect of direct corrective feedback have shown that students who have received feedback outperformed others who did not receive feedback (Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2009a, 2009b, 2010). As part of the teaching and learning process, there is still a need for research to be carried out in order to understand in depth the nature of feedback, how it is given and how

it is perceived by both the tutors and students in order to produce salient feedback in the future (see Ziv's earlier research, 1982:7).

2.2. Purposes of feedback

Researchers looking into feedback have, one way or another, shared similar views as to why feedback should be given. Feedback plays an important role in students' learning as it offers a mode of communication between the tutor and individual student which is unlikely or rarely likely to take place in the everyday classroom (Hyland & Hyland, 2001:185; Hyland, 2006:103). According to Hyland and Hyland (2001:186), the role of feedback is for "channelling reactions and advice" in order to assist students to perform better. Sommers (1982:155) and Ziv (1982:3) share a similar opinion when they point out that the main purpose of feedback is to encourage students and help them to write better or, as Ziv (1982:3) puts it, to "improve the quality of their texts". Feedback needs to be delivered in different ways according to the tasks students are assigned to, at the same time, proposing strategies so that students themselves are able to identify. This is because students are unable to put themselves in the position of the tutor as to how they would respond to the writing, there is a need for tutors' commentary, in order to help them understand the position of a reader by becoming a reader themselves. As Sommers (1982:148), indicates, responding to comments helps students become better evaluators of their own writing, leading to them becoming better writers.

"Our [tutors'] comments need to offer students revision tasks of a different order of complexity and sophistication from the ones they themselves identify, by forcing students back into the chaos, back to the point where they are shaping and restructuring their meaning... We [tutors] need to show our students how to seek, in the possibility of revision, the dissonance of discovery – to show them through our comments why new choices would positively change their texts, and thus to show them the potential development implicit in their own writing"

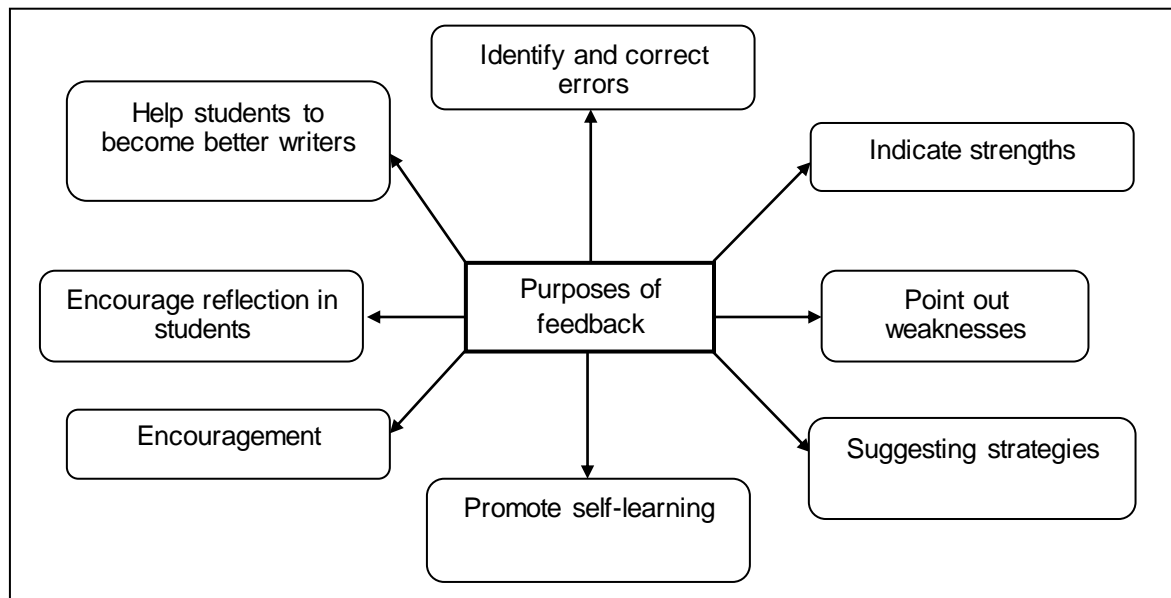
(Sommers, 1982:154,156)

Apart from suggesting ways of improving and indicating strengths and weaknesses, other reasons for giving feedback include guiding students to recognise their errors, becoming reflective learners, and helping students to develop better writing competency (Gibbs & Simpson, 2004; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006:208). These principles were also highlighted in Jackson's (1995:2) earlier paper indicating that feedback should specify "alternatives, unanswered questions, inconsistencies, connections, the request for a definition, drawing attention to implications, and the like."

There is a need to deliver good feedback as it plays a major role in students' learning. When no feedback is given, students will not learn anything (Jackson, 1995:3). It provides students with information on their development and accomplishment as opposed to a summative form where students know only if they have passed or failed the task (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006:212). In other words, with feedback, students are able to know or "learn" their strengths and weaknesses including suggestions for improvements, as compared to merely getting a grade or mark telling them if they have passed or failed. Based on the discussion here, we can sum up the main purposes of feedback. Not only does it point out students' errors, but it is also used to acknowledge aspects which students have handled well, their strengths, and their weaknesses, as well as suggesting strategies students can use to improve their skills in order to become better writers. The main purposes of feedback are summarised in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2. Purposes of feedback

(Adapted from Gibbs & Simpson, 2004:17; Jackson, 1995:2; Lee, 2003:220)



2.3. Tutor's roles in giving feedback

It is in every tutor's interest to give effective feedback to students in order to help them to be better writers. Keh (1990:301) proposes three roles in which tutors can participate when giving feedback to students.

Firstly, in giving comments, tutors could try writing the feedback in the position of reader or as Keh (1990:301) puts it, "write as a reader interacting with a writer". The focus is on the content, thus initiating the feedback with positive comments. It is believed that in order for students to become good writers, they have to know their writing is being read and their ideas are acknowledged (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982:158). Secondly, whilst keeping to the role as the reader, the tutor also plays the role of "writing teacher". The main focus is to

highlight the main problem in the students' writing and at the same time offer suggestions on how to improve the writing. Thirdly, the tutor acting as a "grammarian" where the tutor can list the grammatical errors by explaining why the use of grammar in the context is inappropriate (Keh, 1990:301). It is important to bear in mind that students may not be able to act on all the feedback at once, so it is necessary for tutors to try to limit their feedback (Jackson, 1995:3). Brannon and Knoblauch (1982:162) share similar views on the idea of tutors playing certain roles in giving comments. They suggest that the main role of the tutors is to ensure that students are aware of the mistakes they impart to or the confusion they cause to their readers and the ways to avoid them happening again.

"[t]he teacher's role is to attract a writer's attention to the relationship between intention and effect, enabling the recognition of discrepancies between them, even suggesting ways to eliminate the discrepancies, but finally leaving decisions about alternative choices to the writer, not the teacher."

(Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982:162).

As we can see from this short discussion of tutors' roles, most of the roles could be derived from the definitions and purposes of feedback which have been mentioned earlier, for instance the role of tutors in pointing out the errors and areas for improvements. Although tutors often play a role in giving feedback, Hyland (1998a:255) suggests that feedback which is often found in L1 classrooms is of "poor quality [and] focuses on the wrong issues". Feedback in L1 classrooms is also often disregarded and misconstrued. Similar findings, however, are found with feedback in L2 settings. The literature review thus far explores the notion of feedback, purposes of feedback, and tutor's roles in giving feedback. Although the tutors and students attitudes towards feedback are not investigated (see research methodology, Chapter 5, Section 5.1.), the aim of this literature review is to clarify the notion of feedback. What follows is a discussion on feedback classification.

2.4. Ways of categorising feedback

A substantial amount of research has been carried out looking into feedback and how feedback is conveyed to students. However, most of the research looks at the types of feedback in the initial drafts and final pieces of students' writing in L1 students (for instance, Sommers, 1982; Ziv, 1982). Sommers (1982:149) and Ferris (2006) both were in agreement that feedback is more effective if it is given during the writing process rather than in the final draft, as they provide students with support for their subsequent writing. However, undergraduates students in UK higher education institutions tend not to produce "drafts" for their essay. In most cases, they write one essay for every module. Some researchers have argued that feedback is irrelevant when students cannot apply the feedback to their subsequent piece of writing (Gibbs & Simpson, 2004:21; Jackson, 1995:3).

Individual researchers have their own means of categorising the feedback according to their research aims and the data they have gathered for their research. It will be impossible to construct a robust classification of feedback (Lee, 2003:251). Some of the classifications of feedback are summarised in Table 2.1. The feedback data for this research was not categorised as its main focus is to identify the genre of feedback. However, from the findings of the genre analysis, we can recognise the distinctive patterns of feedback (see Chapters 6 and 7 for the findings and discussion of the genre analysis of feedback).

Table 2.1. Past researches and classifications on feedback

Note: Only researchers who have classified the types of feedback are listed in this table.

Researcher:	Classifications of feedback/ Feedback research focus:	Participants and context:
Feedback on content		
Connors, R.J. and Lunsford, A.A. (1993)	Global comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - comments evaluating specific rhetorical elements (supporting evidence, examples, details such as organization, purpose, overall progress) - comments that deal with specific formal elements (sentence structure, paragraph structure, documentation, quotations). 	UGs (college students) marked essays
Ferris, D.R., Pezone, S., Tade, C.R. and Tinti, S. (1997)	Pragmatic aims and linguistic forms of tutors' written commentary Pragmatic aims include: directives (asking for information, making suggestion/request, and giving information); grammar/mechanics; positive comments. Linguistic forms include: syntactic form (question, statement/exclamation, and imperative); presence/absence of hedge(s); text-specific/generic.	UGs (47 freshmen and sophomores who have experiences with western tutors) ESL experienced writing instructors
Hyland, F. and Hyland, K. (2001)	Praise and criticism in written feedback	ESL students in a university in New Zealand 2 experienced ESL writing instructors.

Table 2.1. (continued) Past researches and classifications on feedback

Researcher:	Classifications of feedback/ Feedback research focus:	Participants and context:
Jackson, M. (1995)	Summative and formative evaluations	N/A. Discussion on good feedback practice.
Keh, C.L. (1990)	Higher order concerns (HOCs) and lower order concerns (LOCs). HOCs include development of ideas, organization, and the overall summary (content). LOCs include mechanical errors (form).	ESL learners
Mutch, A. (2003)	Positive and negative comments	Business school teaching staffs Feedback reports from 11 degrees across all levels of study.
Stern, L.A. and Solomon, A. (2006)	Global level (overall quality, paper structure and organization, creativity, and voice); Middle-level (quality of specific thoughts and claims, procedure and technique, support evidence for claims, request for content clarification, paragraph, and sentence structure/style); Micro-level (word choice/phrasing, missing words and pieces, grammar/punctuation, spelling/typos, technical style, and references/citations); Other comments (invitations to discuss paper, personal expressions and advice, scholarly advice, “road maps”, tracking marks, rubric/grading sheet, unidentifiable, and other).	UGs portfolios (including homework, exams, quizzes, informal reflection papers, formal research papers and scientific laboratory reports). Faculty comments (for papers which had been graded)

Jackson (1995:2), alternatively, looked into summative and formative evaluation whereby he classified feedback as a form of formative evaluation, defined by him as “a judgement designed to improve the work of the student involved” as it is often the sort of comment which tutors would often give in the margin, or at the end of the essay. Meanwhile, summative evaluation is assessment in the form of marks or grades which lets students know if they have passed or failed in a task or course. The feedback data gathered for this research were considered to be summative feedback. The formative feedback (or marginal comments) was not included as the data collection did not include collecting the students’ essays, where the marginal comments would be found (see Chapter 5 for the research methodology).

Other ways of categorising include Mutch (2003:30) and Robb *et al.* (1986:84) research. They classified feedback into positive and negative comments. They found that most of the tutors’ comments were positive rather than negative. This categorisation, positive and negative comments, shares similar features with Hyland and Hyland’s (2001:186) classifications of feedback, praise, criticisms, and suggestions. They define praise as “an act which attributes credit to another for some characteristic, attribute, skill, etc.”, while criticisms are defined as “an expression of dissatisfaction or negative comment on a text”, whereas suggestions are defined as “the more positive end of a continuum” (Hyland & Hyland, 2001:186).

Praise is the most frequent form of feedback used by tutors. Although praise is often used in comments, most of the time it is used as a means to alleviate criticisms and suggestions

rather than explicitly praising the students' good work (Hyland & Hyland, 2001:195). Alternatively, criticisms and suggestions are used as a form of mitigation by tutors, often through the use of hedging, interrogations and "personal attribution" (Hyland & Hyland, 2001:196-199). In order to soften comments through the use of hedges, modal verbs such as '*could*', '*might*' or '*should*' are used. This is also shown in Lea and Street's (1998:167) research where mitigation in comments is often found to interrelate with the use of modality expressed through imperatives and assertions. Mutch (2003:31) indicates the reason for doing so is for mitigation to be "less dependent on the tutor's perceived expert power". Hedging is also a significant aspect of this research.

In addition to this, praise does seem to play a part in how students perceive feedback. Students with a higher grade in their essays develop more positive attitudes towards feedback, and from this it may seem that teacher praise appears to influence students' attitudes (Norton & Norton, 2001:16). Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006:212) are not in total agreement. They claim that praise is important with all students. Feedback should not only comment on students' strengths and weaknesses along with offering suggestions for improvements, but should also incorporate praise and criticisms. They recognise that praising students' effort and writing competence promotes success as compared with praising students on their ability or intelligence (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006:212). Miller (1982:330) claims that when students are given the options of receiving criticisms in their feedback, surprisingly some students, although not all, do request criticisms from tutors. It is the sense of curiosity in certain students which drives them to seek out criticisms. They will request criticisms when they are prepared to accept them. Although students' preferences of feedback were not investigated in this research (see Chapter 5,

Section 5.1.), the findings from genre analysis and corpus analysis of feedback (Chapters 6 and 8) showed that praise, criticisms and suggestions were very common in the feedback data gathered for this research.

2.5. How should feedback be given?

As has been discussed, feedback has an important role to play in students' learning. In order to help students to improve their writing, feedback from tutors has to be given positively and constructively (Gibbs & Simpson, 2004:15; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006:209-210; Norton & Norton, 2001:12; Rust, 2002:153). Feedback also needs to be "sensitive" not only to what the students' expectations are for a piece of writing, but also if they will find the feedback useful in their learning (Gibbs & Simpson, 2004:19-20). In addition to this, the way feedback is given should take account of the needs, abilities and personalities of students (Hyland, 1998a:279; Hyland & Hyland, 2001:188; Young, 2000:417). Because of this, there is a need for tutors to be aware of the means for giving appropriate feedback to students and having the needs identified (Young, 2000:417). It is quite common for tutors to use written feedback in order to suit every students' needs, especially when they have come to know each student well (Hyland, 1998a:279). Hyland and Hyland (2001:188) clarify this in their research where they found tutors' responses vary depending upon the students' ability, the task type, as well as the stage at which feedback is given, initial writing (draft) or the final product. Although students' needs are to be taken into consideration while giving feedback, Lee's (2003:223) research on secondary level tutors' main approach in giving error feedback, show a significantly low percentage of feedback was actually related to the needs the of the students.

Findings on students' opinions of the criteria which constitute good feedback show, basically, that a good comment not only indicates the problems in the writing, but also points out the strengths and weaknesses of the piece of writing by offering suggestions as to how to go about eliminating the weaknesses, thus making feedback more effective (Taylor, 1981:12). In line with findings on the main purposes of feedback which have been pointed out, Leki's (2006:279) findings on students' expectations of feedback share similar views to what has been expressed so far,

“What they [students] hoped for from the feedback was a clear sense of expectations and of standards, information about where they were falling short, and where they were performing adequately”

(Leki, 2006:279)

Further findings on students' preference about feedback include “question comments” (Keh, 1990:302). Students find “question comments” the most helpful comments because they have to think of the answers. However, the extent to which students can benefit from question comments are questionable, particularly if students themselves are struggling to answer the questions. This is reflected in Gibbs and Simpson's (2004:19) findings. They found that feedback given in a “more sophisticated epistemological stance” is quite often likely to cause confusion in students because of their inability to define the meaning behind the feedback.

Although it is said that students are able to become better writers through tutors' feedback, the timing of feedback is an important aspect as delay would be of no use to students because there is insufficient time for them to act on it before their next submission, or the submission of other essays (Lea & Street, 1998:167; Mutch, 2003:26; Nicol &

Macfarlane-Dick, 2006:208). Therefore, feedback should be given without delay in order to provide sufficient time for students to reflect on it. Otherwise, it is unlikely that students will benefit from feedback at all (Gibbs & Simpson, 2004:16,21; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006:210; Rust, 2002:152). When no comment is given to students, it is less likely that students will know what they have done wrong and how to improve their writing. As Sommers (1982:149) points out, if no comment is received by students, they will “revise in a consistently narrow and predictable way”. Alternately, some students will presume that their tutors have understood what they were trying to deliver and that there is no necessity for them to revise or improve.

Sommers (1982:149) further clarifies that it is better if comments are given during the process of writing and not when the writing has been completed. This is because comments are meant to initiate ways of improvements in the next draft. Though this may be true, it is only applicable to secondary school students rather than higher education students. Students are less likely to be asked to produce multiple drafts in any course or module in the higher education. Similarly, for courses in which students are expected to write only one essay per module, there is no chance for students to make improvements (Jackson, 1995:3). However, feedback on general issues such as presentation or organisation should be useful in subsequent writing.

It is important to note that more emphasis should be placed on the meaning or rather the product of writing when giving feedback (Hyland, 1998a:281). However, it has been found that in most writing, tutors’ comments often focus on the product of writing and less on the process of writing (Ziv, 1982:2, in a L1 context). Sommers (1982:150) believes that too

[22]

much emphasis on error correction will lead students to believe that tutors value accurate grammar, leading students to attend to errors rather than concentrating on the meaning of the text.

It is often the case that tutors actually state what should have been written by students, thus becoming the dictator instead of seeing what students have to say (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982:159; Taylor, 1981:9). Brannon and Knoblauch (1982:159) say “they [teachers] tend to undervalue student efforts to communicate what they have to say in the way that they wish to say it” which will not only discourage students but also will not bring any improvements in students’ writing. Feedback is given with the idea of helping students to become reflective learners at the same time as becoming better writers (as discussed in Section 2.2., also shown in Figure 2.2.), ensuring their ideas are understood by their readers. It is worth remembering that tutors are not to “test the writer’s ability to follow directions” (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982:162). It is the stress on product over process that often causes students’ to form contrasting perceptions to their tutors on how writing should be produced (Taylor, 1981:6). It is necessary for students to know what they write is actually being valued and convey this through feedback. They need to know they are judged in terms of their performance (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006:212). By responding to their writing, tutors show students that their work is being read and taken seriously, thus encouraging students to improve (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982:166).

As much as emphasis on product, students, especially L2 students, expect tutors to correct all their errors (Leki, 1991:203). In fact, L2 students disapproved of their tutors focusing solely on “content and organisation”. Despite this, it is difficult to prove if students

actually improved with tutors correcting all errors (Leki, 1991:208). In addition to this, tutors often do not provide enough comments when guiding students to attend to subject matter or “purposes and goals” but more on errors. Tutors should be constantly reminded that feedback is not largely commenting on errors such as “spelling and usage problems”, but it is also on what the students themselves have to offer (Sommers, 1982:154-155). In order to provide effective feedback, tutors should not focus on error correction excessively (Jackson, 1995:7) as students won’t be able to grasp all of it at the same time (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006:210).

Further examples on how feedback can offer solutions to the problems proposed by Ziv (1982:7), particularly on vocabulary, is to offer alternative words. Tutors could perhaps suggest other means of revising; either to rearrange, delete, substitute or add to the text, in order to generate a clearer meaning to the students. Tutors could also pinpoint the actual problem in the writing style by offering alternatives to the students. Other suggestions, as proposed by Sommers (1982:153) include specifying strategies students can undertake to become better writers. Sommers (1982:155) points out that “[c]omments should point to breaks in logic, disruption in meaning, or missing information.” Adding to this, Gibbs and Simpson (2004:16) point out that feedback focusing on content or product is more likely to encourage students to act on the feedback and is considerably less demotivating for students, as it is basically commenting on students’ “action” and not on the individual. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006:210) claim in order to sustain the conceptuality of feedback, feedback should be given as “dialogue”, meaning not only will students receive feedback in the form of writing, but also through interaction between the teacher and

student in order to discuss the follow-up issues arising from the feedback rather than merely as “informal transmission”.

After what has been said so far, tutors ought to develop a positive attitude in order to reflect on their feedback writing practice, thus enhancing the teaching and learning process. This is partly because not only is feedback involved in giving constructive comments to students, it also gives tutors information on their feedback practice and on students’ progress (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006:214). In other words, through reflecting upon the kind of feedback they practiced, tutors are able to investigate how much information is transmitted and accepted by students. From this, tutors will be able to improvise or make changes. Lee (2003:231) asserts this further when she points out that an “open and reflective attitude” towards feedback on the part of tutors should be encouraged as her research shows that tutors frequently were not quite sure of their own feedback procedures. As mentioned earlier, tutors often need additional help to give more effective feedback.

2.6. Advantages and disadvantages of feedback

Having looked at what feedback is, the purpose of feedback, the role of tutors in giving feedback, the different types of feedback, and how feedback should be given, we now look at the advantages and disadvantages in using feedback.

2.6.1. Advantages of feedback

It is in every tutor's interest to create a learning environment which is supportive and conducive to improvement for students. One of the ways this could be achieved is by giving positive and encouraging feedback (Hyland & Hyland, 2001:186; Rust, 2002:152). Tutors' feedback are helpful as they help students to be aware of the problems or mistakes they have made in their writing, while at the same time they offer ways to make room for improvements (Keh, 1990:295; Rust, 2002:152). As most feedback is given positively and constructively, one of the methods in which feedback is viewed as encouraging is through the use of praise in giving comments as Hyland and Hyland (2001) have shown in their research (praise is also mentioned earlier in Section 2.4.). It is believed that by using praise in feedback, it can help to increase students' motivation, while at the same time boosting their self-esteem, particularly for the less able writers.

2.6.2. Disadvantages of feedback

Despite the usefulness of feedback, not all students will act on the feedback they receive (Norton & Norton, 2001:3). Tutors' feedback on students' writing can have an impact on students' writing and attitudes (Hyland, 1998a:279). Although the use of mitigation by tutors is to some extent encouraging, some students may not be able to interpret it accurately (Bailey, 2008:4; Bailey & Garner, 2010:193; Lea & Street, 1998:167; Mutch, 2003:31). For students who are unable to understand the feedback they receive, it will be of no value (Wojtas, 1998:1). Giving feedback to students can be useful and helpful pedagogically, but without students taking full advantage of it, its effectiveness may be constrained and have "limited effect" (Rust, 2002:153).

When students receive too many criticisms or negative comments, their self-confidence as well as their motivation to do well may be hindered (Hyland & Hyland, 2001:186). In order to overcome low self-esteem in students, tutors perhaps should try to balance the number of positive as well as negative comments on students' essays (Lee, 2007:192). One of the main reasons to why students do not act on the feedback is because the feedback does not offer any strategies to students, especially when the comments are unclear (Sommers, 1982:153). If students experience difficulty in understanding the feedback and they are unable to comprehend the comments, they will most likely see feedback as irrelevant to their learning (also mentioned in Section 2.5.). When feedback is given in an inappropriate way, it might have certain effects on students. For instance, in the research conducted by Ziv (1982:3), the major effect of Ziv's comments on her students' writing was creating "dissonance". In order to make sure that students view feedback as motivating, tutors should remain as positive as possible (Harmer, 2001:262).

Feedback which is specifically focused on a particular course or field, or is "context specific", may not be applicable for students as they are unable to use it in subsequent essays (Gibbs & Simpson, 2004:21). This suggests that feedback focusing on general issues such as presentation or style will be more effective as it can be applied across other essays as well. Although general feedback is more applicable in subsequent essays, 'context specific' feedback is also useful nonetheless. For instance, students may reflect on the present comments for their strengths and weaknesses in essay writing and to develop on the positive and negative aspects of essay writing for their next essays. Students are also often making changes to what are perceived as necessary for the tutors instead of what they think is essential (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982:158; Sommers, 1982:149-154). Some

considerations have to be taken into account in giving comments despite their usefulness, since when they are inappropriate, it not only does not help students but may influence their desire to write.

2.7. Perceptions of tutors and students towards feedback

Findings from previous research show that tutors and students believe that feedback from tutors can help to improve students' writing and students would often seek to receive more feedback from tutors (Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005:201; Ferris & Roberts, 2001:161-184; Jackson, 1995:3; Lee, 2003:220; Leki, 2006:279; Zacharias, 2007:38-52; Ziv, 1982:2). It has been found that students in general can deal with the absence of tutors from the class, but they are unable to deal without feedback from their assignments (Gibbs & Simpson, 2004:6).

2.7.1. Tutors' perceptions of feedback

Findings by previous researchers have shown that tutors often find marking essays a difficult task (for instance, Norton, 1990; Norton & Norton, 2001, based in L1 settings). Tutors believed that it is their responsibility to correct errors and this may eventually lead tutors to correct all forms of errors in students' writing (Lee, 2003:222). Some tutors experience problems when it comes to giving constructive feedback to students, especially on weaker essays. Tutors' main concerns are whether their feedback has been clearly delivered, whether students are able to understand and act on it, or even whether it has been read by the students (Keh, 1990:301; Mutch, 2003:35). It is difficult to assess the extent to which students have acted on the feedback unless a longitudinal study is carried

out (also discussed in Chapter 10). Tutors' feedback provides students with opportunities to reflect (Bailey & Garner, 2010:192; Sommers, 1982:156), while at the same time ensuring it sustains long-term learning in students (Lee, 2003:231). Based on this notion, Hyland (1998:280) believes that tutors normally customised their feedback according to the individual students on how they expect their feedback to be delivered. By contrast, Lee (2003:231) found that tutors in her study often did not have the necessary skills and often require training in giving feedback to students. In other words, this means, as much as tutors want to deliver effective feedback to their students, some tutors lack the skills or experiences to give effective feedback.

2.7.2. Students' perceptions towards feedback

Cook-Sather (2002) believes there is a need to include students' perspectives in education. Thus, when students have a role to play in education, and tutors take their perspectives into consideration what they have to say, the student is handed a sense of authority by the tutor. They will be more motivated to learn as they develop a sense of authority in themselves (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982:166). It is also believed that listening to students' perspectives, enables the tutors to see the situation from the students' point of view. This can then improve the "current educational practice, re-inform existing conversations and reform efforts yet to be undertaken" (Cook-Sather, 2002:3). In order to see if feedback has been understood effectively by students, what better way is there than to find out the students' point of views by working collaboratively with them.

It was in 1982 when Ziv began her initial research setting out to investigate how L1 students had perceived her feedback comments on their drafts. This was followed by other researchers who share a similar interest. There is a need for tutors to provide insightful and effective feedback to students. However, it is this belief that tutors are the authority figure and they possess the same notion of themselves that diminishes students' motivation to write (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982:158-159). It is because students look up to their tutors that there is a need for tutors to examine and reflect on their own practice critically in order to deliver effective feedback and for this reason classroom research needs to be carried out further (Lee, 2003:251).

It is necessary for students to be able to interpret feedback before it can bring improvement in their writing (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006:210). Individual students have their own perceptions or attitudes towards feedback (Young, 2000:409). Some students generally prefer positive comments, yet there will be some students who are not in favour of positive comments as they do not particularly tell them any problems, or give suggestions with regards to improving their work. Similarly, students' preferences of the types of feedback vary from individual to individual. As mentioned earlier, one of the main purposes of feedback is to help students to write better (see Figure 2.2.). However, there are instances where what the tutors mean is perceived differently by the students (Longhurst & Norton, 1997; Norton, 1990; Norton & Norton, 2001:10; Ziv, 1982:7), causing students not to act on the feedback (Hounsell, 1987).

There are several reactions from students upon receiving feedback. There are cases where students go through the feedback, while others are interested in their mark. In some cases, students will not read the feedback because they disagree with the mark awarded to them (Jackson, 1995:5; Keh, 1990:302; Mutch, 2003:25; Wojtas, 1998:1). Findings from Leki (1991:206-207) and Gibbs and Simpson (2004:15) show that students have a keen interest in the marks awarded to them. The question of whether students do look at feedback is uncertain (also mentioned earlier in Section 2.7.1.). It is a common practice that feedback is often accompanied by grades or marks and from the findings earlier on, it can be seen that quite often that students develop a keen interest in the grades they achieve rather than the feedback. This is one of the main concerns for tutors: should they be spending time giving reflective feedback to students (Jackson, 1995:4). Despite students' interest in grades, it is also students' belief that when essays are returned without any feedback, they get the feeling that tutors have not read their essays after all. One way to direct students' attention specifically to the feedback is by not awarding marks to their essays (Jackson, 1995:3-5). However, it has been found that in some cases, when marks are not accompanied by feedback, it can be quite demoralising (Gibbs & Simpson, 2004:15). It seems that whether or not feedback is given it raises issues.

Based on research findings by Keh (1990), her students generally found single word comments such as "*unclear*", "*elaborate*" did not provide as much help as longer comments. Gibbs and Simpson (2004:19) point out similar instances where "unrealistic or unspecific" comment such as "[*n*]o conclusion" was given did not help students to understand or to act on it. Sommers (1982:153) also found students were facing major problems with tutors' use of "vague directives". Other students criticised the feedback they

received as “uninformative and too brief” and “terse” (Mutch, 2003:25,31) or what Sommers (1982:152) refers to as “a series of vague directives that are not text-specific”. From these, we could say that students, in general, prefer to have comments with more information.

With brief, vague and uninformative comments, it is not surprising that students quite often are not be able to understand, interpret or act on them. For instance, a student’s essay may be said to present a loose argument but for students who are unable to understand what a ‘tight argument’ is, this will not help them to make improvements on their essay unless the feedback is accompanied by suggestions from the tutor (Jackson, 1995:4). However, there are cases, when students do not understand what is written in the comments, they will try to solve the problem as shown in Ziv’s research (1982). Apart from that, students will also try to defend what they have written when they were given the opportunity to discuss their work with the tutor, or they may ignore the comments altogether (Ziv, 1982:3-5).

In relation to this, Leki (1991:209) claimed that comments on issues such as grammatical errors, punctuation errors or misspellings are “concrete” as compared with content and organisation. For this reason, it is unsurprising that students quite often pay more attention to error correction than to acting on the improvements needed to be made in subsequent writing or further clarifying their meaning.

2.7.3. Differences in perceptions between tutors and students

A substantial amount of research carried out over the years has shown that tutors and students have their own perceptions towards feedback. For instance, in a study carried out by Maclellan (2001), tutors were in favour of feedback, since it helps enhance students' achievements. On the other hand, most of the students responded that feedback was rarely useful to them. The finding also revealed that some students did not find feedback to be useful in their learning at all (Maclellan, 2001:313). Further findings show that what the tutors believed is not what the students believed. For example, tutors tend to believe that feedback helps to promote discussion but the majority of students reacted differently, saying that feedback does not stimulate discussion.

Students are often confused by the use of vague and uninformative comments (as mentioned earlier in Section 2.7.2.), also shown in Keh's (1990:302) research. Jackson (1995:7) believes that one way feedback can help students to become better writers is to specify the criteria which must be met by students in every essay. However, research by Norton and Norton (2001:12-14) suggests that there are differences in the perceptions of marking criteria between students and tutors. Results from the research imply that there is a mismatch between what the students actually think they did and what the tutors think the students have achieved. Similar discussions on these differences can be seen in Gibbs and Simpson (2004:18) where students have different interpretations of the assessment criteria. For instance, students think "style and presentation" are more important than "theoretical and conceptual understanding" which is seen as more important by the tutors. It is

important for students to understand the criteria, not only to achieve good results but also to work on the task they are assigned (Gibbs & Simpson, 2004:18).

Further to this, research by Ashwell (2000:245-246) and Sommers (1982:151) show that students often interpret tutors' feedback using their own intuition and understanding. Lea and Street (1998:167) and Mutch (2003:25-36) share similar opinion towards this where they indicate that students may have their own interpretation of the feedback in contrast to what the tutors wish to express, and it is unclear how much of the feedback students receive will actually be used appropriately. Tutors are also concerned that students do not use the feedback they are given effectively, and in some cases do not collect their assessed work (Mutch, 2003:26). It can be seen that there are contradictions between what the students and their tutors think. It will be pointless for tutors to give long feedback to students if the feedback is going to be discarded, even if it contains praise or criticism (Miller, 1982:331).

2.8. Challenges in construing feedback

From the discussion so far, we can see that feedback has a major role to play in helping and encouraging students becoming better writers. Tutors and students have their own perceptions of feedback. Yet, feedback is not as easy as it may sound. Research over the years has shown that there are quite a few challenges tutors and students deal with. The following sub-sections aim to provide further insight into this.

2.8.1. Challenges faced by tutors

Although most tutors will try their best to give clear and effective feedback to students, they still face challenges they are going through (Mutch, 2003:24). Young (2000:410) points out that giving feedback is a greater challenge to tutors who are teaching “mature students”. It may seem that giving feedback to students is fundamental, however, one cannot deny the fact that it is time-consuming. One of the main challenges of feedback faced by tutors is the time factor since giving comments needs time and this can exasperate some tutors (Gibbs & Simpson, 2004:7; Keh, 1990:301; Lee, 2003:225-229; Sommers, 1982:148). The time factor is often a challenge for tutors who wish to provide students with detailed feedback.

From this study of time pressures, it is reasonable to assume that the amount of feedback given to each student is inconsistent (Hyland, 1998a:280), that the amount of feedback each student receives will differ. However, this is not entirely due to the time available for giving feedback or marking essays. For example, students who have produced better quality writing may well receive less feedback from the tutors as there will not be as much to be said with the exception of praising. On the other hand, where an essay has been badly written, it is not surprising that it will have more feedback as tutors are commenting not only on the positive aspects of the essays but also on the weaknesses of the essay and how to improve the work by offering suggestions (Norton, 1990:429).

2.8.2. Challenges faced by the students

Research has been carried out on the impact of feedback on students and it shows that some students find feedback tends to demoralise them. As quoted from Young (2000:409, italics and quotation marks in original), “*for some students, it was ‘only work’; for others their whole sense of self was at stake*”. Past research shows that feedback needs to be appropriate as it may affect self-esteem (for example, Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Norton, 1990; Young, 2000) or “create dissonance” in students (Ziv, 1982). Self-esteem is defined as one’s opinion of oneself (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006:211). Research by Young (2000:410) focusing on the impact of feedback on high and low self-esteem students explicitly shows that self-esteem has a role to play in students when they receive feedback.

Despite the fact that tutors find the marking criteria useful, students, on the other hand sometimes fail to understand what the criteria mean and have often failed to take account of the feedback they receive. This is often linked with students who generally have a low self-esteem themselves. Norton (1990:421) further clarifies that the cause of low self-esteem is frequently related to the poor performance in their essays where they are given low grades for their essays. Young (2000:412) indicates that positive attitudes towards feedback tend to emanate from students who are found to have high self-esteem. Norton and Norton (2001:14), further point out that tutor praise of students’ essays could be one of the factors influencing students’ self-esteem in writing better essays. It is also believed that students with high self-esteem are more tolerant of receiving criticism as compared with students with low self-esteem. It is also pointed out that low self-esteem can be influential in students’ future performance as it leads to demotivation in students (Norton & Norton, 2001).

Further findings from Young (2000:413) also reveal differences in how high and low self-esteem students' view on feedback. It is found that students who have higher self-esteem develop positive attitudes towards feedback whether they are constructive comments or negative comments, whereas students with a low self-esteem interpret comments which are meant to be constructive as negative. A comparative study between high self-esteem students with middle self-esteem students shows that students with high self-esteem think it is unnecessary for tutors to alleviate positive and negative comments, whereas students with middle self-esteem generally prefer comments to be balanced out. Further comparison between high and low self-esteem students shows that higher self-esteem students accept feedback as comments on their product which allows them to take action and make improvements, while low self-esteem students consider feedback as an "indictment of themselves" and feel "defeated" even to the point of dropping the course because they view feedback as a means of aptitude judgement (Young, 2000:414-415). This is further clarified by Gibbs and Simpson (2004:15), when they specify that if feedback generally focuses on "personal characteristics", it can not only be discouraging but, at the same time, influence students' self-esteem.

As much as tutors worry if students do read the feedback they receive, questionnaires distributed to students from Keh (1990:304) show that students, especially students who have to rewrite the same essay for a better grade, do read the feedback tutors give because they want to know what aspects they have done well and which areas need more improvement. What is uncertain is whether students use the comments and suggestions in their next essay or in other courses. Findings from Jackson (1995:3) and Leki (2006:279) also reveal that students do read the feedback they receive from tutors.

On the other hand, some researchers have found that there are quite a number of students who admit to not looking at feedback at all (as mentioned earlier in Section 2.7.2.). However, several steps have been proposed which may help engage students with feedback. Gibbs and Simpson (2004:21) suggested five ways of doing so. First, tutors could ask at the initial stage of the course about particular areas which students would like to receive feedback on. Second, they could provide feedback without mark or grade to allow students to focus on their progress. Third, an area which has not been researched or discussed is self-assessment of the task they are assigned. Fourth, for draft and final writing, two-stage feedback is recommended, one on the draft and the second on the final work and fifth, award a grade only after tutor feedback and self-assessment have been carried out.

Research shows some benefits from the steps mentioned, but as mentioned earlier in Section 2.4., students in higher education do not write drafts in their essays, so two-stage feedback is unlikely to be used. Although self-assessment and peer-assessment have been proved to be effective by some researchers, students still think highly of tutors' comments and will want to receive feedback (Gibbs & Simpson, 2004:6).

2.9. Summary

This chapter has looked at the general issues related to feedback and to the present knowledge of the subject. As has been discussed, tutors' feedback is most often used in students' writing in helping and encouraging them to become better writers. Previous research has shown that there are differences between what tutors and students perceive.

As Hyland (2006:103) indicates, quite often both students and tutors are uncertain of the roles they play in giving and receiving feedback. Sommers (1982:148) indicates there is still insufficient evidence to show what makes productive and caring feedback and how the feedback plays a role in students' learning. There is a need for research to be carried out with careful analysis and evaluation in order to help tutors to be aware of salient feedback as well as in helping students to benefit from written comments (Ferris *et al.*, 1997:157). Mutch (2003:35) shares a similar opinion on this matter where he indicates that further investigation has to be set up to look into how students react towards feedback.

Looking at what has been done over the years, it seems that feedback has a complex role in producing greater achievement for students. Giving feedback to students is essential, yet how much students are able to understand it remains a mystery. Tutors confront the greatest enigma of all. There is the idea of giving positive and constructive feedback on time in order to allow it to be acted on. At the same time, there is the challenge of making it appropriate to all students so that they are encouraged by it to (Young, 2000:409). Whether students do really read the feedback is a question yet to be answered.

What I have done in this chapter is review feedback. Although the present research did not investigate the tutors' and students' views regarding feedback (as mentioned earlier, see also Chapter 5, Section 5.1.), I hope I have been able to provide a general notion of feedback and make aware of the challenges involved in giving feedback. What I am going to do in the next chapter is to review genre analysis.

CHAPTER 3: GENRE STUDY

What I did in the last chapter was to review feedback. The aim of this chapter is to provide a clearer sense of meaning of the notion of genre. The next section, Section 3.1. discusses feedback as part of an academic discourse. Section 3.2. provides a review of genre based on three approaches or traditions, namely the Sydney School in Australia, English for Specific Purposes (hereafter referred to as ESP) set out in United Kingdom and the Rhetoric/New Rhetoric approach based in North America. Section 3.3. discusses the types of genre, looking at feedback as an occluded genre and feedback as a supporting genre. This is relevant to this research on the language used in feedback. Following this, Section 3.4. looks into previous analyses approach carried out by genre scholars. Section 3.5 indicates the relevancy and appropriate procedures put into practice covering moves, steps and acts patterns before pedagogical implications are discussed in Section 3.6. This chapter will conclude with a summary on the whole notion of genre in Section 3.7.

3.1. Feedback as an academic discourse

According to Hyland (2009a:1), academic discourse is defined as “the ways of thinking and using the language which exist in the academy”. Academic discourse incorporates the syllabuses used by institutions, their assignments such as essay writing, report writing, dissertations or theses, presentation, journal articles or even class lectures or tutorials. In all these aspects, students and educators are each writing to target the specific cluster of people they are working with (Hyland, 2009a:1). Since written feedback investigated in this research is given by the tutors to students in higher education, at university level, and can be found within the academic field, written feedback can be regarded as part of an

academic discourse. It is a way of conveying the communication of thoughts or suggestions from tutors to students.

Hyland (2009a:25) states that texts can be regarded as the “spoken and written instance of *system*” (italics in original). Building on Swales’s (2004:12) idea on the Constellations of genres, Hyland (2009a:27) provides a summary of academic spoken and written genres, as illustrated in Figure 3.1. Although feedback is not listed in Figure 3.1., it constitutes a part of the academic genre of essay writing, both in written and spoken form.

Figure 3.1. Examples of written and spoken academic genres

Written genres		Spoken genres	
Research articles	Book reviews	Lectures	Student presentations
Conference abstracts	PhD dissertations	Seminars	Office hour meetings
Grant proposals	Textbooks	Tutorials	Conference presentations
Undergraduate essays	Reprint requests	Peer study groups	PhD defences
Submission letters	Editor response letters	Colloquia	Admission interviews

3.2. The notion of genre in language studies

The notion of genre has made significant impact in three different geographical locations (although its influence is worldwide), in Australia, the United Kingdom, and North America. Despite the fact that remarkable work has been done on genre and has been discussed explicitly in these three traditions, the concept of genre remains ambiguous as it is perceived differently. By and large, this depends on individual genre scholars and their personal approach.

Hyland (2002b:17) proposes three main ‘approaches’ or referred to by Hyon (1995, 1996) as three ‘traditions’ to genre analysis. The three approaches or traditions as Hyland suggested are Systemic Functional View (based on the Sydney School theory), an ‘ESP’ Perspective and a ‘New Rhetoric’ view (Hyland, 2002b:17, quotations in original). Figure 3.2. provides a summary of the three approaches based on Hyland (2002b:17).

Figure 3.2. Approaches to analysing language in a genre

- A **Systemic Functional** view: a genre is defined as a staged, goal-oriented social process. This involves the interaction of participants using language in a conventional, step-wise structure.
- An **‘ESP’ perspective**: a genre comprises a class of communicative events linked by shared purposes recognized by the members of a particular community. These purposes are the rationale of the genre, and help to share the ways it is structured and the choices of content and style it makes available.
- A **‘New Rhetoric’** view: gives less emphasis to the form of discourse and more to the action it is used to accomplish, seeking to establish the connections between genre and repeated situations and to identify the way in which genres are seen as recurrent rhetorical actions.

(Hyland, 2002b:17, quotations in original)

3.2.1. The Sydney School

The Sydney School employs a systemic-functional linguistics approach to genre analysis (Halliday, 1978; Halliday & Hasan, 1989; Martin, 1985, 2009). Halliday specialised in language and its social function which sets it apart from the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) or New Rhetoric approach. Although much of Halliday’s work is not entirely focused on genre as a whole, the concept of genre proposed by other Australian genre scholars is deeply associated with Halliday’s (1978) and Halliday and Hasan’s (1989) work on language and context. Since then, the approach has had a profound effect not only on

views towards language, but on the education system in Australia as well (Hyon, 1995:30; 1996:696; Kress, 1987:35; 1993:22), especially on literacy (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993a:1; Kress, 1993:25) which is heavily emphasised in Christie's, Martin's and Rothery's (1987) earlier work and more recently in reading programs, for instance, the work by Martin and Rose (2005).

Systemic-functional linguistics (SFL) considers language as an entity (Halliday, 2004:19-20) and more importantly language functions (Halliday, 1989a:10). From Halliday's point of view, a text is to be examined as a whole, looking at it from multiple perspectives at the same time, rather than looking at each part of the text separately (Halliday, 1989b:23). Hyon (1995:30) defines systemic-functional linguistics as "the way that language functions within certain social settings". The SFL approach is based largely on the relationship of text and its context (Christie, 1987b:27; Hyon, 1995:30; 1996:696; Kress, 1987:35-36). It investigates how language works in respective contexts or what is known as "context of situation", a term developed by Malinowski in 1923 referring it to the "environment of the text" (Halliday, 1989a:5). The Sydney School's approach to genre is more practical, focusing on both form and context which mainly involves examining the functions of language rather than on "situation" only (Hyon, 1995:30,67). The notion of genre based on SFL shows the recurrent patterns of texts in particular situation and the meanings which are being conveyed (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993b:67; Kress, 1993:24) and according to Kress (1993:36), all texts have their own respective generic patterns.

The concept of register helps to describe the contextual situation of language, defined by Halliday (1989c:38) as "a configuration of meanings that are typically associated with a

particular situational configuration of field, mode, and tenor". Field refers to the event which is taking place including the activities which the speaker or writer is engaged in. Tenor refers to the participants who are taking part, their relationship with one another and their roles. Mode refers to the language used or the "text" and the mode of communication (spoken, written or both) (Halliday, 1989a:12; Halliday & Hasan, 1976:22). Halliday heavily stresses the notion of register in the context of situation when it comes to analysing language. As mentioned earlier, Halliday has not fully expanded the notion of genre.

Following Halliday's work, Martin (1985:250) defines the notion of genre as "how things get done" and later Martin, Christie and Rothery (1987:59) refer to genre as "a theory of language use". Based on SFL approach, Martin (1992:505; 2009:10) defines genre as "staged, goal-oriented social process". It is *staged* because there is generally more than one way for people to communicate in order to achieve their goal, hence *goal-oriented*. It is a *social process* as interaction takes place usually between two or more people, either from same culture or different cultural backgrounds (Martin, 2009:13; Martin *et al.*, 1987:59). More recently, Martin (2009:13,19) defines genre is "a recurrent configuration of meanings and a culture as a system of genres". Because genres are "social processes" (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993a:7), texts will consist of stages or generic patterns in situations where they are found or used (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993a:7; Kress, 1987:36-38; 1993:27). Halliday (1978:134) and Macken-Horarik (2002:20) referred to the stages as "schematic structure".

Apart from the 'context of situation' as Halliday emphasises, the 'context of culture' also plays a vital role in the notion of genre (Christie, 1987b:24; Cope & Kalantzis, 1993a:7;

Kress, 1993:23; Martin, 2009:13; Paltridge, 2004:2). If the ‘context of culture’ changes or differs, the ‘culture of situation’ will also change correspondingly (Christie, 1987b:24) as Kress (1987:44) emphasises, “[g]enres are cultural constructs, they are as culture determines. Challenging genres is therefore challenging culture”. Martin *et al.* (1987:62,64) also affirm this by saying genres are not simply conventions because it is changing across time and culture, which makes genre a functional notion (Martin *et al.*, 1987:62; Paltridge, 2004:1). Other genre scholars who have taken the same systemic-functional approach as Halliday are notably Ventola (1987), Callaghan, Knapp and Noble (1993), Kress (1993) and Macken-Horarik (2002).

3.2.2. English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

Genre in ESP is fundamentally influenced by the work of Swales (1981, 1990), one of the most prominent genre scholars. Swales’s initial work was established while he was at Aston University. Swales (1981, 1990) began his research looking into article introductions, highlighting the structural features, subsequently providing a new framework or structure to look into genre in the field of ESP. Ever since Swales’ research on genre on article introductions (Swales, 1981, 1990), other scholars have also carried out research on genre such as laboratory reports (Dudley-Evans, 1985), editorial letters (Flowerdew & Dudley-Evans, 2002), academic introductions (Bhatia, 1997; Bhatia, 2004:65-81), professional genres such as promotional genre (Bhatia, 2004:59-64) or from a range of professional contexts such as business and law (Bhatia, 1983, 1993, 2008). Swales (1990:58) defines genre as a “class of communicative events” intended for a specific community of people sharing “some set of communicative purpose”.

Following Swales's (1990) definition of genre, Bhatia (1993) further elaborated on the notion of genre corresponding with Swales as well as other genre scholars in which he refers to genre as a communicative text aimed for the understanding of a specific community of people, for instance, businessmen, tutors and students or lawyers (Bhatia, 1993:13-14) which corresponds to Swales's (1990) notion of genre. Hyland (2002b:230) defines genre as "a set of texts that share the same socially recognised purpose and which, as a result, often share similar rhetorical and structural elements to achieve this purpose". Although Hyland's definition of genre was presented more than a decade after Swales's definition, both definitions share similar features such as the similar features of text which categorise it as within the same genre and sharing purposes. Dudley-Evans (2000:4) further supports this notion of genre based on the ESP perspective, originating from the concept of characteristic "linguistic features" embedded in a text which sets it apart from other texts.

Genre in ESP is often associated with the analysis of 'moves' which is based on Swales's model (Swales, 1981, 1990) (see Section 3.5. for further discussion on Swales's model). The development of genre analysis in the field of ESP has extended not only in academic context but workplace discourse (Bhatia, 1996:11). Genre in ESP is mainly directed at non-native speakers of English mostly for graduate writing in higher education (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). It is considered as a "tool" in equipping non-native speakers or writers of English with the appropriate use of language that is required of them (Hyon, 1996:695). A distinctive difference between ESP and the Sydney School is the focus on genre structures and grammatical features in the ESP approach as opposed to the focus on form in the Sydney School (Hyon, 1996:695-697, see Figure 3.3. for a summary of the three genre approaches).

3.2.3. North America or New Rhetoric approach

The notion of genre based in North America is also known as the ‘New Rhetoric’ approach (Freedman & Medway, 1994a; Johns, 2002:8-10; Paltridge, 2007:931). This approach came to be known after Miller’s (1984) article on ‘Genre as social action’. Genre in North America places more emphasis on the “social purposes, or *actions*” (Hyon, 1996:696, author's emphasis) rather than the communicative purposes as in ESP or in the contextual situation in the Sydney School. Miller (1984:151) states that “a rhetorically sound definition of genre must be centered not on the substance or the form of discourse but on the action it is used to accomplish”. Writers generally construct genre based on the recurring situations (Devitt, 1993:576; 2008:21).

In North America, genre was used initially to distinguish variations between literary texts such as short stories, plays or poetry where emphasis was more upon form, before it was implemented in classroom teaching benefiting both L1 and L2 learners or writers of English (Hyland, 2009a:26; Hyon, 1995:14; Paltridge, 2007:933). The genre boundary then shifted into non-literary texts where the emphasis was more on social and functional features (Hyon, 1995:18) or the ‘rhetoric’ approach to genre (Campbell & Jamieson, 1978; Hyon, 1995; Miller, 1984). One notable feature of the North America’s approach on genre is its main focus on the relationship between the functional features of texts in specific contexts (Coe, 2002:197; Hyon, 1995:66; Paltridge, 2007:315). Despite much research being carried out on genre in North America, most of it has looked into form, where little is committed to the communicative purpose in specific settings like Swales’s notion of genre or the ESP approach.

The New Rhetoric approach is based upon the notion that as social needs change, so does genre. Campbell and Jamieson (1978:19) both agree it is the situation which forms the style as well as the construction of texts. In other words, genre structure cannot be predetermined in analysing genre as the situation is what helps to structure the text. Miller (1984), in total agreement with Campbell and Jamieson (1978:19), describes genre as responding to social needs, but further elaborates that genre could not be restricted merely to the style and structure of text, but should also take into consideration the “social and historical aspects of rhetoric” (Miller, 1984:151). Miller (1984:159-160) emphasises the importance of the context of a genre in order to understand text and highlights the significance of genre as a representation of social action seeing that the situational needs are always accounted for. Much emphasis on the rhetorical notion of genre has focused on the relationship between text and context. Hyon (1996:698) refers this as the “functional and contextual aspects of genres”.

Other work on genre incorporates other disciplines such as composition studies and professional writing. In composition studies, Bakhtin, a Russian-born scholar whose work began to emerge only in 1986 has introduced new insights for genre. Bakhtin (1986:60) defines genre as “utterances” which are distinguishable by their “content, style and compositional structure”. Bakhtin further elaborates,

“[g]enres correspond to typical situations in speech communication, typical themes, and...to particular contacts between the meanings of words and actual concrete reality under certain typical circumstances”

(Bakhtin, 1986:87)

Devitt (1993:573) also supports the notion that understanding social context enhances the writing process. The importance of situation in understanding a genre thoroughly is apparent in North America. Flowerdew (2002:91) further verifies the importance of situational context in the new rhetoric which is largely based on “the purposes and functions of genres and the attitudes, beliefs, values and the behaviors of the members of the discourse communities within which genres are situated”. Another distinguishable feature of the North America New Rhetoric is the main focus of its methodology on ethnography as compared with the linguistic features of ESP and the Sydney School (Flowerdew, 2002:91; Hyon, 1996:696; Miller, 1984:155).

3.2.4. Summary of the three approaches on genre

Genre-based approaches reveal the patterns and associations of texts (Devitt, 1993:580). Knowing a genre allows readers to identify how writers write and the choices they make, and also how a particular text functions (Devitt, 1993:580-581). The Sydney School’s main focus is based on a “staged, goal-oriented social process” (Martin, 1992:505; 2009:10), while the ESP approach is based on a “class of communicative events” (Swales, 1990:58) and the Rhetoric/New Rhetoric approach is based on Miller’s (1984) earlier paper on ‘Genre as Social Actions’ where much emphasis is on “social purposes, or *actions*” (Hyon, 1996:696, italics in original).

Although the New Rhetoric, the Sydney School and the ESP approaches have different ways of looking at genre, one noticeable similarity between all three perspectives lies in the ambition to attain specific targets. Hyon (1995:37) draws attention to the resemblance

of the New Rhetoric's notion of genre to the Sydney School's theory and the ESP approach where all three traditions focused not only on goal attainment but on social processes as well. All three genre traditions identify the textual patterns of text informing writers on the recurring patterns in similar contexts. The ESP approach is the main approach used for the present study. Figure 3.3. shows the similarities and differences between the three approaches, The Sydney School, ESP, and Rhetoric/New Rhetoric approach.

Figure 3.3. Summary of the Sydney School, ESP and Rhetoric/New Rhetoric approaches

(Adapted from Flowerdew, 2002:91-102; Freedman & Medway, 1994b:1-17; Hyland, 2009b:14-22; Hyon, 1996:693-716; Macken-Horarik, 2002:23-24; Paltridge, 1995a:503-510; 2007:931-938)

	The Sydney School	ESP	Rhetoric/New Rhetoric
Began	Late 1970s	Early 1980s	1980s
Work originally based on	Halliday (1978) on SFL; Developed further by: Christie (1987b); Halliday & Hasan (1989); Martin (1985, 1992) , Martin, Christie and Rothery, (1987).	Swales (1981, 1990) Developed further by: Bhatia (1993, 2004); Flowerdew (2002); Flowerdew and Dudley-Evans (2002); Flowerdew and Wan (2010)	Miller (1984) Developed further by: Devitt (1993); Freedman and Medway (1994b); Yates and Orlikowski (1992)
Pedagogical contexts	Primary and secondary schools (very little research is focused on Higher Education institutions).	Academic mainly L2 (non-native) and professional settings; EAP Classes (English for Academic Purposes) and EPC Classes (English for Professional Communication).	University and Professions.
For whom	Primary and secondary school writing programs (children and adolescents); non-workplace texts (for instance, adult migrants in Australia).	Non-native speakers of English at university level and professional writing.	Mainly L1 teaching (composition studies, rhetoric and professional writing studies).

Figure 3.3. (continued) Summary of the Sydney School, ESP and Rhetoric/New Rhetoric approaches

	The Sydney School	ESP	Rhetoric/New Rhetoric
Genre defined	“staged, goal-oriented process” (Martin <i>et al.</i> , 1987); the structural forms that cultures use in certain contexts to achieve various purposes.	“a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes...recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community” (Swales, 1990:58).	“similarities in strategies or forms in the discourses, by similarities in audience, by similarities in mode of thinking, by similarities in rhetorical situations” (Miller, 1984:151).
Main focus	Systemic-functional linguistics, incorporating both ESP and New-Rhetoric traditions (making sense of text, identifying the textual features, rather than depend on set of rules).	Communicative purposes for intended audience; mainly focus on genre structures and grammatical features; less focus on specialised function of texts and their surrounding social contexts.	“Functional and contextual aspects of genres” (Hyon, 1996:698); mainly focusing on the relationship between text and context and the actions that genres fulfil within particular situations).
Common features	These approaches identify structural elements in texts and make statements about the patterning of these elements and their functions.		
Usefulness to teachers	Teachers are more aware of the stages involved in each stage of writing or genre which can be used to develop new materials and models for teaching genres.	Provides ESL instructors with insights into the linguistic features of written texts as well as useful guidelines for presenting these in classrooms.	The focus on genres and contexts offer teachers fuller perspectives on the institutional contexts around academic and professional genres and the functions genres serve within these settings so they could assist students.

Figure 3.3. (continued) Summary of the Sydney School, ESP and Rhetoric/New Rhetoric approaches

	The Sydney School	ESP	Rhetoric/New Rhetoric
Usefulness to students	Teaching students to identify the linguistic features of written texts (genres) or “stages” for social processes. Students recognise that texts are structurally constructed constituting functional elements.	Helping L2 learners to recognise the generic patterns and functions of language in texts required for tasks or professions.	Helping university students and professionals to be aware of the context and social functions or actions of genres, “sociocontextual” (Hyon, 1996:698).
	Helping students to become better writers and readers.		
Examples of research	Children’s writing (Christie, 1987a); factual writing (Martin, 1989); secondary school science writing (Macken-Horarik, 2002); service encounters (Hasan, 1989; Ventola, 1987); report and expository writing in secondary schools (Rothery, 1989).	Business and law discourse (Bhatia, 1993, 2008); introductions in academic books (Bhatia, 1997); letter to journal editors (Flowerdew & Dudley-Evans, 2002); letter of applications (Henry & Roseberry, 2001); article introductions (Swales, 1981, 1990).	Scientific reports (Bazerman, 1988); legal patent (Bazerman, 1994); disciplinary communication (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995); political briefs (Coe, 2002); organisational communication: memo, proposal and meeting (Orlikowski & Yates, 1994; Yates & Orlikowski, 1992); medical record (Schryer, 1993, 1994).
Examples of mixed-approaches	Writing skills of science or engineering students (Flowerdew, 2002)	Company audit report (Flowerdew & Wan, 2010)	
	Scientific report introductions (Paltridge, 1995b)		

3.3. Types of Genre

Over the years, substantial research looking at the different approaches of genre has been carried out by genre scholars from looking at academic materials to non-academic materials. Bazerman (1984) looks into how individual sections are construed from abstracts, followed by Swales's (1981, 1990) research looking into research article introductions in which he investigates the moves and steps in the introductions, to the discussions sections of research articles (Gosden, 1992, 1993; Holmes, 1997; Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988). The genre-based approach is also applied to institutional contexts, such as analysing PhD theses (Dudley-Evans, 1999; Paltridge, 2002; Thompson, 1999, 2001) and textbooks (Love, 1993; Love, 1991). Apart from looking into academic materials, genre scholars have shifted their research to look into professional or workplace discourses, for instance, letter of application (Bhatia, 1993, 2004; Henry & Roseberry, 2001), letters to journal editors (Flowerdew & Dudley-Evans, 2002), legal writing (Bhatia, 1983, 1993), or promotional and reporting genres (Bhatia, 2004). From the pedagogical perspective, all the research contributes to L1 and L2 teaching which benefits both native and non-native speakers of English.

3.3.1. Feedback as an occluded genre

In 1996, Swales brought forward the case on occluded genres in a published article entitled, "Occluded Genres in the Academy: The Case of the Submission letter" (Swales, 1996). Swales (1996:46) defines *occluded genre* as "formal documents which remain on file, ...or they are rarely part of the public record". These genres are often "hidden, 'out of sight' or 'occluded' from the public gaze by a veil of confidentiality" (punctuations in original). These

genres are not publicly available “to outsiders and apprentices (such as graduate students)” (Swales, 2004:18).

In 1996, Swales investigated 65 letters to journal editors and found that cultural differences affect the writing process and implemented strategies. For instance, in the *enclose* strategy, native speakers of English opted for a more personalised approach (for example: *I enclose/I am enclosing* (Swales, 1996:51, italics in original)) whereas non-native speakers tend to take a more impersonal approach or as Swales refers to as being more “administrative” (for example: *[p]lease find enclosed...* (Swales, 1996:51, italics in original)). Due to the privacy and confidentiality of these genres, little research has been carried out. The few studies which have looked into *occluded genres* and have either recognised or used the term explicitly include peer seminars (Aguilar, 2004), MBA Thought Essays (Conner Loudermilk, 2007), business proposal modules (Flowerdew, 2010), letters to journal editors (Flowerdew & Dudley-Evans, 2002), tax computational letters (Flowerdew & Wan, 2006), peer reviews of research articles (Gosden, 2001, 2003), evaluative reports on retention-promotion-tenure (Hyon, 2008), and personal statements or statements of purpose (Swales, 2007). Other studies which have looked into occluded genre but have not referred to the term include letters of application (Bhatia, 1993, 2004; Henry & Roseberry, 2001; Swales & Feak, 2000) and written feedback (Hyatt, 2005; Mirador, 2000; Yelland, 2011).

3.3.2. Feedback as Supporting Genre

Swales and Feak (2000) who looked into the genre-based approach of reviews have categorised two specific genre types, referred to as “networks”. The structures proposed by

them are “open” and “supporting” genres (Swales & Feak, 2000), the former referring to genres which are easily accessible and are often known to the public through publications, whereas the latter refer to genres which are often used to help academics improve on a specific aspect of their profession (Flowerdew & Dudley-Evans, 2002:464), for instance, “research paper reviews” or “comments to reviewers” (Swales & Feak, 2000) and editorial letters to publishers (Flowerdew & Dudley-Evans, 2002). Compared with open genres, supporting genres are considered to be “hidden” or either not accessible by the public or the public is unaware of such genres. The definition of *hidden genre* seems to overlap with the previously mentioned *occluded genre*.

The principle aim of doing a genre-based study is to help students or users to become proficient writers and readers. The findings from a genre-based approach on written feedback will enable current tutors as well as student-teachers to see the salient features of feedback writing. In addition, it allows present tutors to reflect on their feedback writing practices. Furthermore, written comments are not often published or easily accessible via any media, except through students or tutors, thereby affirming their state as an occluded or supporting, ‘hidden’ genre.

3.4. Approaches to genre analysis

One of the ways to distinguish how texts are structured is by looking at it as a genre (Lea & Street, 2000:43). One of the main advantages of applying genre analysis to written feedback is that it indicates the way the language is used in feedback by the tutors and by the students who are receiving the feedback and use the feedback. Hyland (2009a:26) affirms suggesting,

“[g]enres thus provide an orientation to action for both producers [the lecturers] and receivers [students], suggesting ways to do things using language which are recognizable to those we interact with”.

(Hyland, 2009a:26, own insertions)

Lea and Street (2000:43) are in support of this where they indicate that through the examination of tutors’ feedback on students’ written work, the complexity of texts within a discipline or subject matter will be more apparent to both the tutors and student. Hyland (2009a:20) proposes three main approaches to analysing academic discourse namely, “textual”, “contextual” and “critical”. Each of these approaches is explained further in Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4. Approaches to analysing genre as a discourse

- **Textual:** approaches which focus on language choices, meanings and patterns in texts including those based on genre, corpora and multimodal analyses.
- **Contextual:** these begin with wider situational aspects, such as the sociology of science, ethnography and sociohistorical perspectives.
- **Critical:** a category which brings an attitude of criticality, such as Critical Discourse Analysis and Academic Literacies, while drawing on blends of other methods.

(Hyland, 2009a:20)

This research will be applying the textual approach in examining written academic feedback. In the textual approach, Hyland (2009a:25) mentions three further approaches to investigate texts namely, genre analysis, corpus analysis and multimodal analysis. Genre analysis is the main area of investigation for the present study on feedback (process of analysing genre is further discussed in Section 3.5.) with a small corpus study on the area of hedging (see Section 5.6.. for discussion on the present study’s research methods). What I have done so far is to introduce feedback as an academic discourse, to identify the different approaches of

genre (Systemic Functional Linguistics, English for Specific Purposes, and the New Rhetoric approach), and to recognise that feedback can either be an occluded or supporting genre. In the next section, I shall be discussing the processes involved in analysing genre, the central focus of this research.

3.5. Processes of analysing genre

Generally, genre has an introduction, content and conclusion as Swales (1990:41) indicates, “[g]enres have beginnings, middles and ends of various kinds” and feedback is no exception to this. Whether it is a spoken or written discourse, dialogue will exist in the text, as mentioned by Dixon (1987:17), “unless writing, too, is a dialogue, it will go dead”. A major difference between spoken discourse and written discourse is that in conversation the speaker normally speaks spontaneously or instantaneously, while the writer normally has the time to structure and organise the text before it is presented to the reader (Coulthard, 1994:7; Kress, 1993:25; McCarthy, 1991:25) and the reader in return is able to comprehend the text (Coulthard, 1994:7). The text is therefore the dialogue that creates a passage of ideas between the writer and reader or as Bakhtin (1986:72) emphasises, “dialogue is a classic form of speech communication”. Coulthard (1994:9) further elaborates on what text is,

“...a text is a string of words and a writer has to encode the ideational meaning into, and the reader decode that meaning from, words. Problems arise because word meanings are not fully fixed; rather, words derive some of their meaning from the context in which they appear.”

(Coulthard, 1994:9)

Sinclair and Coulthard (1975:20) itemised dialogues in the classroom into a ranking system consisting of five scales starting off with lesson as the largest unit, followed by transaction, exchange, move and act. Although their research is specifically focused on the interaction

exchanges taking place in the classroom between the teacher and pupils, certain features of the proposed ranking system can be linked to this research.

3.5.1. Moves

Genre of a text is realised through the communicative purposes it means to achieve (Askehave & Swales, 2001:198; Flowerdew & Dudley-Evans, 2002:469; Swales, 1990:58). The smooth transition of the dialogue in any texts is signalled through what is known to genre analysts as “moves” (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975:21; Swales, 1981, 1990). In support of this, Flowerdew (2002:95) and Flowerdew and Dudley-Evans (2002:469) propose the main idea in analysing genre is to “break it down into its component stages, or moves, to provide a template of its schematic structure”. Texts, both spoken and written, are constructed by moves (Henry & Roseberry, 2001:154). Sinclair and Coulthard (1975:21) define moves as “the structure of exchanges” between the teacher and the student in the language classroom. Freedman (1987:100) on discussion of a medical consultation refers to moves as “speech acts: commands, requests, complaints, advice, reassurance,...”. Nunan (1993:122) shares a similar approach with Sinclair and Coulthard’s definition whereby he defines moves as “the basic interactional unit of classroom discourse”. Following this, Mirador (2000:47) in her research on Move Analysis of Written Feedback comes up with her theoretical explanation of move:

“**MOVE** is the logical manoeuvre adopted by the communicator/s in written or spoken discourse. Such manoeuvre is evident in the unified functional meaning of a sentence or group of sentences in a written or spoken text. The sentence or group of sentences have a single unifying purpose in relation to the context in which it occurs.”

(Mirador, 2000:47, emphasis in original)

A text is made up of moves. In general, there are several moves embedded in a text where each sentence or 'utterance' in a move is interrelated or cohesive (Bakhtin, 1986:72; Halliday & Hasan, 1976:10; McCarthy, 1991:25). The categorisation of moves is generally based on "linguistic evidence", understanding of the texts, and the mutual community's expectations (Dudley-Evans, 1994:226). A move can consist of one sentence or more but all performing the same function (Macken-Horarik, 2002:23; Mirador, 2000:48). It is impractical to have only one move in a text as shown in Mirador's research (2000:48), one move is often preceded or followed by another. However, these moves are not used all at the same time; some moves will be obligatory while others are optional (Mirador, 2000:50; Swales, 1990). Hasan (1989:61-62) stresses that genre is defined by "obligatory elements" and "optional elements". Building on the SFL notion of genre, Macken-Horarik (2002:20) also mentions stages being obligatory or optional. Other research findings which have shown the obligatory and optional moves include Flowerdew and Dudley-Evans (2002), Flowerdew and Wan (2010), Henry and Roseberry (Henry & Roseberry, 1998, 2001), Hopkins and Dudley-Evans (1988).

Although texts are made up of moves or generic patterns, Christie's (1987b:27) earlier paper on Genres as Choice mentioned that depending on the context, the choices writers make to convey their meaning are "not arbitrary", rather "selective". Hyland (2009b:63) mentions that it is unlikely for moves to be presented sequentially or discretely and there is also less cohesion between moves in texts belonging to the same genre. He gave examples of article introductions from two journals, which may differ because of the choices writers made in their writing from the list of optional moves, the journal's requirements, and the intended members of the community (Hyland, 2009b:63). Freedman's (1987:100) earlier discussion

also gave a similar situation where a medical consultation is different from consultation with a lawyer because not only are the institutions different but the language used in both contexts were considerably different too. Kress (1993:36) who focuses on SFL also mentioned that not all genre in a given situation will be similar to another as power or authority may have an effect on the genre conventions.

Depending on the convention of individual researchers, each move will usually be identified as Move 1, Move 2, Move 3 (Flowerdew & Dudley-Evans, 2002; Mirador, 2000; Swales, 1981, 1990) or labelled with the linguistic functions of each move (Bhatia, 1983; Flowerdew & Wan, 2010; Henry & Roseberry, 2001), notwithstanding how short the text is, so long as the speaker or writer has stated his/her position (Bakhtin, 1986:72). In Swales's (1981, 1990) research on forty-eight article introductions which have been randomly selected, he identifies a three move-structure, as shown in Figure 3.5. (see Section 3.5.2 for a complete account of Swales's research):

Figure 3.5. Swales's (1981, 1990) three move-structure on article introductions

Move 1	Establishing a territory
Move 2	Establishing a niche
Move 3	Occupying the niche

Correspondingly, Dudley-Evans's (1994) research on the moves analysis of the discussion section of an MSc dissertation, written by a native-speaker/writer of English, also shows the occurrences of generic moves structure. Unlike Swales's (1981, 1990) research which focused on Move and Step structures (see Section 3.5.2. on steps and Figure 3.7. for Swales's CARS model of article introductions), Dudley-Evans (1994:224-225) focused on the move-structure

of the discussion section of the dissertation where he identifies a three-part framework namely Introduction–Evaluation–Conclusion. The findings from this research are further shown in Figure 3.6.

Figure 3.6. Move analysis of the discussion section on MSc Dissertations
(Adapted from Dudley-Evans, 1994:224-225)

		Move(s)
Discussion	→ Introduction	Restating the aim Work carried out Summary of the method used Restatement of the relevant theory/previous research Statement of the main results/findings of the research
	→ Evaluation	Information move Statement of result Finding (Un)expected outcome Reference to previous research Explanation Claim Limitation Recommendation
	→ Conclusion	Summary of main findings Recommendations

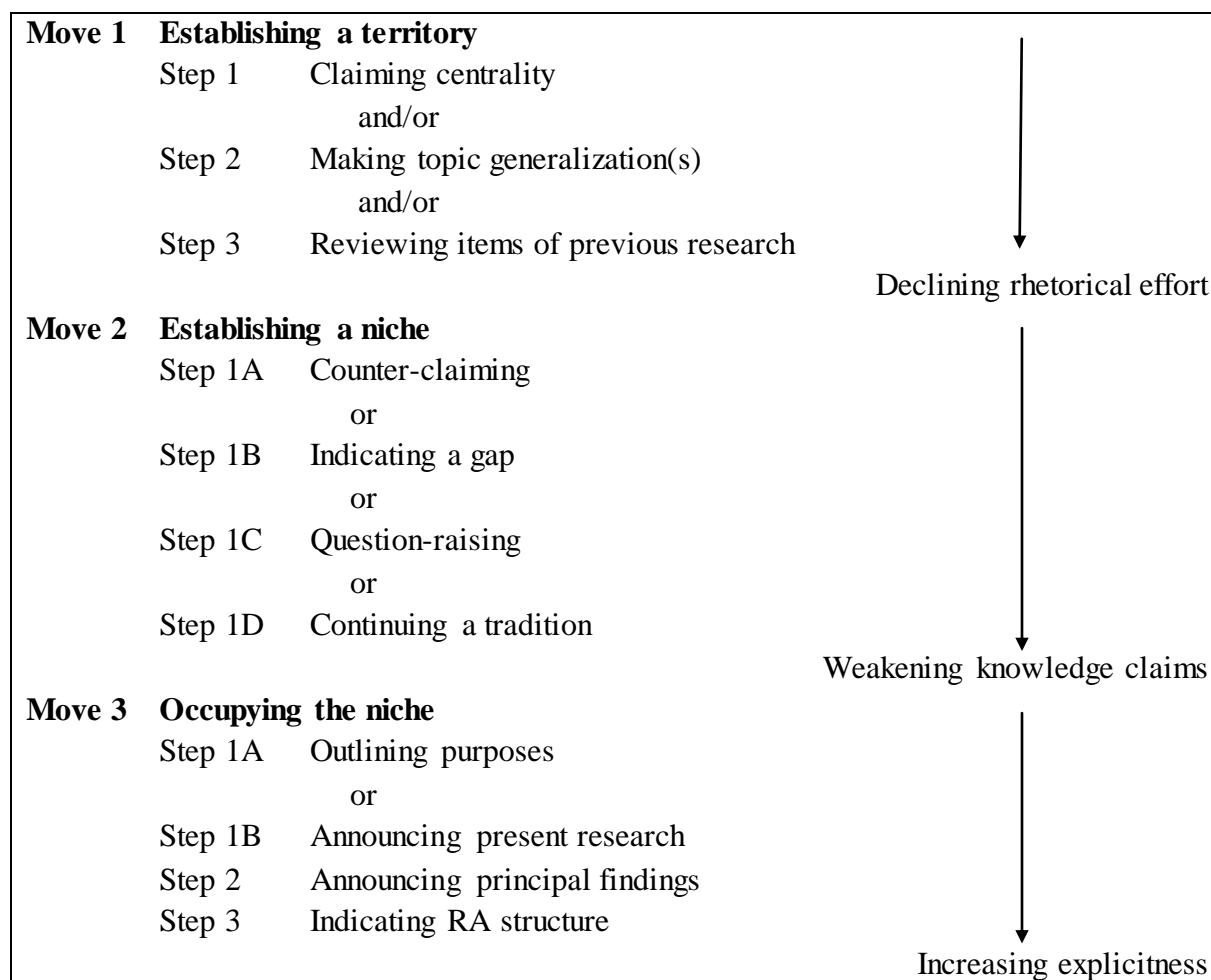
3.5.2. Steps

Embedded within moves are “steps” (Swales, 1981, 1990). Flowerdew and Dudley-Evans (2002:469) refer to steps as a “component” of moves. However, as discussed on Section 3.5.1., not all research on genre-based analysis has analysed the step structure. Swales’s

(1981, 1990) research on article introductions shows that specific steps are found within the three moves, which are used often by writers in their introductions (shown in Figure 3.7.).

Similarly to moves, steps can either be obligatory or optional.

Figure 3.7. Swales's CARS model of article introductions
(Adapted from Swales, 1990:141)



3.5.3. Acts

Sinclair and Coulthard (1975:27) define acts as “the units at the lowest rank of discourse”. In their work on classroom interaction, they identify acts within moves. In classroom discourse, Sinclair and Coulthard (1975:27-28) discovered twenty-one acts in four types of sentences,

“declarative, interrogative, imperative, and moodless” (see Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975:40-44 for the complete list of acts). Some of these acts are more focused, “specialized”, whereas some are more specifically related to “classroom-specific” (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975:27-28). In their classroom discourse, they identify three main acts namely “*elicitation*, *directive*, and *informative*” which are found widely across the spoken discourse and often found to be in the “*Initiating moves*” of classroom discourse (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975:28, authors' emphasis).

Figure 3.8. Definition of *elicitation*, *directive*, and *informative*
(Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975:28)

Acts	Definition
Elicitation	To request a linguistic response – linguistic, although the response may be a non-verbal surrogate such as a nod or raised hand.
Directive	To request non-linguistic response is simply an acknowledgement that one is listening
Informative	To pass on ideas, facts, opinions, information and to which the appropriate response is simply an acknowledgement that one is listening.

Apart from Sinclair and Coulthard, there are few genre scholars using *acts* or focusing their work beyond the level of acts. For instance, Swales (1981, 1990) has demonstrated the moves and steps structures in article introductions and Bhatia (1993) has looked into job application letters, legislative documents and sales promotion letters which also analysed the moves and steps structures.

3.6. Feedback as a genre

The notion of feedback as a genre was first established in 2000 by J. Mirador. Mirador (2000) conducted a move analysis research into written feedback in higher education to postgraduate students. From the thirty responses she gathered and compiled into a corpus, she identified twelve alternating moves which are used by tutors to give feedback. She also identified certain linguistic forms associated with each move as well as the patterns by which tutors generally organised their feedback. Figure 3.9. shows a summary of the moves from Mirador's research.

Yelland (2011) in support of Mirador's research agrees feedback is a distinctive genre, constituting moves. However, Yelland opposed some of Mirador's findings claiming there were overlapping categories, for instance the difference between *juxtaposition* and *positivising*. Another criticism is Mirador's lack of information on the other linguistic forms (*recapitulation/referencing, highlighting strength, exemplification, evidentiality, positivising, probing* and *overall judgement*) which were not further discussed. In testing out Mirador's model of feedback, Yelland mentioned that Mirador's *Clinching Pattern* should be renamed as *Standard Pattern*. In his pilot study of 140 samples of tutors' written feedback, Yelland also found that the standard pattern is used the most often. However, when tested out on first-year students where they were asked to give feedback on other students' essays, students did not use the *Standard Pattern*. Although Yelland agrees on the notion of feedback as a genre, he did also mention that a major disadvantage of the genre of feedback is that students may not have mutual understandings or knowledge of the feedback practice.

Figure 3.9. Move analysis of written feedback to postgraduate students
(Adapted from Mirador, 2000:50-58)

Moves structure of written feedback		
Moves	<div>1. General Impression</div> <div>2. Recapitulation/ Referencing</div> <div>3. Suggesting Improvement</div> <div>4. Highlighting Strengths</div> <div>5. Calling Attention to Weaknesses</div> <div>6. Affective Judgement</div> <div>7. Exemplification</div> <div>8. Evidentiality</div> <div>9. Juxtaposition</div> <div>10. Positivising</div> <div>11. Probing</div> <div>12. Overall Judgement</div>	
Linguistic form of certain moves		
Moves	Linguistic form	
General Impression	Adjectival	
Suggesting Improvement	Modality; comparative	
Calling Attention to Weakness	Strong negatives	
Affective Judgement	I-directed	
Juxtaposition	Conjunctions	
Patterns of organising feedback		
The Clinching Pattern	Moves	<div>General Impression</div> <div>Recapitulation</div> <div>Highlighting strengths</div> <div>Calling attention to weakness</div> <div>Overall judgement</div>
The Sectional Pattern	Focus on individual sections	<div>Context section</div> <div>Research methodology</div> <div>Presentation</div> <div>Discussion</div> <div>Conclusion</div>
Alternating Pattern	Alternating between two sets of moves	<div>R1C1, R2C2, R3C3</div> <div>R = Recapitulation,</div> <div>C = Comment</div>

In addition to Mirador (2000) and Yelland (2011), Hyatt (2005) has also done a genre analysis of feedback commentaries on students essays. However, Hyatt's research did not analyse the moves structure of feedback. His main focus is identifying the functional categories of feedback to which he has proposed seven categories of feedback: phatic comments, developmental comments, structural comments, stylistic comments, content-related comments, methodological comments and administrative comments. Nevertheless, Hyatt (2005) has shown that feedback given at the postgraduates level of study has its own specific generic characteristics (see Chapter 5, Section 5.6.3. for reasons why Hyatt's approach is not applied in this research).

Farr (2011) conducted a similar research in the area of feedback, focusing on the discourse of teaching practice (TP) feedback, both spoken and written. Farr's research covers more ground as compared to the present research (see Chapter 5, Section 5.1. for a discussion on the history of this research). Her research methods include the use of diary entries, pre- and post-feedback questionnaires, online questionnaires, the POTTI (Post-Observation Trainer Trainee Interactions) corpus and the POR (Post-Observation Reports) corpus. Based on her data, Farr developed a framework of the genre of teaching practice feedback consisting of four categories: direction, reflection, evaluation, and relational talk, with additional sub-categories for each (see Figure 3.10.). All four categories are found across both the spoken and written feedback. However, the reflective and relational functions are predominantly found in the face-to-face interactions (spoken data) whereas the direction and evaluation are found more in the written feedback.

Figure 3.10. The discourse of teaching practice feedback: a framework

(Adapted from Farr, 2011:73)

Reflection	Open reflection Focussed reflection
Direction	Management direction Content direction Performance direction
Evaluation	Praise Criticism
Relational and cathartic talk	Small talk Addressing emotional incongruity Apologising Irony

The findings from Farr’s research have shown the distinctive use of hedging and boosting in the POTTI corpus (hedging is discussed further in Section 4). She found the issue of face, avoiding making any threats to face (also known as “Face-Threatening Acts”, FTA, discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.1.) was an influential factor towards the tutors’ and student-teachers’ use of language, particularly in the spoken feedback, as compared with the written feedback which is more direct. With regards to this research on written academic feedback, the written feedback is not as direct as Farr’s POR corpus. Hedging is one of the most prevalent features emerged from the genre analysis (as discussed in Chapters 8 and 9, see Chapter 5, Section 5.6.4.2. on Farr’s research).

3.7. Implications of genre

The research done on genre analysis has been put to great use by academics in various disciplines. Genre analysis brings a whole dimension for linguists to investigate language further. As Bhatia (1993:39) mentions, “it allows a far thicker description of functional

[68]

varieties of written and spoken language than that offered by any other system of analysis in the literature". Genre analysis not only looks into the linguistic analysis, but also extends into explaining how language works, taking into account external factors such as "socio-cultural" and "psycholinguistic" (Bhatia, 1993:39). Devitt (1993:582) mentions genre offers a writing "template" where the writer chooses the appropriate genre template required in the writing task in a given situation. Hyland (2009b:46) also mentioned "template" where he states that discourse conventions offer writers a template on how writing should be presented in a particular context. However, individual writers have their own "ideological assumptions" on how writing should be done (Hyland, 2009b:44) or other generic patterns they may have developed from home or social activity (Kress, 1987:43). Hyland (2009b:44) refers this as writing as a process of power and ideology.

Teachers of writing should be clear on the suggestions they make, although not intentionally, and students should also be aware of the choices they make (Dixon, 1987:16). Students should also have access to, or teachers should show texts from various genres in teaching writing to allow students to identify the generic patterns required for different writing tasks (Christie, 1987b:31; Dixon, 1987:17; Hyland, 2009b:47-48; Kress, 1987:43). Building on the SFL notion of genre, Martin and Rothery's earlier work (1993:153) emphasised the importance for teachers to know how grammar helps in constructing the meaning of a text. They also mentioned that the first step to teaching the genres of writing is to be able to know and identify the "stages" or patterns. It is useful also for teachers to know the language used for each stage of the text so they can help students.

In relation to Swales's (1990) notion of genre and discourse community, Devitt (1993:582) claims that "understanding genre may help us to understand [the] discourse community" (1993my insertion) which works both ways according to Devitt; understanding the community also helps to understand the genre. Genres are mainly written for intended members of the community (Kress, 1987:40), conforming largely to generic patterns and conventions known to the community. In this respect, Hyland proposes that writing is a process of social construction (2009b:40-41). It is also a process of social interaction (Hyland, 1999:100; 2009b:34) where there is a relationship between the writer and reader (Devitt, 1993:583; Dixon, 1987:14; Hyland, 2009b:34-37). Due to the choices writers make for their audiences and the expectations the audience has from the writers, these help to form the genre. Teachers of writing should create awareness to help students see how texts are developed for different audiences and purposes or situations (Christie, 1987b:31; Devitt, 1993:583; Hyland, 2009b:20,43-44). Based on the notion of genre as social actions where "genre constructs the situation" (Devitt, 1993:583), Devitt highlights that students will not know how to write unless they know the genre. In addition to this, Devitt (1993:583) also emphasises that the writing task has to be realistic in order for students to respond. For instance, students may be aware of the genre of letters to editors but because they do not have the need to produce such a letter, they may not be able to write it (Devitt, 1993:583).

One major drawback of the genre analysis arising from the generic patterns is, it tends to be superficial (Christie, 1987b:25), and subjective or intuitive (Hyland, 2009b:20). Another major disadvantage of genre analysis is that it is often regarded as prescriptive, or a "recipe" (Freedman, 1987:95; Martin *et al.*, 1987:69) rather than a representation or model. One major consideration on the genre approach is either to treat models or frameworks as suggestions, or

as an approach to how discourse can be analysed, as Hoey emphasised in his Problem-Solution and General-Particular discourse pattern (Hoey, 1979, 1983, 1994). Devitt (1993:582) also supported this when she mentioned genre reveals only some of the choices writers make in their writing. It offers answers to the complexity of writing tasks and “without genre a complete solution to the problem is impossible” (Devitt, 1993:582). Dixon (1987:16-18) also expressed his concerns over the emphasis on generic patterns which may eventually lead to prescriptive teaching of writing which can be overcome with the exposures to various writing (as mentioned above).

3.8. Summary

Genre is an approach to find out how things get done (Martin, 1985:250) or as mentioned by Devitt (1993:580), “a maker of meaning”. This chapter has looked at the three traditions of genre, the Sydney School or SFL, ESP and Rhetoric/New Rhetoric. Although these traditions were developed by scholars in different parts of the world, each tradition is unique and each has contributed immensely to classroom teaching. Research carried out from a genre-based approach helps to identify the generic patterns of texts for communicative purposes (Hyland, 2009b:61). It shows how writers write and the functions of the texts which in return can help learners to become better writers. Genre, however, is not an end in itself (Devitt, 1993:584). It should only be treated as a set of guidelines or reflective practices.

Genre is dynamic (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995:4-7; Devitt, 1993:573-580; Freedman, 1999:766; Kress, 1987:42). Languages evolve over time, genres also evolve as new genres begin to develop from new situations due to the expectations of the members of the

community and the choices writers make in their writing to meet the audiences' expectations (Bazerman, 1988:59,156,315; Christie, 1987b:24; Devitt, 1993:584). Dixon (1987:18) in his earlier paper mentions that it will be difficult for the notion of genre to form a common ground because of the choices writers make within the same texts to convey meanings. Bazerman (1988:315) stressed the need to understand how genres are developed over time and why writers choose to conform to the generic patterns.

At the start of this chapter, I mentioned the main focus of this research is to find the existence of genre in the feedback given by tutors. The present study will be very much focused on the ESP approach, identifying the patterns of feedback. The research is largely influenced by Swales's (1981, 1990) notion of genre, in particular to identifying the moves and steps of a particular genre. In addition to this, the research is also influenced by Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) approach where the acts structure is implemented. The notion of feedback as a genre is developed following research by Mirador (2000) and Yelland (2011) where they have shown that feedback is made up of several distinct moves, where each move is either obligatory or optional. Findings with regards to this research are further discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.

In the next chapter, I will be looking at hedging. The notion of hedging was developed whilst doing the genre analysis of feedback and developing a framework of written academic feedback. Apart from the positive feedback evaluations which were expected, hedging was an important aspect of my data as it is one of the most striking features emerging from the feedback data. Negative evaluations were rare, or rather limited, in the feedback data, but the constant softening or toning down features, hereafter classified as hedging, were prevalent. Hence, the reason I decided to investigate hedging in written academic feedback.

CHAPTER 4: HEDGING

In the previous two chapters, I have looked at literature reviews on feedback and genre analysis. This chapter begins with a literature review on politeness theory as the main purpose of the corpus study is to investigate hedging where politeness plays an important role. The term, hedging, used in this thesis is seen as an umbrella term for all the sub-components (for instance, the use of modals and lexical verbs) it incorporates.

This chapter begins with a brief introduction on politeness theory and the notion of hedging. This is followed by reviews on modals, vague language, stance adverbs and submodifiers, all of which are considered to be the sub-components of hedging and hence classified under 'hedging'. This is then followed by a discussion looking at the reasons writers hedge their comments. Only these four aspects (modality, vague language, stance adverbs, and submodifiers) will be discussed in this chapter due to their relevance to this research. This literature is not exhaustive since only the key areas of investigation of this research are discussed.

The following sub-section discusses the notion of politeness theory which is a fundamental aspect of feedback.

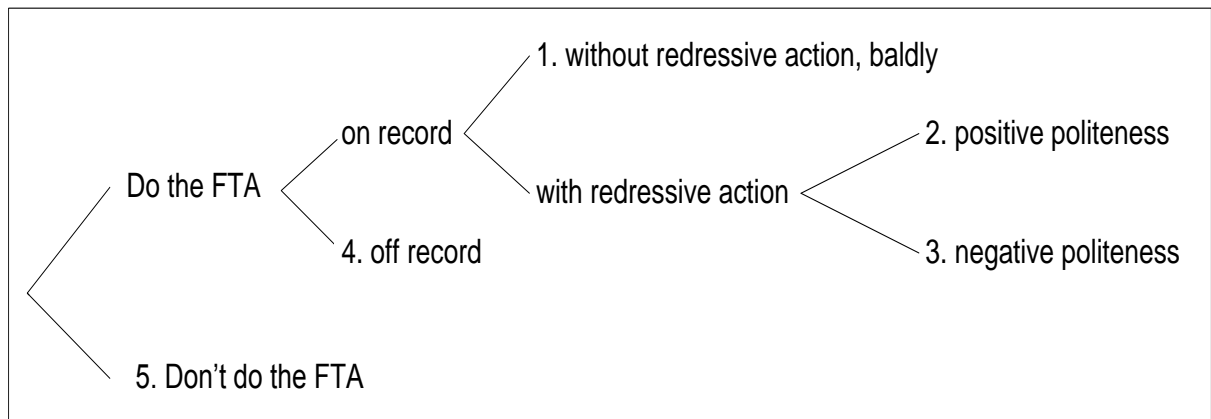
4.1. Politeness theory

Politeness is an important aspect in feedback or in any use of language because speakers or writers have to take into account the hearers' or readers' feelings, in order to minimise any

potential threat to face in any mode of interaction. In giving feedback, tutors have to protect not only their own face but their students' face as well. The notion of politeness and face was first introduced by Goffman (1967). Goffman (1967:5) defines face as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact". Building on Goffman's work, Brown and Levinson (1987) developed further the notion of politeness and face. They define *face* as "something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction" (Brown & Levinson, 1987:61). Watts (2003:119) follows up on this notion of face referring to it as a metaphorical term for "individual qualities and/or abstract entities such as honour, respect, esteem, the self, etc".

In defining politeness theory, Brown and Levinson (1987) identify two types of face: positive face and negative face. Positive face refers to the "want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others" (Brown & Levinson, 1987:62; 1999b:322). Negative face refers to the "want of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others (Brown & Levinson, 1987:62; 1999b:322, quotations in original). As both types of face, positive and negative, could cause threat to the face of the speaker and hearer, or writer and reader, speakers or writers will use various strategies to reduce any potential threats to face (referred to as face-threatening acts, 'FTAs', by Brown & Levinson, 1987). Brown and Levinson (1987:69) identify four politeness strategies to save the reader's or hearer's face in any FTAs: bald on record, negative politeness, positive politeness, and off record (as shown in Figure 4.1.).

Figure 4.1. Possible strategies for doing FTAs (Brown & Levinson, 1987:69; 1999b:327)



An off record FTA means speakers will say things in the most vague or ambiguous way so that they will not be held responsible for their own actions since they have not committed to their actions. Going off-record also means the speaker is trying to avoid being too imposing on the hearer (Brown & Levinson, 1987:70). An on record FTA means the hearer is committed to do an action. When an on record request is made, the speaker has two options; either opting for not taking any action, or to take redressive action. A bald on record without redressive action means doing the action in the most explicit and direct way. For instance, in issuing commands, “*go out*” or “*shut the door*”. A redressive action means the speaker is actually giving face to the hearer in order not to cause any harm to the hearer’s face, depending on which face is stressed; positive or negative politeness.

Positive politeness is mainly concerned with the hearer’s face so that no FTA is made. The risk of FTA is minimal when the speaker knows the hearer (whether as a friend, or a colleague), as the speaker knows the hearer’s wants. Negative politeness is concerned with redressing the hearer’s negative face. In negative politeness, the speaker is aware of the hearer’s self-determination. The speaker will minimise any potential threat to the hearer’s

wants and negative face. This can be achieved through apologising, hedging, or explaining, to create a distance between the speaker and hearer as well as to provide the hearer with an escape route without feeling he is being forced. Brown and Levinson (1987) regard negative politeness being more polite than positive politeness as it calls for more face-redressive action.

In relation to feedback, a threat to a student's positive face occurs when the student perceives criticism or disagreement (or deliverance of bad news) from the tutor, in the sense that his (the student's) ability and effort is not recognised. In feedback, a threat to a student's negative face occurs when the student perceives the tutor's means of offering suggestions (advice for areas for improvement in the present essay or for subsequent essays) as an imposition on the student's self-determination. While positive politeness is mainly concerned with the degree of familiarity, informality, or solidarity, negative politeness is associated with the degree of distancing, formality, and restraint (Meier, 1995:346).

As this research is on written academic feedback, all the feedback comments are considered to be face-threatening because there will be a degree of negative commentaries as well as suggestions (as the definition of feedback suggests, mentioned in Chapter 2, Section 2.1.). All positive comments in the feedback are considered positive politeness strategy as it involves the students' positive face. Examples of positive comments are "[t]his is good and your essay mostly adheres to the conventions stipulated in the Style Guide" (Text 53), and "[y]ou have interpreted the question accurately and demonstrate a clear understanding of the material" (Text 75). Both positive comments show the

commendations where both the tutor and student share similar thoughts on it (the fact that the student has excelled in the specific area).

A negative politeness strategy in feedback occurs in the indirect criticisms or suggestions. Suggestions in the feedback are mostly hedged statements, embedded with implicit criticisms. For instance, “[t]o help you to structure your essay more clearly, you could take each text and say how it does this” [Text 1]. Under Brown and Levinson’s politeness framework (1987:131), hedging is one of the strategies for negative face redress.

Hedging is used as a politeness strategy to promote solidarity, bridging the gap of authoritativeness, power, and status. It expresses a lack of commitment to the truth of the proposition (also discussed in Section 4.3.) and helps to develop the relationship between the tutor and the students. To hedge, therefore is to mitigate utterances in order to save the audience’s face (Clemen, 1997:239). While positive feedback may be addressing the student’s positive face, it also places a distance between the students and the tutor. While the intention of negative politeness strategy in feedback may be true, it is also worth remembering that students will have their own interpretations of feedback different from what the tutor intends to deliver: be as constructive as possible, at the same time offering suggestions by softening or mitigating criticisms.

4.2. Hedging

Much research into academic writing has been carried out in the area of hedging since its first introduction by Lakoff (1973:471), defining hedging as “words whose job is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy”. The term hedging itself is broad, multi-functional and often

[77]

overlaps with other terms such as modality, politeness and vagueness (Farr & O'Keeffe, 2002:26; Hyland, 1995:34; Hyland, 1998c:158-161; 1999:105; Nkemleke, 2011:19; Salager-Meyer, 2011:36). Hedging is often used as a politeness strategy (as mentioned earlier in Section 4.1.), to avoid sounding too authoritative, softening the force of an utterance or to show uncertainty. These are all reflected in the definition of hedging across literatures. Crismore and Vande Kopple (1988:184-185, italics in original) define hedging as “linguistic elements such as *perhaps, might, to a certain extent, and it is possible that...*[where] writers use them to signal a tentative or cautious assessment of the truth of referential information”. Swales (1990:175) defines hedging as linguistic devices which express “honesty, modesty and proper caution in self-reports”. Hyland (1998c:160) states that hedging “*weakens force of statements, contains modal expressions, expresses deference, signals uncertainty, and so on*” (italics in original). More recently, Fraser (2010:22) distinguishes between two kinds of hedging, “propositional hedging” and “speech act hedging”. Fraser defines hedging as “a rhetorical strategy, by which a speaker, using a linguistic device, can signal a lack of commitment to either the full semantic membership of an expression (**PROPOSITIONAL HEDGING**)... or the full commitment to the force of the speech act being conveyed (**SPEECH ACT HEDGING**)” (Fraser, 2010:22, emphasis in original). Fraser further illustrated this with examples as illustrated in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2. Propositional hedging and speech act hedging
(Adapted from Fraser, 2010:22, emphasis in original)

Propositional hedging
a) He's really like a geek.
b) The pool has sort of a L-shaped design.
c) Peter's house is almost 100 feet wide.
Speech act hedging
d) Come over here, can you?
e) I guess I should leave now.
f) The type of comment isn't made around here. [Agentless passive]
g) Perhaps you would sit down a minute.

While Fraser (2010) distinguishes between propositional, and speech act hedging, earlier research by Salager-Meyer (1994) in her study on the written discourse of medical English proposed five classifications of hedging which can be used to represent the hedging devices. First, “shields” which involve modal auxiliaries or modals (*can, could, may, might, will* and *would*), epistemic verbs (*seem, appear, believe* or *suggest*), adverbs (*possibly* or *probably*) and their derivative adjectives; second, “approximators” referring to any quantity, degree, frequency and time (*approximately, usually, generally, somehow* or *somewhat*); third, expressions which express authors’ personal doubt and involvement (*I believe* or *as far as I know*); fourth, “emotionally-charged intensifiers” which express the writer’s opinions (*extremely interesting, surprisingly* or *particularly encouraging*) and fifth, “compound hedges” or “strings of hedges” which could be double hedges (*it may suggest that*), treble hedges (*it would seem likely that*) or quadruple hedges (*it would seem somewhat unlikely that*) (Salager-Meyer, 1994:154-155).

Arguably these classifications can be rather stereotypical. However, they do provide a summary of the hedging strategies used by writers across disciplines. For example, Crismore and Vande Kopple (1988) found hedging in the science and social-studies texts for ninth-graders was expressed through personal voice (*it seems to me or I suppose that*) and impersonal voice (*it seems that or it is supposed that*). Hyland has done much research on hedging looking at scientific research articles examining its functions and the grammatical features used to convey tentativeness. His main focus is exploring the use of lexical verbs, adverbials, adjectives, modal verbs and nouns in scientific research articles (Hyland, 1995; 1996a, 1996b, 1998c; 2000), and the use of directives in various genres (Hyland, 2002a, 2005b).

The classifications proposed by Salager-Meyer (1994) provide a good starting point in order to understand hedging, bearing in mind that to have a better understanding of the hedging strategies, it is important to study the context in which the texts are produced (Biber, 2006b:Chapter 5; Clemen, 1997). Hyland (1998b:373; 1998c:35) believes a person's use of language is influenced by the discourse community. An author will write conforming to the expectations or "norms" of his/her community (Hyland, 1998c:35). Brown and Levinson (1987:42) also mention that the context of hedging is also based on the notion of mitigations, and that "what came before and what comes next" is vital in order to realise the face-threatening acts. In support of this Fraser (2010:25), emphasises the effect of hedging lies in the "interpretation of the utterance...where the interpretation depends on the context of utterance". He also mentions that the speaker's intention is often expressed through hedging and hedging is largely dependent on the hearer's perceptions or the kind of hedges used (Fraser, 2010:25).

While hedging is used as the main umbrella term in this literature and the rest of this research to refer to any linguistic strategy where the author expresses uncertainty, or softens or mitigates utterances, other scholars have used other terms such as “stance” (Biber, 1999: Chapter 12; Biber, 2006a; Biber, 2006b: Chapter 5; Hyland, 1999; Hyland, 2005b), “evaluation” (Hunston, 1994; Hunston & Thompson, 2001a) or modality (Palmer, 1990, 2001). Under hedging, there are other subcategories, all of which have functioned as hedges. These subcategories include modality, vague language, submodifiers and stance adverbs, all of which have the function of hedging. All these subcategories will be discussed in the following sub-sections (Sections 4.2.1. to 4.2.4.). While this research has chosen to discuss hedging with its subcategories, Fraser (2010:25) stresses that “vagueness, evasion, equivocation, and politeness” are all but “discourse effects” resulting from hedging. This literature and the rest of this research will explore hedging as the main heading which includes the various other subcategories mentioned.

4.2.1. Modality

Halliday (2004:618) refers to modality as “the area of meaning that lies between yes and no”, “either yes or no” or “both yes and no”. Modality is used by speakers or writers to convey their attitude towards what is said, or proposed and the effect the proposition had on either the hearer or reader (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:377,910; CollinsCOBUILD, 1990:217). Modals often embed the “degree of certainty and necessity” within them whether something said or written is “real or true” or merely an assumption (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:638). There are two types of modals, core modals and semi-modals, examples relating to the former include *can*, *could*, *may*, *might*, *must*, *shall*, *should*, *will*, and *would* and the latter refers to “marginal modal verbs”, encompassing ‘*dare (to)*, *need*

[81]

(*to*), *ought to* and *used to*' (Biber, 1999:483-484; Carter & McCarthy, 2006:420,922). Other semi-modals also include "fixed idiomatic phrases" such as "*had better*, *have got to*, and *be going to*" (Biber, 1999:484; Palmer, 2003:3). Apart from this distinction, modality is also recognised as epistemic modality and root modality¹ (Coates, 1983), epistemic, deontic and dynamic² modalities (Palmer, 1986, 1990, 2003) or intrinsic³ ("deontic meaning") and extrinsic⁴ ("epistemic meaning") modalities (Biber, 1999:485-486). The two kinds of modality which are often used in the discussion of modality are epistemic and deontic (or root) modalities. Epistemic modality refers to "knowledge" but in the modality sense it is mainly concerned with the speaker's or writer's "lack of knowledge" (Downing & Locke, 2006:383) or speaker's commitment to "the truth of a proposition" (Krug, 2000:41). Deontic or root modality refers to obligation and permission (Downing & Locke, 2006:383; Krug, 2000:41).

Historically, 'could', 'might', 'should' and 'would' are used to refer to events in the past, but they are also used to refer to present state. For instance, *they may be real pearls, you know*, *they might be real pearls, you know* or *they could be real pearls, you know*; all three utterances can be paraphrased as *it is possible that they are real pearls* and all of them are

¹ Coates (1983:20-21) argues there is a difference between root modality (also known as "non-epistemic modality") and deontic modality. Deontic modality such as *must* and *may* are obligation and permission which Coates thinks "represent only the core" when they incorporate other meanings too.

² Palmer (1990:3-4) refers to epistemic modality as a proposition, while deontic modality he sees as obligation, or permission. He refers to dynamic modality as "the modality of events that are not conditioned deontically" although deontic modality is also a modality of events, he takes into account "*possible for*" and "*necessary for*" which have no deontic meaning and the "volitional" *will*. Palmer (1990:36-37) continues this debate by stating that dynamic modality is more *subject-oriented* as compared with epistemic and deontic modality which are more *discourse-oriented*.

³ Biber *et al.* (1999:485) refer to intrinsic modality as "actions and events that humans (or other agents) directly control: meanings relating to permission, obligation, or volition (or intention)".

⁴ Biber *et al.* (1999:485) refer to extrinsic modality as "the logical status of events or states, usually relating to assessments of likelihood, possibility, necessity or prediction".

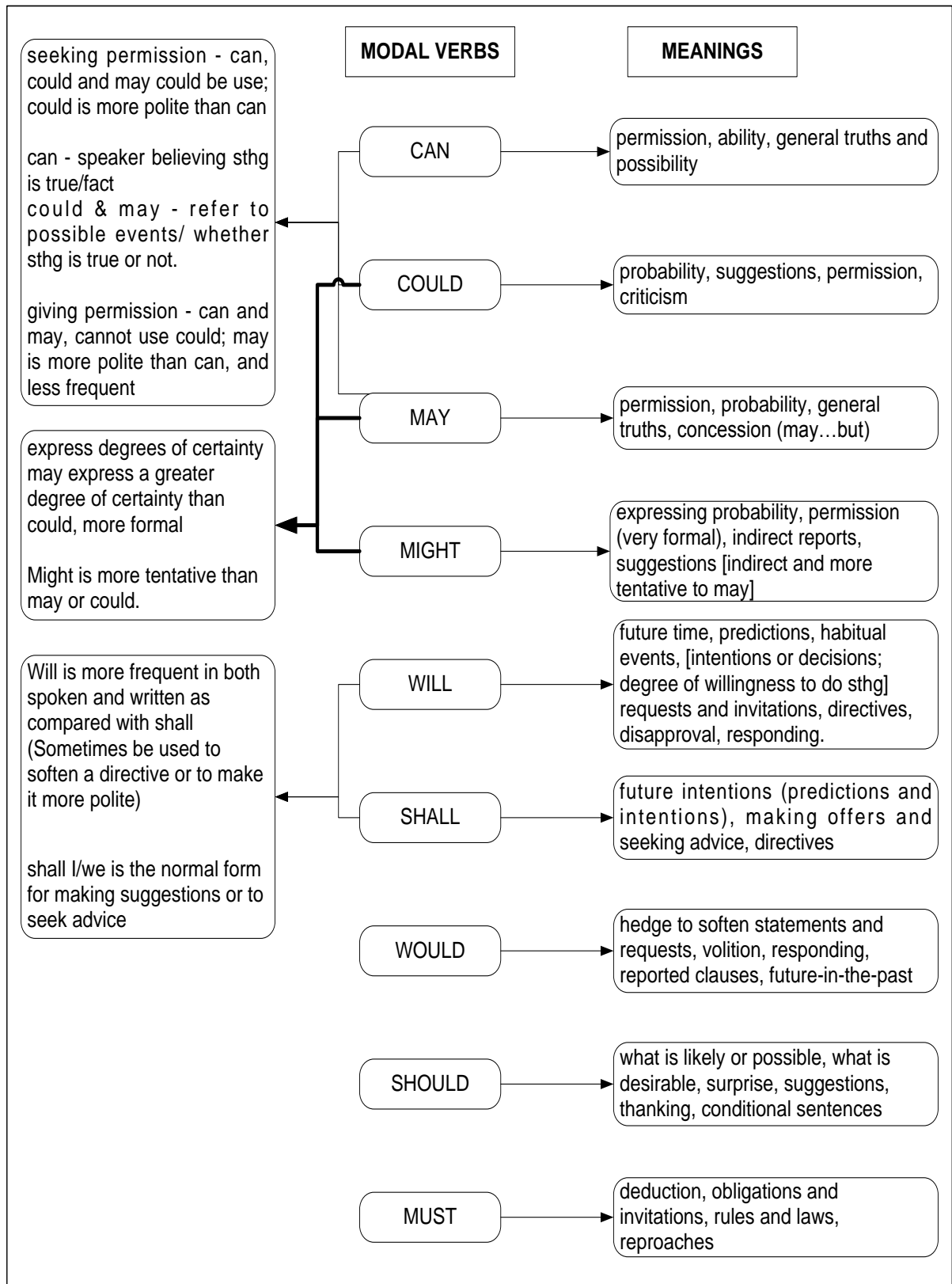
referring to the present state. They can also refer to future events, such as *it may/ might/ could snow tomorrow* which can be paraphrased as *it is possible that it will snow tomorrow* (all examples adapted from Downing & Locke, 2006:387). Carter and McCarthy (2006:640) imply by using the past form of these modals, *could* or *would*, they “express greater tentativeness, distance and politeness” between the writer and the reader or speaker and listener. For instance, *it will help your essay* and *it would have helped your essay*. The first utterance is more certain as compared to the second utterance which is more polite and less authoritative.

Modals are used to express various meanings in speech or writing. Coates (1983) has provided a detailed list of the range of meaning modals convey, a summary is shown in Figure 4.3. Carter and McCarthy (2006) have also provided a comprehensive record of the modals with their meanings, summarised in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.3. Summary of the meanings of modals by Coates (1983)

modals	meaning
<i>can</i>	ability, root possibility, permission
<i>could</i>	root possibility, epistemic possibility, ability, hypothesis
<i>may</i>	root possibility, epistemic possibility, permission
<i>might</i>	root possibility, epistemic possibility, permission, hypothesis
<i>must</i>	strong obligation, confident inference
<i>shall</i>	strong obligation, volition prediction, determination
<i>should</i>	weak obligation, tentative inference, hypothesis, necessity
<i>will</i>	volition, prediction
<i>would</i>	prediction, hypothesis, volition

Figure 4.4. Summary of the meanings of modals
Adapted from Carter and McCarthy (2006:642-656)



Hedging can thus be expressed through modal verbs making the statement more tentative as shown in Hyland's (1995; 1996b, 1998b, 1998c, 2005a, 2009a) research on scientific research articles, Lea and Street's (1998:166-168) research on students' writing in higher education in interpreting feedback, Myers (1989:13) in discussing the scientific report on the structure of DNA by Watson and Crick, on published articles (Myers, 1991:44), and discussion of textbooks (Myers, 1992). Farr's (2011) research on teaching practice feedback also shows a high frequency on the use of modal verbs as hedging. Obligations and necessities modals, such as *must* or *should* are minimal.

Modality in itself is a broad concept (Palmer, 2001:2). In defining modality, Palmer (2003:2) classifies modality into two subcategories, namely mood and modal system. Mood is recognised by the indicative and subjunctive mood. The modal system is exemplified by the use of the modal auxiliaries (*can, could, may, or must*). This section on modality is restricted to core modal auxiliaries (*can, could, may, might, must, shall, should, will, and would*). The classification of modals is based largely on the definition of modality provided by Carter and McCarthy (2006:910) and Leech (2006:63-64). Apart from modal auxiliaries, hedging is also expressed through lexical verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs (Facchinetti, Krug, & Palmer, 2003:vi; Hermerén, 1978:10). Lexical verbs (such as *think* or *suggest*) are discussed in section 4.2.2. under vague language while stance adverbs (such as *generally* or *possibly*) are further discussed in Section 4.2.3. Section 4.2.4. looks at submodifiers (such as *quite* or *really*). There will not be individual sections on nouns (such as *chance* or *hope*) and adjectives (such as *appropriate* or *necessary*) in this literature. However, if they are present and used as hedging devices in the corpus analysis (discussed in Chapter 8), they will be mentioned.

4.2.2. Vague language

Using vague language in spoken or written language is also a strategy of hedging (Clemen, 1997:240). Carter and McCarthy (2006:928) define vague language as “words or phrases with very general meanings...which deliberately refer to people and things in a non-specific, imprecise way”. Examples of vague language include “*thing, stuff, or so, like, or anything, or whatever, kind of, sort of*” (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:202,928). It is used more often in conversation to sound less authoritative and less direct (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:202). Myers (1996:4) argues that using vague language is necessary for academics. Clemen (1997:240-241) also states that speakers or writers have to use vague language as “a rule” when they are uncertain about anything, or when data is misplaced and specific information is not required in initial findings. By using vague language in terms of hedging, speakers or writers will not be held for responsibility in presenting false claims or propositions, or as Clemen (1997:241) says “provides him with a graceful way out and increases the credibility of his utterance”.

‘Approximator’ is also a term which is closely linked to vague language, defined as the imprecise way of referring to numbers or quantities with words such as “*around six*”, “*roughly twenty people*”, “*five minutes or so*” or “*loads and loads*” (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:203-204). Other examples of remaining vague to any precise quantity with numbers include “*about*”, “*round*” or “*approximately*” (Biber, 1999:557; Channell, 1994:43). In addition to the imprecision applied to numbers, there are other vague phrases or words used to express quantities with “non-numerical vague quantifiers” such as “*lots of*”, “*few*” or “*several*” (Channell, 1994:95-96). Channell (1994:20) highlights three indicators of vagueness in expressions or words as summarised in Figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5. Summary of vagueness by Channell (1994:20)

- (1) if the word or expression can be contrasted with another which appears to render the same proposition;
- (2) if it is ‘purposely and unabashedly vague’
- (3) if its meaning arises from the ‘intrinsic uncertainty’⁵ referred to by Pierce⁶ (as cited in Channell, 1994:20)

In an investigation of the language used in teaching practice (TP) feedback on language teacher education (LTE) programmes looking at the Post Observation Teacher Trainee Interactions (POTTI) feedback (consisting of 81,944 words, also listed in Table 5.4.), Farr (2011:118-119) found a high frequency of single word vague items such as *like* (314 occurrences altogether, 62 of which are used as hedging), *things* (195 occurrences), and *something* (194 occurrences). Vague items of two-word clusters are also very frequent, such as *sort of* (160 occurrences), *kind of* (139 occurrences), and *or something* (40 occurrences). Similar results were also found on the use of approximators such as *a little* (122 occurrences), *a bit* (105 occurrences) and *little bit* (97 occurrences). *Sort of* and *kind of* are often found within tutor talk suggesting the tutor is hedging in order not to sound too critical and is concerned with the potential loss of face of the student-teacher (Farr’s research is also discussed in Chapter 3, Section 3.6.). The use of approximators suggests that tutors opt to remain vague in order not to sound too “pedantic” to the student-teacher

⁵ Pierce’s notion of vague language is as follows:

“[a] proposition is vague where there are possible states of things concerning which it is intrinsically uncertain whether, had they been contemplated by the speaker, he would have regarded them as excluded or allowed by the proposition. By intrinsically uncertain we meant not uncertain in consequence of any ignorance of the interpreter, but because the speaker’s habits of language were indeterminate; so that one day he would regard the proposition as excluding, another as admitting, those states of things. Yet this must be understood to have reference to what might be deduced from a perfect knowledge of his state of mind; for it is precisely because these questions never did, or did not frequently, present themselves that his habit remained indeterminate” (1902:748, as cited in Channell, 1994:7).

⁶ According to Channell (1994:7), although Ullmann’s work was dated even earlier, Pierce is the pioneer of vague language who devised a meticulous account of vagueness.

(Farr, 2011:118). Channell (1994:197) argues that speakers do not use vague language as “empty fillers” or gap fillers to postpone response time but in fact the language was chosen by them to achieve “communicative goals” or to cover up any misleading information which may be conveyed. In addition to this, she argues that being vague is neither good nor bad. The appropriateness of vague language depends largely on the context and situation of the speaker or writer, as with hedging (Channell, 1994:197; Myers, 1996:12). Apart from context, Myers (1996:12) states that the speakers or writers should recognise the reasons why they are using vague language and “how and why they are using it”.

4.2.3. Stance adverbs

Biber *et al.* (1999:966) define stance as “personal feelings, attitudes, value judgments, or assessments” expressed by speakers and writers. Hyland (2009a:74) defines stance as “the writer’s textual ‘voice’ or community recognized personality”, further elaborating it as “an attitudinal, writer-oriented function which concerns the way writers present themselves and convey their judgements, opinions and commitments”. Stance is often used to explore spoken and written language (examples include Biber, 2006a; Biber, 2006b; Conrad & Biber, 2001; Hyland, 2009a:74; Nkemleke, 2011:Chapter 6). In analysing university registers, Biber (2006a:101-102; 2006b:92-93) provides a comprehensive list of lexicogrammatical features on stance which comprise stance adverbs, and modal and semi-modals, amongst others. Hyland (2005b:177-180; 2009a:74-76), on the other hand proposed hedges, boosters markers, attitude mention and self as the salient “rhetorical resources” for stance, where adverbs (for instance, *hopefully*, *unfortunately*) are normally used as attitude markers. Since stance is a broad concept, researchers working in the same

area of study may opt for other terminology apart from stance (Englebretson, 2007:2). For instance, while Biber (2006a; 2006b) and Conrad and Biber (2001) have chosen *stance* in their research, other researchers may opt for *evaluation* (examples: Hunston, 1994; Hunston & Thompson, 2001b).

For the present study, hedging is used as the main heading where stance adverbs have the function of hedges. Stance adverbials are speakers' or writers' expressions of "attitude or assessment" on a proposition (Biber, 1999:966). They can be classified into epistemic stance (certainty and likelihood adverbs), attitudinal stance (expressing attitudes, judgements or feelings) and style stance (manner in which information is being presented) (Biber, 1999; Biber, 2006a; Biber, 2006b; Conrad & Biber, 2001). These classifications of stance are however, not implemented in this research since the main focus of this part of the research is to investigate how do tutors hedge comments. All instances of stance adverbs in the feedback data were manually extracted and only stance adverbs which were hedging were accounted for (further discussed in Chapter 5, Section 5.6.). Some examples of stance adverbs include *actually*, *definitely*, *obviously*, *probably*, *really*, *roughly*, *unfortunately*.

Conrad and Biber's (2001) study shows that, although rare in comparison to other grammatical features, stance adverbials occur more frequently in conversation than in academic prose or news reports. In addition to this, each register has its own distinct use of stance adverbs (in terms of "meaning, grammatical realizations, clausal positions"). Similar findings were found in Biber's (2006a; 2006b) study on university registers

(examples include: classroom teaching, institutional writing or textbooks), where he found that amongst other features of stance such as modal verbs and stance complement clauses, stance adverbs are also used across the different university registers, although some adverbs occur more frequently in one register than others.

Nkemleke's (2011:Chapter 6) study⁷ on the pre-defence report of students' dissertations shows that stance adverbs (*generally, actually, of course, really, perhaps or probably*) are a common feature used by supervisors to express stance (rank 3rd in the distribution of stance markers⁸). For example, *[h]er write up is generally fluent and quite accurate though containing some minor language errors*. The use of the stance adverb, *generally*, indicates the “degrees of commitment to the truth of the proposition that is asserted” which has the effect of boosting the proposition at the same time, mitigating the criticism, errors, at the latter part.

4.2.4. Submodifiers

Submodifiers are also known as “degree adverbs” (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:457), used to “give more information about the extent of an action or the degree to which an action is performed” (CollinsCOBUILD, 1990:293). They are used to specify “the amount of the quality” or “to intensify adjectives” (CollinsCOBUILD, 1990:93, see Appendix 4.1. for a

⁷ Nkemleke (2011:Chapter 6, p.107) has looked at evaluation in the pre-defence reports examining the various “evaluation resources” ranging from “epistemic and evaluation adjectives/verbs to modals and stance verbs” which he has classified under “stance”.

⁸ The most common stance feature being used in pre-defence reports is the evaluation adjective (such as: *very* + adjectives, *interesting, satisfactory or good*) with 34.37% while second most common is modals (*can, could, should or will*) with 27.94%, stance adverbs with 8.64%, followed by epistemic adjectives (*clear, evident or certain*), 7.94%.

complete list of submodifiers used to intensify adjectives, indicate the extent of a quality and reduce the effect of an adjective). Biber *et al.* (1999:555) have referred to degree adverbs (such as *less*, *rather*, *slightly*, or *quite*) as “downtoners” or “diminishers” which imply “to some extent”, all of which relates to the features of hedging.

Quite is used as a hedge in most academic writing, not excluding feedback in utterances such as *the conclusions you draw were quite insightful* or *this is quite limited though*. These two examples show the adjectives (*insightful* and *limited*) are submodified or hedged by *quite* (a)- to highlight the quality in a positive way, referring to the former and (b)- to mitigate the implicit criticisms, referring to the latter.

4.3. Why do authors hedge their comments?

Hedging is a politeness strategy in academic writing which forms an interaction between the writers and readers (Myers, 1989:5, also mentioned earlier in Sections 4.1. and 4.2.) and bridging solidarity with the readers (Hyland, 1998b:353). According to Nkemleke (2011:20), “academic language is a world of indirectness and non-finality”. Indirectness is regarded as a politeness strategy whereby the writer or speaker show respect to his/her reader or hearer (Upton & Connor, 2001:321). Salager-Meyer (1994:150) and Clemen (1997:239) claim that writers or speakers use hedges to make propositions more tentative or vague so an audience could find it more “acceptable”. Hyland (1995:33) supports this notion when he states the reason to hedge is to enable writers to present “unproven claims with caution and softening categorical assertions”. In other words, writers have the choice to remain uncommitted (Downing & Locke, 2006:184; Hyland, 1998c:1), at the same time,

it also provides the opportunity for them to defend their status as an academic (Millán, 2008:68).

With respect to written feedback, it is a strategy for tutors to be less assertive, or not “sounding too authoritative or direct” (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:906). As mentioned earlier in the section of *Politeness Theory* (Section 4.1.), hedging is used as a softening feature, an act of mitigation, or “weakening” towards what is being said or written to make it “more polite” (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:923). In defining the concept of hedging which is used to mitigate forceful utterances, Clemen (1997:239) emphasised that hedging ought to be regarded as a face-saving strategy. Other researchers (such as Holmes (1982) and Myers (1989)) also treat hedging as politeness feature. As mentioned earlier (in Section 4.1.), in written academic feedback is heavily tilted towards negative politeness while positive politeness is associated with positive evaluations, such as complimenting (Johnson, 1992:54).

4.4. Summary

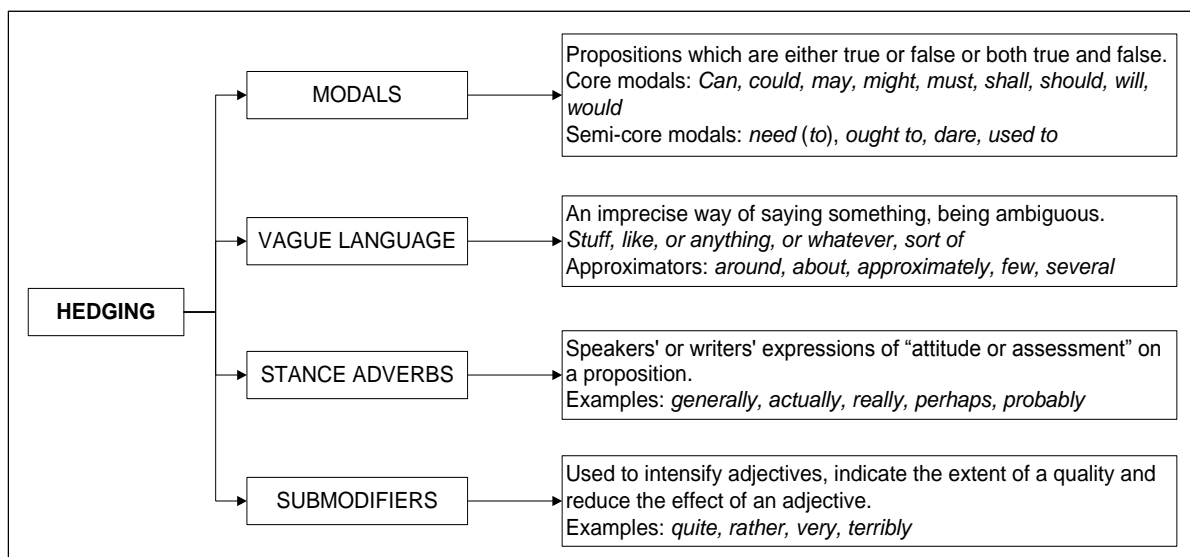
The technical discourse term, ‘evaluation’, is avoided in this research as feedback is principally an evaluative process. Evaluation involves making a judgement or giving an “opinion” on “how good and bad” something is (Hunston, 1994:191) and evaluation is often found spread across a text (Hunston & Thompson, 2001b:19). There are extensive evaluations in feedback such as highlighting the students’ comprehension skills or writing proficiency as well as commenting on problems arising from the students’ work, all of which involves the tutors telling students how they have done in their work. Having said

this, Biber (2006a:99; 2006b:89) and Hyland (2005b:177) mentioned that it can be a difficult task to investigate the writer's/speaker's attitudes or stance as any expressions or utterances could be considered as evaluative. As the present research is looking into feedback, this suggests that all commentaries from the tutors are evaluations. Hedging is an interesting area of study, to see how tutors avoid making any explicit criticisms while trying to be constructive and encouraging.

Hedging is a feature which is often used by academic writers to avoid full commitment to assertions and minimise the threat to face. This is mainly achieved by using modals, vague language, submodifiers and stance adverbs to convey propositions, all of which express tentativeness, at the same time, engaging the reader in the text and building solidarity with the reader. This study, though not comprehensive, has tried to highlight the four sub-components of hedging namely, modals, vagueness, submodifiers, stance adverbs; all features which are found in the feedback report data. Figure 4.6. shows the approach taken for the study of hedging in this research (see Chapters 8 and 9).

Figure 4.6. Model framework used to analyse hedging

(Adapted from Biber, 1999; Carter & McCarthy, 2006; Channell, 1994; CollinsCOBUILD, 1990)



In this chapter, I have reviewed hedging which is found to be one of the most salient features in the feedback data. I have also discussed the four sub-components of hedging (modality, vague language, stance adverbs, and submodifiers) which all in all forms an integral contribution to the second part of this thesis, the corpus study. This chapter has also looked at the reasons writers hedged their comments which is mainly to avoid sounding too authoritative and building solidarity with the readers. Hedging is also used to avoid making any face threatening acts which may cause the potential loss of face of the students. The findings and discussion on hedging with regards to this thesis are further discussed in Chapters 8 and 9.

In the next chapter, I will be discussing the methodology for this thesis.

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The chapter begins by reinstating how the present research was developed, starting off with a brief history. This is followed by an outline of the research context and the participants⁹ involved in the study. Ethical considerations of the study will also be examined. There will then be a discussion on the research data incorporating the feedback corpus, the data collection method involved, the size of the corpus and what it represents. This thesis is carried out based on a mixed-method approach; qualitative and quantitative analysis with greater emphasis on the former, involving a genre approach and a corpus analysis approach.

This chapter also intends to describe and explain the considerations as well as the challenges involved in collecting the data under study. Compiling the feedback corpus (known as the EdEng corpus) for analysis raises several issues such as ethical considerations, the size and representativeness of the EdEng corpus. The steps in compiling the corpus and the issues will be addressed later in this chapter.

5.1. History of the research project

This research initially set out to investigate the genre patterns of written academic feedback, exploring the language used in feedback in a UK higher education institution (referred to as the university). Alongside the genre study, a follow-up investigation was also planned to examine the views of students and tutors towards feedback by means of

⁹ I use participants to refer to a wider context such as both students and tutors or research participants in general. Students and tutors will be mentioned explicitly

questionnaire and interview. The initial research intention was proposed to a department (designated A in this research) of the university over the summer term 2008/09. Permission was granted by the Head of Department along with the programme coordinator to carry out the research, provided all communication was done between the students and me. It was decided that the research would look only at the undergraduates' level of study, focusing on second and third year students of an English programme since first year students were considered "new" to essay writing at a university level in comparison to pre-university essay writing. Copies of the feedback reports¹⁰ were collected from the department's office as they kept copies of the feedback reports. Due to the tight lecture and seminar schedules in Department A, there was no means for me to convey my research intentions to students directly, which explains why all communications were made through email.

5.1.1. Pilot study

Due to the possibility that the selected research methods might fail to achieve what they have been set out to accomplish, it is necessary to carry out a pilot study. Piloting by definition means testing the research instruments before the actual research is carried out in order to identify potential problems (Brown, 2001:62). The pilot study enables researchers to assess the effectiveness of their research methods, as Glesne and Peshkin (1992:30) have claimed, "[a] pilot study can test many aspects of your proposed research". In other words, this means that in conducting a pilot study, it could help us test out the data collection methods which shall be of use in the actual study. It informs us of the problems that could have been overlooked in forming questions for the research methods as well as the

¹⁰ Feedback reports are used to refer to all the feedback commentaries sheets, given on templates, set out by Department A.

questions placement which in return could help minimise non-response rate from the participants (Oppenheim, 2000:47). As Oppenheim (2000:48) further clarifies, “[i]t is essential to pilot every question, every question sequence, every inventory and every scale in your study”. Generally speaking, every phase of the research should be pre-tested from the questions, instructions to the answer categories and even the numbering system before the actual research is carried out in order to produce the desired outcome or intended research purpose (Oppenheim, 2000:47-49).

One of the main reasons for a pilot study is to examine the effectiveness of research instruments (as mentioned earlier). With regards to this research, a pilot study was carried out with the third year students¹¹ feedback reports to see if feedback constituted a genre and if there were similar patterns within the feedback. With the help of an academic advisor, a letter of consent was drafted and reviewed by the Head of Department and programme coordinator in Department A (see Appendix 5.3.). As it was the summer term, most students were away from the university, and the suggestion was to contact students through email. The letter was sent to 72 second and third year undergraduates. Only six students gave their permission to access their feedback reports, while others objected to the idea or did not respond. Copies of the feedback reports (18 reports at this stage) were gathered from the school’s office and anonymised thoroughly. They were also checked by the programme secretary.

¹¹ The third year students were in actual fact students who would begin their third year programme of study in the academic year 2009/10. They had their second year feedback reports returned to them.

Following this, a new email was resent to the six students requesting to do a follow-up study, but no students decided to participate in the interview or questionnaire. The poor response to the interview and questionnaire could be due to the timing factor of the research. The research was carried out during the summer term when the students were either preparing for their examinations or meeting assignment deadlines. The lack of participation could also arise from the research focus, feedback, as it is a rather elusive and personal subject matter, both for the tutors and students. The students were aware of the fact that the tutors were in command of their grades. On the other hand, the tutors were not only responding to their current writing practice but could be seen to be indirectly commenting negatively on the feedback system set out by the respective departments in the university.

The data collection proceeded into the autumn and spring terms of 2009/10, collecting new feedback reports from the students who had given permission, as well as resending the letter of consent in the hope to gather more responses. Due to the limited responses from Department A, the research focus shifted and a decision was made towards the end of spring term 2010 to include a new department, Department B. Due to the limited responses in the questionnaire and interview in the pilot study, these elements were discarded.

The result from the pilot study indicated that there did appear to be a genre of feedback and therefore, I decided to pursue my research further.

5.2. Research context

The main purpose of this research is to explore the genre of written academic feedback given by tutors to tertiary level students. A UK higher education institution (the university) was selected as the starting point of this research with the main focus being Department A, with the incorporation of Department B at a slightly later stage (as mentioned earlier in Section 5.1.). This study looking into written feedback was carried out for one academic year, Session 2009/2010. The feedback reports from Departments A and B were gathered from the students' summative essays for every module (18 modules altogether) in a particular English programme study (see Table 5.1. for the distribution of research participants and data, and see Section 5.4.1. on obtaining consents).

Each department used different templates for giving feedback. In Department A, most of the feedback reports were handwritten with a few exceptions (six feedback reports out of 42 were electronically typed). The handwritten reports were transcribed. No optical software was used because all comments were relatively short. The feedback on the template from both departments was the corpus data for this research, referred to as 'feedback reports'. In Department A, assessment of the essays focused on five main criteria, namely, (i) Knowledge and Understanding, (ii) Application, (iii) Argument and Analysis, (iv) Communication and Presentation and (v) Module Specific Outcomes (refer to Appendix 5.1. for the template used in Department A).

Because of the limited students' participation (as discussed in Section 5.1.) and the length of the feedback reports in Department A, I decided to involve Department B, in order to expand the data given by Department A. Department B used another feedback template

[99]

form whereby five criteria were assessed and feedback was given on each of these criteria. These criteria are: (i) Acquisition of Knowledge (referred to as AK), (ii) Interpretation, Analysis, Construction of Argument and Relevance (referred to as IACAR), (iii) Command of English (referred to as CE), (iv) Documentation and Presentation (referred to as DP) and (v) Overall (referred to as OV) (refer to Appendix 5.2. for the template used in Department B).

I chose this particular aspect of research into the genre of written academic feedback due to its relevance for my future academic and profession related interests in Brunei Darussalam.

5.3. Research participants

The participants involved in the research were the tutors and students from Departments A and B. The main focus of this research is on examining particularly the genre of written feedback in Departments A and B. Students from both departments were studying for an English Language degree and all essays were written in English.

5.3.1. Tutors

The feedback reports from Department A were gathered from 10 tutors while the feedback reports from Department B were gathered from one tutor. The feedback reports from each tutor varied, ranging from one report per tutor or seven reports from one tutor, as some tutors were teaching more than one module. The main purpose of Department B's feedback was to increase the number of feedback reports in case Department A's feedback reports were not able to yield any interesting findings, since the feedback reports from Department

A were relatively short (as shown in Table 5.1.). Even though the feedback from Department B came from one tutor, the data were checked for any indications of idiosyncrasy, which are mentioned in the results and discussion chapters on genre and corpus study (Chapters 7 to 9).

5.3.2. Students

All the feedback reports from Department B were gathered from 42 second-year students, generating 84 feedback reports over two semesters. Department A's feedback reports, however, were collected from five second-year students and one third-year student. In addition, there were two reports which were submitted by the second year student from their first year of study, generating 42 feedback reports altogether. The distributions of the participants alongside the feedback reports are tabulated in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1. Distribution of participants and data

	No. of tutors	No. of students	Modules	No. of essays	Total no. of words	Ave. no. of words per report
Department A ¹²	10	6	12	42	4527	108
Department B ¹³	1	42	6	84	31414	374
Total	11	48	18	126	35941	285

5.4. Ethical considerations

As with much other research, the ethical issue is one of the most important things to consider. According to Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:44), ethics is defined as “questions of

¹² The feedback reports were collection of students' first and second year reports as well as one student in the third/final year.

¹³ All the feedback reports were gathered from students in the second year.

values, that is, of beliefs, judgements and personal viewpoints”. Gathering the feedback reports for analysis involves major ethical implications in order to protect the students’ rights. The main ethical considerations in this study include obtaining students’ consents and anonymising the reports.

5.4.1. Obtaining consents

An informal meeting was conducted with the Head of Department A and the programme coordinator of the selected programme where the research intentions were proposed. It was agreed the study would focus only on the second and third year students’ feedback reports, as first year students are in their preliminary stage of essay writing and familiarising themselves with the marking criteria. Due to the tight schedule or contact time with the students in Department A, it was not possible for the tutors to allow a 5 to 10 minute slot before or after a lecture or tutorial to convey research intentions. As an alternative, the students’ emails were given to me. A letter of consent was emailed to 72 students, 34 from Year 2 students and 38 from Year 3 students where only six students (out of 72 students) had given their permission¹⁴.

With the consent and help from a tutor in Department B, the same letter was distributed to 55 students in that department, 42 of whom gave their written consent to use their feedback reports¹⁵ (refer to Appendix 5.3. for the letter of consent which was used). I was introduced

¹⁴ I was informed that the department kept copies of the feedback reports in the administration office which were how the first set of reports was gathered. However, the copies were no longer made available in the new academic term 2009/10. Students who had agreed to participate made copies of their feedback reports and handed to the Department’s secretary for me to collect.

¹⁵ Feedback reports were handed to me in electronic form, the 13 feedback reports which were not given consent were deleted from the database.

to three tutorial groups of students where the research intentions were explained by the tutor in my presence. The research focus was emphasised, examining the language used by tutors in the feedback reports rather than individual student's performance. If needed, additional information and questions regarding the research were clarified. The fundamental ethical issue was to inform the research participants as to why the specified materials were collected. Students participating in the study were made aware of the research purposes.

5.4.2. Anonymising data

Anonymising data remains a questionable subject and can vary from research to research, (Rock, 2001:9). The standard idea of anonymisation is replacing or altering participants' names with pseudonyms and their addresses. According to Rock (2001:9), apart from names and addresses, other features which should be anonymised "may include bank details, telephone numbers, registration numbers, and dates of birth" as this information is deemed to be "highly damaging" to particular individuals. Without doubt, anonymisation modifies data. There is a concern not to remove any vital information (Rock, 2001:2). Researchers should be made aware of "under- and over-anonymising" which may alter the data completely (Rock, 2001:9).

The majority of the texts in the feedback reports were by and large kept in their original format where headings remained and feedback writing practice, for instance, use of bullet points were kept. All the feedback reports from both departments were checked thoroughly where all students' names were anonymised. Anonymisation in Department B was not

required as all essays were marked anonymously. Students used their university IDs which were not known to the researcher and possibly not to the tutor. There were a few minor exceptions in the case of Department A where students' names were mentioned and these were replaced. For example, the embedded name in the feedback report below relates to a particular student and was therefore replaced with "Name omitted". This was applied to every name found in the reports.

Some interesting points here [Name omitted], and you show some ability in literacy analysis.

It is worth reiterating that only students' names were removed and replaced with "Name omitted". Apart from the students' names¹⁶, aspects which were not replaced or anonymised in the study include proper nouns such as the name of the author, for instance, "Halliday", or tutor quoting a student's reference to a particular book, for instance, "... (Hyland, 2009:1)", further shown in the example below.

The analysis of conjunctions could be better as you only have one example of Halliday's categories.

The example above shows an instance where anonymisation was not made. Since the comment was not imposing any harm as it was not making any explicit reference which may be associated or identified to a particular student or tutor, no replacement was necessary. As Rock (2001:9) highlights, it is important to remove any identifiable features

¹⁶ The present study looks at feedback as a genre, thus only the written feedback was extracted. Anonymisation of tutors' names was not required. They were only explicit in the feedback template form. There were no mentions of any tutors' names in the reports.

whereby a person could be recognised by its community. Rock further exemplifies this with asylum seekers and their solicitors where both parties can be traced back to their home or country of origin. In respect of this study, students' names were anonymised to protect students' rights, but in terms of tutors re-quoting the references made by students to a particular author or book, these were kept in the original format. The anonymisation of the study was limited to removing any particular details, specifically names, which may be associated to a specific tutor or student enabling them to be identified or contacted.

Arguably, the feedback reports can be traced back to a particular tutor through idiolects which are identifiable. However, the tutors who participated in this research are not known to the public or the respective department, only by me. As for students, all of them remain as anonymous as I did not meet or know any of them personally. Tutors will not be judged or criticised in any way as there has not yet been a clear-cut means of writing feedback. The main focus of the study is investigating the genre patterns of written academic feedback, thus the identity of tutors who wrote the feedback reports is not important.

5.4.3. Anonymisation method

Anonymisation can be carried out manually, automatically, or both which can be very labour intensive and time consuming (Rock, 2001:16,20). The anonymisation method involved in this study is mainly straightforward as the reports were electronically typed into a word processing programme. Any mention of names was replaced or coded immediately with [Name omitted]. Since there will be no follow-up research, pseudonyms were not assigned to individual tutors as it was not deemed necessary.

5.4.4. Replacement codes

There is no doubt anonymising is vital. As mentioned, participants should not be identifiable by any means in any part of the research. For this study, anonymisation was required only for students' names. As some of the feedback reports from Department A were handwritten, there were problems in interpreting the actual words used. A specialist¹⁷ was consulted on each of the handwritten reports to confirm and validate our transcriptions. Where disagreement arose and no valid interpretation could be made on an incomprehensible word, it is marked with '*'. In addition, each report was assigned a number in sequence, so that T1–T42 represents reports from Department A and T43–T84 represents reports from Department B. The table below shows the coding used in the study.

Table 5.2. Codes of the study

Code	Detail	Examples
[Name omitted]	Student's name	[Name omitted], this is excellent work, well-structured,...
*	Incomprehensible writing	the texts you've chosen both can * and question dominant ideologies.
TX	Each report, T, is assigned a number, represented by X.	T1, T2, T3...

5.5. Research data

The research data focuses solely on tutor's feedback, that is only the first marker's comments. Some feedback reports from Department A consisted of second marker's comments and these were not included in the analysis.

¹⁷ The specialist refers to someone who has knowledge of educational practices and has experiences in giving written academic feedback.

5.5.1. The EdEng corpus

The research data for the study is a compilation of all the feedback reports given by tutors to undergraduates on their summative essays, hereafter referred to as the EdEng corpus. Each report was recognised by the numbers assigned to each. As the reports from Department B were based on five separate criteria, sub-headings based on each criterion were assigned to ensure the findings were not skewed, as the result of one criterion. It is open to argument whether it is practical to combine Department A and Department B's feedback reports into one corpus, or it would be more advantageous to distinguish them into two separate corpora. Nonetheless, these feedback reports constitute a single genre, written feedback, it is unnecessary to distinguish between both sets of reports, with the exception that when a particular feature was found to be of use only in Department B it will be mentioned.

5.5.2. Size of the EdEng corpus

There is a general concern in corpus studies over the data collection method for each corpus, spoken or written, its size, content, representativeness, and permanence (Hunston, 2002:25). Ooi (2001:178) states that a corpus is designed "as a resource for general purposes or for a more specialised function...resource that is maximally representative of a particular language genre, or language specific to a particular domain". In this respect, the EdEng corpus is a specialised corpus. There is no general agreement to how big a corpus should be (Hunston, 2002:25), in fact Partington (1998:4) states that "there is no "standard size" in corpora" (quotations in original). The size of a corpus largely depends on the research and its purposes (Hunston, 2002:14, 26). A larger corpus might be suitable for

lexicography or phraseology studies while a smaller, specialised corpus is suitable for studying specific aspects of language in a particular context (Hunston, 2002:26; Koester, 2010:66). Flowerdew (2004:21) summarises six major reasons for developing a specialised corpus:

Figure 5.1. Reasons for developing a specialised corpus (Flowerdew, 2004:21)

1. Specific purpose for compilation – to investigate particular grammatical, lexical, lexicogrammatical, discoursal or rhetorical features;
2. Contextualisation – setting (for example: lecture hall), participants (role of speaker/listener; writer/reader) and communicative purpose (for example: promote; instruct);
3. Genre – promotional (grant proposals, sales letters);
4. Type of text/discourse – biology textbooks, casual conversation;
5. Subject matter/topic – economics, the weather;
6. Variety of English – Learner, non-standard (for example, Indian, Singaporean)

The EdEng corpus is made up of 35,941 words, a relatively small corpus. Nonetheless, it is a specialised corpus. Table 5.3. shows the distribution of the corpora, between Departments A and B, as well as the five individual criteria in Department B.

Table 5.3. Distribution of the EdEng corpus

Corpora	EdEng corpus		Department B individual sections				
	Department A	Department B	Acquisition of Knowledge	Interpretation, analysis, construction of argument and relevance	Command of English	Documentation and Presentation	Overall (Criterion)
No. of words	4527	31414	3877	19230	3536	3160	1611
Total	35941		31414				

5.5.3. Representativeness of the EdEng corpus

Koester (2010:68) amongst others (Barnbrook & Sinclair, 2001:239; McEnery & Hardie, 2012:11; Ooi, 2001:178) argues on the importance of a small or specialised corpus is not in its size but rather in the representativeness of the corpus. McEnery and Hardie (2012:250) define a representative corpus as “one sampled in such a way that it contains all the types of text, in the correct proportions, that are needed to make the contents of the corpus an accurate reflection of the whole of the language or variety it samples”. Although the representativeness of a corpus is important, along with balance and comparability, McEnery and Hardie (2012:250) also state it is a difficult task to fulfil all three aspects.

The present EdEng corpus is made up of 35,941 words. The extent to which the EdEng corpus is representative could be questioned. However, as McEnery and Hardie (2012:250) point out, ‘representativeness’ is a problematic notion to encompass. However, recognising the issues of corpus compilation, the EdEng corpus is a specialised corpus focusing on a specific genre, written academic feedback, in a particular setting, a higher education institution. Its primary intention is to provide a better understanding of the genre patterns of written feedback through genre-based analysis (see Section 3.6.1.1). The corpus study (as discussed in Section 3.6.1.2) is a follow-up study to further confirm the use of specific features arising from the genre analysis. Other researchers who have also work on small corpus include Farr (2011), Flowerdew (2004), Henry and Roseberry (2001), Koester (2010), and Nkemleke (2011).

5.6. Research methods

Since the attempt to stimulate interest in the questionnaire and interview was unsuccessful, this study will investigate only the language used in written feedback. Research methods vary accordingly to the researcher's intentions and the research questions set out to answer. As mentioned earlier, this research implements a mixed method approach; a combination of qualitative and quantitative method, QUAL + quan, focusing more on the former rather than the latter.

The next sub-section discusses the difference between qualitative and quantitative approaches.

5.6.1. Qualitative and quantitative approaches

Morse (1991:6) highlights the main importance in distinguishing the methods implementation through the use of uppercase (capital letters) to indicate greater emphasis on the selected method. The moment of time in which the methods are employed is another important aspect of mixed method research, through the use of symbols '+', indicating both methods are used at the same time, '→' indicating the methods are used in series and '(...)' indicating one method is embedded within the other.

Dörnyei (2007:24) defines the qualitative approach as “data collection procedures that result primarily in open-ended, non-numerical data which is then analysed primarily by non-statistical methods”, and the quantitative approach is defined as “data collection procedures that result primarily in numerical data which is then analysed primarily by

statistical methods”. The advantage of using a qualitative approach is it allows the researcher to “describe and analyse phenomena on their own terms, and helps us to think constructively and to generate meaning out of complex and problematic situations” (Hopkins, 2002:143). This research focuses on the qualitative approach (further discussed in Section 5.6.4.2.), and a considerably smaller part of this study focuses on the quantitative approach which is concerned mainly with statistics (McEnery & Hardie, 2012:249). A quantitative approach is taken to show if there are any differences in the frequency of occurrences of a particular word/lexis across the two departments and the percentages of occurrences of that particular lexical item (further discussed in Section 5.6.4.1.).

As mentioned earlier, this research implemented a QUAL+quan approach whereby the qualitative aspects of this research are carried out through genre analysis (further discussed in Section 5.6.2.) and corpus analysis (see Section 5.6.4.). This research also carried out a quantitative approach derived from the corpus analysis (see Section 5.6.4.1.). According to Hyland (2010:198), genre analysis and corpus analysis are the two main approaches to investigate written texts data. Table 5.4. below shows the methodologies which have been used in previous studies.

Table 5.4. Data, participants and research focus across the feedback or evaluation literature

Study by:	Data and participants	Methodology	Research focus
Farr, F. (2011)	171 reports of POR ¹⁸ from 3 tutors totalling 89,238 words and 14 sessions of POTTI ¹⁹ between 7 student teachers and 3 tutors with a total of 81,944 transcribed words.	Diary entries, Pre-post feedback questionnaires, online questionnaires, audio recordings for POTTI, corpus analysis of POR and POTTI	Language of teaching practice feedback on language teacher programmes.
Nkemleke, D.A. (2011)	49,960 words from 196 pre-defence reports submitted by students' supervisors from 2005 – 2009.	Text analysis	Evaluation in pre-defence reports, written by supervisors on students' dissertations.
Yelland, C. (2011)	140 samples of tutor's written feedback given to students in MA Education Programmes between 1992 – 1995; 2 groups of students: first year and third year students	Analysing feedback based on Mirador's (2000) moves analysis of feedback and moves structures of feedback (standard pattern, sequential pattern, or alternating pattern).	Testing Mirador's research (2000) on feedback samples and the extent to which feedback is considered a 'genre' (exploration on whether students are considered part of the discourse community).
Kumar, V. and Stracke, E. (2007)	Supervisor's in-text feedback and overall feedback on the first draft of a PhD thesis.	Qualitative approach (development of a model for feedback analysis) and quantitative analysis (percentages for each of the functions of feedback)	Identifying the functions of commentaries which could be used to develop taxonomy of good feedback practices in doctoral students' supervision.

¹⁸ POR refers to "Post-Observation Reports"

¹⁹ POTTI refers to "Post-Observation Trainer Trainee Interactions".

Table 5.4. (continued) Data, participants and research focus across the feedback or evaluation literature

Study by:	Data and participants	Methodology	Research focus
Glover, C. and Brown, E. (2006)	4428 feedback reports from Physical Sciences staff and undergraduates at two UK universities.	Text analysis (type and purpose of feedback), interview	Perceptions of the effectiveness of feedback.
Stern, L.A. and Solomon, A. (2006)	598 graded papers from 30 different departments in a university.	Portfolio	Analysis of faculty comments and effective grading practices.
Hyatt, D.F. (2005)	60 feedback commentaries on Master's level assignments.	Text analysis	Corpus-based analysis of assessment commentaries
Hyland, F. and Hyland, K. (2001)	4700 words from 51 ESL student essays for an English proficiency course at a New Zealand university.	Interviews, text analysis, class observations questionnaires, and verbal reports.	Text analysis of written feedback (investigating praise, criticism and suggestion).
Ashwell, T. (2000)	Three assignments feedback for 1 st draft, 2 nd draft and final draft (content for 1 st draft, form on 2 nd draft) to 50 students in a writing class for a whole academic year.	Analysing the pattern of feedback	Content feedback and form feedback; any improvements in students' writing given in sequence and is there a need to separate?

Table 5.4. (continued) Data, participants and research focus across the feedback or evaluation literature

Study by:	Data and participants	Methodology	Research focus
Mirador, J.F. (2000)	30 feedback texts from 1992-1995 given by 7 tutors to postgraduates' term assignments.	Move analysis	Move analysis of a corpus of written feedback.
Hyland, F. (1998a)	Two experienced tutors working on the English proficiency programme (EPP) and six ESL students at a university in New Zealand; a collection of written data.	Questionnaires, interviews, teacher think-aloud protocols and classroom observations.	Students' attitudes and expectations on the purpose and value of feedback (how do they interpret and use the feedback).
Lea, M.R. and Street, B.V. (1998)	13 tutors and 26 students based in a UK institution. Samples of students' writing and written feedback.	Semi-structured interviews with tutors and students, participant observation of group sessions.	Linguistically-based analysis of textual materials and tutors' and students' interpretations of university writing.
Johnson, D.M. (1992)	51 peer-review midterm papers by native English graduate students.	Analysis of compliments	Forms, strategies and functions of complimenting in peer-review texts.

Table 5.4. (continued) Data, participants and research focus across the feedback or evaluation literature

Study by:	Data and participants	Methodology	Research focus
Norton, L.S. and Norton J.C.W. (1990)	Essay feedback checklist from seven tutors, and 61 first year and 65 third year psychology department students of a university based in England.	Interviews and essay feedback checklist	The misperceptions between students and tutors.
Brannon, L. and Knoblauch, C.H. (1982)	40 tutors assessing the quality of a particular student's writing.	Analysis of tutors' comments	The misperceptions between what the student was trying to do/achieve and how tutors evaluate student's writing.
Sommers, N. (1982)	Feedback given by 35 tutors at New York University and University of Oklahoma on the same set three students' essays (1 st and 2 nd drafts).	Interviewing tutors and students	Tutors' commenting styles.
Ziv, N.D. (1982)	Tutor's comments on the second drafts of 4 students in Expository Writing class at New York University	Interviewing students at the beginning and end of semester to find out their experiences towards the tutor's written comments during and after the writing process and to investigate the extent to which the students react to the comments.	Students' perceptions towards tutors' feedback.

5.6.2. Genre-based analysis

Genre analysis has proven to have a profound impact on pedagogy particularly in the field of ESP (Hyland, 2009b:20), not only for linguists or teaching experts but for students as well, both native and non-native speakers of English. It is important to develop knowledge of genre as the genre helps us to identify “*such things as appropriate subject matter, level of detail, tone and approach as well as the usual layout and organisation. Knowing the genre means knowing not only, or even most of all, how to conform to generic conventions but also how to respond appropriately to a given situation*” (Devitt, 1993:577).

The main focus of this research is to investigate the genre of written academic feedback. Representativeness is another important factor to consider in a genre. Hyland (2010:198) stresses the significance of the representation of texts for genre study. In order to strengthen the representativeness, it is necessary to analyse a number of texts, at the same time incorporating corpus analysis into the study, “drawing on evidence from large databases of electronically encoded texts”. As mentioned earlier (in Section 5.5.), the EdEng corpus compiled from 126 feedback reports is representative as it is a specialised corpus. All the data are restricted, and confined within the essay feedback reports. Having said that, Hyatt (2005:342) states the extent to which this corpus of feedback can be classified as a “discrete genre” largely depends on the particular institution setting. In his corpus of feedback research, Hyatt declined to make any claims to the feedback genre in a wider community. He does however, state it is necessary not to treat any models of feedback prescriptively (Hyatt, 2005:342-343). The models are set to be guidelines rather than a rule book.

A genre analysis was carried with all the 42 feedback reports gathered from Department A. Although there were 84 feedback reports from Department B, only 42 reports²⁰ were randomly selected for genre analysis in order to equalise the number of feedback reports from both departments. As feedback is a genre, analysing 42 feedback reports seemed practical at the point of analysis. An unexpected outcome arose from the tutor's individual feedback writing practices causing the various patterning of feedback (further discussed in Chapter 6). It is worth mentioning that each criterion in Department B was treated as a separate feedback section. The moves patterns were very disorganised and complex when the criteria headings were removed, and each feedback report was analysed as one piece of text. In addition to this, the feedback report was not cohesive. This is the major reason why the criteria were analysed as separate sections.

It is worth mentioning that the analysis was mainly straightforward where the transition from one move to the next was kept at chunks of phrases, at the level of sentences (see example in Table 5.5.). Each move began in a new sentence. There will be a new move when there is a change in the move structure (for instance, when an area of concern was mentioned, the move shifted to Problem move), even though there were embedded comments within the move. These were analysed in the next schematic structures, steps and acts. The main reason for doing this is due to the differences of feedback writing practices amongst tutors. For instance, the use of bullet points to list positives, negatives or suggestions was a common feature found in Department B's feedback reports (see example in Table 5.6.). The listing of comments posed some problems in the process of analysis initially, as each comment was analysed accordingly to the move. As a result, complex

²⁰ 42 feedback reports were used for genre analysis, but all 84 feedback reports were compiled for the EdEng corpus.

patterns of moves emerged such as I + P + I + S + C moves pattern; or I + P + S + P + S + P moves pattern. Hence, the decision was made to analyse moves based on chunks of comments rather than individual sentence or phrase.

Table 5.5. Example of move analysis: Initiation, Problem, Solution, and Conclusion

Moves	Example
Initiation (I)	This assignment focuses on a narrative analysis of two versions of ‘The Boy Who Cried Wolf’. Both texts are presented in the appendices and are annotated using colour-coding with lots of detailed grammatical and structural analysis – this is very good and the amount of analysis you’ve done and the level of detail is impressive.
Problem (P)	I thought the essay itself was rather disappointing in light of this – it became evident that you were trying to do too much with the analysis and that the analysis was over-ambitious given the length of the assignment. This meant that a lot of your points were under-developed and the essay ended up being a rather unfocused and unclear argument of what is happening in both narratives. There is a tendency to jump from one point to the next without fully developing each one, and the points you make are rather disorganised which interferes with the coherence of your writing. There is evidently not enough space for your arguments to be explained, justified or supported particularly well.
Solution (S)	You do draw well on the narrative models of Labov and Toolan. Again, the section on the application of Toolan’s model could have been developed further. On p.5-6, there really is no need to introduce Propp’s morphology on top of all of the other types of analysis!
Conclusion (C)	In sum, you should get credit for the amount of analysis presented in the appendices. But the discussion of the analysis throughout the essay let you down somewhat. (* incomprehensible, Text 22, Department A)

Table 5.6. Example of move analysis: Initiation, Problem, and Solution

Moves	Example
Initiation (I)	The essay demonstrates a fairly good academic style although some phrases/words could be revised. For example, ‘positives and negatives of the theories..’ (page 1), ‘contexts they were born from...’ (page 1), ‘one negative to such drills...’ page 2).
Problem (P)	These are some sentences, especially sentences with integrated quotations that are awkward in phrasing and thus unclear. For example, ‘Language is seen as a complex faculty...by general cognition complex’ (page 3).
Solution (S)	<p>There is no need for you to capitalise words such as ‘behaviourism’, ‘language acquisition’, ‘audiolingual’ unless they occur at the beginning of sentences.</p> <p>There are some sentences that needed to be rephrased to ensure that the meaning you intended was reflected in the sentence. Here are three examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Additionally, they may willing to speak in the target country as they will be used to have silence as a security blanket’ (page 3). • ‘Although this can be seen to be much more interesting....it must be remembered that finding teachers willing to adopt this supportive role is fairly difficult, as it requires a greater expenditure of energy than the average teacher’. • ‘The notion of an ‘Ideal learner’ contrasts strongly to the Interactionist methodology of ‘The Natural Approach’. <p style="text-align: right;">(Text 68, Department B)</p>

5.6.3. Development of a framework of feedback

This research is keen to identify the salient features of feedback as well as the feedback conventions adopted by tutors. At the preliminary stage of this research, following the work of Hoey (1983) on ‘General-Particular patterns’, and Swales (1981, 1990) on genre analysis, the analysis began by identifying the moves of feedback which begin with a general comment such as, “this is good work” before moving onto a specific comment (referred to as “particular” in Hoey’s work) such as “some points need developing – could you say...”. Alongside this, the general–specific comments were further analysed for the steps according to the types of comments mainly focusing on three types, praise, criticisms and suggestions, following the work of Hyland and Hyland (2001). This framework posed

a major problem; the general-specific categories were considered too broad. Hence, the framework was redefined.

Further examinations of the feedback reports were carried out²¹. A distinctive pattern emerged whereby each report seemed to form a narrative where there is a beginning, followed by something happening which is then resolved and then an end to the narrative. By chance, Mirador's research (2000) on move analysis of written feedback was found. Building on Mirador's research (2000) whilst incorporating Swales' (1981, 1990) and Sinclair and Coulthard's approaches (1975), the framework of feedback based on moves and steps analyses was developed. Mirador's (2000) approach was chosen because it is one of the first researches carried out on written academic feedback. I was also attracted by Mirador's move analysis of feedback which seemed to fit my data.

The framework underwent three main revisions before it was finalised. This is because the first and second framework displayed some flaws and hence the framework was modified. The first framework of feedback consisted of four main moves, Introduction, Problem, Solution and Evaluation, and the three steps from the preliminary analysis, Praise, Criticism and Suggestion (Hyland & Hyland, 2001) were maintained. The Problem-Solution structures were adopted from Hoey's earlier work (1979, 1983, 1994), a pattern which was also apparent in the feedback. The move and step framework was soon extended to include acts, "the lowest level of discourse" (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975:27), functions which were embedded in steps. Sinclair and Coulthard (1975:23) state that acts

²¹ 10 feedback reports from Department A were used for the initial analysis while waiting for more feedback reports to be submitted from the students.

are “typically one free clause, plus any subordinate clauses, but there are certain closed classes [*which*] specify almost all the possible realizations which consist of single words or groups”. The initial acts were adapted from Mirador’s move analysis of feedback, consisted of General Statement or Comment; Specific Statement or Comment; Positive or Negative Comment; Exemplification; Mitigation; Embedded Problem; Embedded Solution; and Follow-up reinforcement (see Figure 5.2., 1st framework). Whilst testing this framework with a specialist²² in the area alongside a non-specialist²³, the steps structure posed yet another problem, being too general.

Building on the feedback received on the first framework, the general functions of the steps, a second framework was drawn to fit in with the data. The idea of ‘Introduction’ was discarded due to sounding too close to a common pedagogical term in academic essay writing and was replaced with ‘Initiation’, a term borrowed from the IRF structure (Initiation, Response and Feedback) by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). ‘Evaluation’ was also replaced with ‘Overall’, as all the commentaries in the feedback reports were considered evaluations of the students’ essays (also mentioned earlier in Chapter 4, Section 4.3.), and therefore inappropriate. All the steps from the first framework were replaced, implementing Swales’s CARS model (1990) where each move is subdivided into specific steps outlining the purposes of the moves (see Figure 5.2., 2nd framework). Yet again, this framework proved to be complicated especially for the non-specialist informant and was revised.

²² The specialist refers to someone who has knowledge of educational practices and has experiences in giving written academic feedback.

²³ The non-specialist refers to someone who has no prior knowledge of educational practices in giving feedback.

The final framework was kept to a simple level (see Figure 5.2., final framework). This is to promote a better understanding for teacher trainees in particular. Five steps from the second framework were kept, namely General Impression (GI), Highlighting Strength (HS), Indicating Problem (IP), Suggesting Ways of Improving (SWI), Overall Judgement (OJ) while the others were rejected. One new step was introduced, Focus (FO), a term borrowed from Sinclair and Coulthard (1975:22) referring to it as metastatements about the discourse. Analyses were carried out of the remaining reports from Department A. In the midst of analysing reports from Department B, the move ‘Overall’ was replaced with ‘Conclusion’ due to the confusion it might cause as one of the criteria in Department B’s feedback report is ‘Overall’ (refer to template in Appendix 5.2.). Although this research is trying to implement Swales’s notion of genre (1990) analysing the moves with sub-function steps, it is not as clear-cut as Swales. This is due to the variation of the feedback reports, where not only were the criteria treated as separate sections (for the case of Department B), but also because of the tutor’s feedback writing practices. The detailing of comments into bullet points, particularly in Department B feedback reports (refer to Appendix 5.4. for an example, text highlighted in blue) to some extent caused the recurrence of steps and acts structures in moves patterns. It was realised at the beginning of the development of this framework, it was impractical to devise a framework of feedback consisting of specific steps and acts occurring in specific moves, thus the framework was kept straightforward so that tutors may employ the same step in different moves, or acts in the same step or move (see Chapters 6 and 7).

The present study reflects Mirador’s (2000) research on the move analysis of feedback which provides a critical insight. Most of the functions of steps and acts are replications

from Mirador's move analysis (for instance, Calling Attention to Weakness, Exemplification, General Impression, Highlighting Strength and Overall Judgement, and Positivity which was replaced with Positive Judgement in acts). One major drawback of Mirador's research, however, lies in the 12 moves whereby it will be problematic to analyse and discuss in this research as compared with the hierarchy structure of moves, steps, and acts. It is also worth noting that the feedback analysis was consulted with the specialist and non-specialist informants, especially on problematic areas, such as the use of interrogations, or *need*, whether they were considered as problems or solutions (see Chapter 7, Section 7.2.3.). Analysis or decision made on the moves, steps or acts structures were based on mutual agreements between the specialist, non-specialist and me (see Appendix 6.1. for a detailed explanation of the feedback framework). The genre analysis of written academic feedback using this framework is further discussed in Chapter 6 (see Appendix 6.1. for a detailed explanation of the framework).

Figure 5.2. Developmental Stages of the Framework of Feedback²⁴

1st framework of feedback		
Moves	Steps	Acts
Introduction	Praise	Embedded Problem
Problem	Criticism	Embedded Solution
Solution	Suggestion	Exemplification
Evaluation		Follow-up Reinforcement
		General Statement/Comment
		Mitigation
		Positive/Negative Comment
		Specific Statement/Comment
2nd framework of feedback		
Moves	Steps	Acts
Initiation	Advice	Asking for Information
Problem	Asking for Information	Calling Attention to Weakness
Solution	General Impression	Embedded Problem
Evaluation	General Statement	Embedded Solution
	Giving Information	Exemplification
	Highlighting Strength	Follow-up Reinforcement
	Indicating Gap	General Statement/Comment
	Overall Judgement	Hedging
	Suggesting Ways of Improving	Positive/Negative Comment
		Requests
		Specific Statement/Comment
Final framework of feedback		
Moves	Steps	Acts
Initiation	Focus	Calling Attention to Weakness
Problem	General Impression	Embedded Problem
Solution	Highlighting Strength	Embedded Solution
Conclusion	Indicating Problem	Exemplification
	Overall Judgement	Follow-up Reinforcement
	Suggesting Ways of Improving	Meta-statement
		Mitigation
		Positive Judgement
		Recommendation

²⁴ No specific connections are made between the moves, steps and acts. As mentioned, it was difficult to subdivide the moves into specific steps and acts as the subcategories overlapped or recurred in other moves. Hence, one step may occur in two or more steps, a similar case with the acts.

Apart from Mirador's (2000) research, Hyatt's (2005) research on genre analysis of feedback commentaries is another close representation of this research. However, it was not opted for (as mentioned earlier in Chapter 3, Section 3.6.). Hyatt's analysis shows that feedback is classified into categories with seven respective functions, some of which include *phatic comments*, *stylistic comments* or *methodological comments* (Hyatt, 2005). These functions by and large are reflected in this study. For instance, in the criteria, Command of English (CE), and Documentation and Presentation (DP) in Department B, both criteria are categorised as *stylistic comments* (Hyatt, 2005), but CE has the function of *Proofreading/spelling*, while DP has the function of *presentation* as well as *referencing/citation/quotation/bibliography*.

Kumar and Stracke (2007) have also investigated the written feedback for a PhD thesis where they identified three functions of speech, *referential*, *directive* and *expressive*, in the feedback with subcategories for each function (see Kumar & Stracke, 2007; Stracke & Kumar, 2010). They analysed each utterance as a separate component and fitted it into their framework. This study however, treats each feedback report, even in the case of separate sections, as dialogic, as a whole discourse, constituting moves from chunks of texts into acts at the clause level. This is possibly the main reason why it is difficult to replicate other framework of feedback as every research approach has to be fitted in with the data at hand.

5.6.4. Corpus-based methodology

Flowerdew (1998) is one of the main pioneers in identifying the implication of integrating corpus analysis into text-based analysis encompassing genre analysis, discourse analysis or systemic-functional analysis. A corpus is defined as “a collection of naturally occurring language text, chosen to characterize a state or variety of language” (Sinclair, 1991:171), also widely referred to as a set of texts representative of the language whether as spoken or written data (Biber, Conrad, & Reppen, 1998:246; Hundt, 2009:170; Hyland, 2010:199; Kennedy, 1998:1). A lot of research has integrated corpus analysis with genre analysis where the findings have brought great significance to the research (as shown by Flowerdew, 2005:325-329). The advantage of complementing a corpus-based approach with genre analysis is that it allows the researcher to explore the linguistic patterns which would be unnoticeable had it been done manually (Hyatt, 2005:343). Corpus analysis also allows genre analysts to identify the main characteristics of a genre, illustrating how the language is used in the particular setting (Hyland, 2010:199).

According to Hyland (2010:199) and McCarthy, Matthiessen and Slade (2010:66), corpus analysis tends to be both quantitative (see Section 5.6.4.1.) and qualitative (see Section 5.6.4.2.). The corpus analysis for this research was carried out only on a selected noticeable feature, hedging. In the midst of analysing and developing the framework of feedback (see Figure 5.2.), one major feature which is of interest is the tutors’ constant use of hedging. Explicit criticisms are very rare in the reports with a few exceptions in low graded essays, such as *there are many technical inadequacies throughout the essay and you often express yourself poorly*. Comments are often hedged such as *the analysis could*

have been more specific and linked to the discussion more explicitly. Although there are a lot of positive comments, they are also often followed by embedded negative comment, such as *you have read reasonably widely although you do not always make reference to your reading to support your analysis and interpretation of your chosen text.* It was the hedging features which prompted a corpus investigation.

5.6.4.1. Quantitative corpus analysis

This corpus study started as a top-down approach (Biber, Connor, & Upton, 2007:12) where hedging was set as the main linguistic function to explore. Quantitative analysis was carried out to show if discrepancies occur within the sub-categories of hedging between the two departments as one corpus is slightly larger than the other. The frequencies of the individual subcategories of hedging showed their distribution across the two sub-corpora.

5.6.4.1.1. Frequency of occurrences

Hyland defines frequency as “a word, string, grammatical pattern which occurs regularly in a particular genre or subset of language” (2010:199). The standard corpus software, *WordSmith 5* (Scott, 2010) was used. The *WordList* Tool in *WordSmith 5* (Scott, 2010) was used to retrieve the frequency information of the top 50 words to see if there were any other interesting areas of investigation. In addition, the *Concord* Tool in *WordSmith 5* (Scott, 2010) was also used to generate the frequency information and collocates of each of the words. As the sizes of the corpus from both departments are different, the raw frequency information cannot be assumed to be prominent (Leech, Rayson, & Wilson,

2001:16; McEnery, Xiao, & Tono, 2006:53). The raw frequencies were then normalised to answer the question how frequently does the word occur per thousand words (McEnery & Hardie, 2012:49; McEnery *et al.*, 2006:53-54). In doing so, any discrepancies in the use of each word between one department and the other were detected. The formula used was as follows:

$$\text{Words per thousand} = \frac{\text{Raw frequency}}{\text{Total no. of words in corpus}} \times 1000$$

Apart from looking at the collocates of each word under investigation, a statistical significance test was also carried out to test if there were significant differences between the occurrences of each word in the two corpora (Department A and Department B). The two most common statistical significant tests carried out in many corpus studies are the chi-square test and the log-likelihood test (McEnery *et al.*, 2006:55). A log-likelihood test was carried out over chi-square test because it works better with smaller datasets such as the EdEng corpus and the test is not based on normal distributions as in chi-square test (Dunning, 1993:65; Leech *et al.*, 2001:16; McEnery & Hardie, 2012:51-52). The log-likelihood test was also chosen because the level of significance can be set from 0.05 (p-value < 0.05) to 0.0001 (p-value < 0.0001). The critical values for the levels of significance, $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$, and $p < 0.0001$ are 3.84, 6.63, 10.83, and 15.13 respectively. To ensure greater reliability, the cut-off point of each item under investigation as suggested by Rayson *et al.* (2004:8) is 15.13 where the level of significance is set to be $p < 0.0001$. This means that any point below 15.13 is of no statistical difference. The log-likelihood calculator developed by Paul Rayson (2004) was used (findings discussed in

Chapter 8 and results from the log-likelihood tests for each of the areas under investigation are shown in the appendices).

It is worth reiterating at this point, the primary focus of the corpus study was to investigate the hedging features used by tutors. The frequency information was carried out to note if there were any discrepancies in the use of hedging in one department than the other. The log-likelihood test or the statistical significance test was carried out to see if there is any skewing of data, particularly in Department B because the feedback reports were written by one tutor. This means that for any statistical significant difference in the use of any items (modals, vague language, stance adverbs, or submodifiers) in Department B could be an indication of idiosyncrasy. On the other hand, if any item is statistically significant in Department A, it does not indicate idiosyncrasy as the feedback reports were written by ten different tutors. It is less likely for the item to be a feature of idiosyncrasy when it is in Department A. Having said that, it is also worth noting that there could be other reasons or factors why the tutor in Department B is providing feedback in a different style, some of which include: his/her personal style (also discussed earlier in Sections 5.6.2. and 5.6.3. in genre-based analysis and devising a framework of feedback), the feedback template (as mentioned earlier in Section 5.2.), or the departmental practice.

5.6.4.2. Qualitative corpus analysis

The corpus analysis began by looking at the top 50 words in the EdEng corpus. The top 50 nouns, adjectives and adverbs which were in the top 50 most frequent words were further examined (see Chapter 8 for further details).

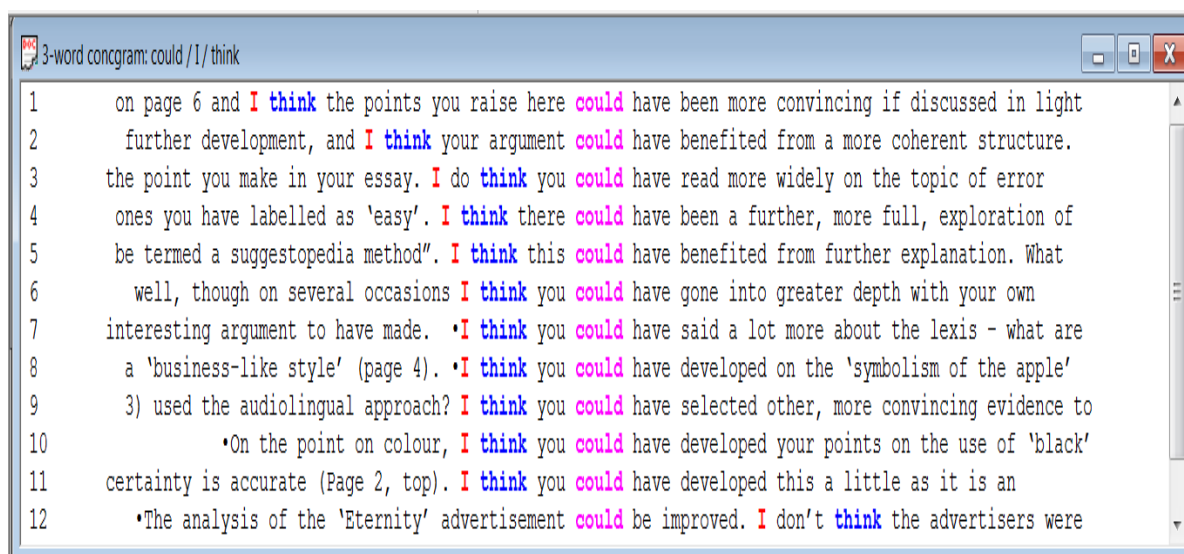
Farr's (2011:111-135) research formed the groundwork in this part of research, investigating the hedging features in written academic feedback. The notion of hedging in itself is a broad area of study incorporating subcategories like modality, vague language, or other adverbs or adjectives which are referred to as stance (as discussed in Chapter 4). The main part of the analysis was identifying how hedging was used, implementing co-text analyses to derive the functions of hedging rather than interpreting them intuitively. The *Concord* Tool in *WordSmith 5* (Scott, 2010) was used to retrieve the concordances for each hedging feature found (findings of the corpus study is discussed in Chapter 8). Manual extractions of non-hedging use were carried out for each of the individual subcategories (see Section 5.6.6. for the procedures).

In addition to *WordSmith 5* (Scott, 2010), the program, *ConcGram*©, developed by Greaves (2005) was also used to find the patterns of the associated word. In other words, it helps to retrieve the co-occurring words or collocates in relation to the associated word, either grammatically or semantically. Cheng *et al.* (2006:414) refer to *concgram* as “all of the permutations of constituency variation and positional variation generated by the associated of two or more words”. Apart from carrying out automated searches, the main

advantage of using ConcGram© is its efficiency in identifying the co-occurring words relative to the node word in the corpus, with no frame or window limitations (Cheng *et al.*, 2006). With regards to this research, only the *concgram search engine tool* was used. Undoubtedly, the functionality of ConcGram© exceeds far beyond than what was used in this research.

From the concordances retrieved from *WordSmith 5* where apparent or noticeable strings of hedges (Salager-Meyer, 1994, as discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.1.) or referred to as cluster of hedges in this research were found, a *concgram search* was carried out to show the clustering of hedges around the associated word or node word, the word which was being searched (for instance: *could*). The example shown in Figure 5.3. shows an example of the concgram search for *I think* + *could*. Chapters 8 and 9 further discussed the cluster of hedges found in the EdEng corpus.

Figure 5.3. Example of concgram search for *I think* + *could*



5.6.5. Distinguishing between hedging and non-hedging features

The main hedging features under investigation included the use of modal verbs, core modals (*can, could, may, might, must, shall, should, will and would*) and semi-core modals (*need to* and *ought to*). Other areas under investigation in hedging included stance adverbs (*generally, perhaps, usually, probably*), submodifiers (*fairly, quite, rather*), and approximators (*some, more, a little, many, a lot*). Each item in the sub-components of hedging, particularly in the use of modal verbs, were categorised into respective functions (see Chapter 8). Classifying the modals posed some problems as there were areas of overlap in some of the modals. Consultations were carried out with the specialist²⁵ and non-specialist²⁶ informants on the overlapping features. Justifications were provided for areas where overlapping occurred (see Chapter 8). Boosting features which were found in the feedback reports such as *very* and *really* were not included as they were found to be highly positive (for instance *very good*, or *really interesting*). Hence, it was not further investigated.

Some of the comments from Department B were quotes from students' essays and these were deleted as they were not hedging features.

On page 4 you make several suggestions for teachers “one implication of this method would be...” and “so another implication for teaching is not repeat the same thing too many times”.

²⁵ The specialist refers to someone who has knowledge of educational practices and has experiences in giving written academic feedback.

²⁶ The non-specialist refers to a native speaker of English who has no prior knowledge of educational practices in giving feedback.

The use of *would* in the extract above, along with other similar uses were deleted from the findings of the concordances as these were merely student's words and not tutor's feedback. Other non-hedging features also include the meta-statements (MS), an act function of genre analysis (as outlined in Appendix 6.1.). An example is shown below:

This is generally good although there are a few points you should note:

There were brief mentions of these other uses of modal verbs, as meta-statements, in the findings and discussion chapters (partly illustrated in the genre analysis of feedback, Chapters 6 and 7, and on the corpus study on hedging, Chapter 8, Section 8.2.1.), however there will be no further elaboration on these as hedging is very minimal.

5.7. Chapter summary

In this chapter, we have looked at the research methodologies which were used in this study. As mentioned earlier, every research method is highly dependent on the researcher's aims and research questions. This research has opted for a mixed method which uses a combination of qualitative approach and quantitative approach (QUAL + quan). The qualitative approach incorporated a text-based approach, genre analysis, to analyse the feedback reports. A corpus study was also carried out mainly investigating the hedging feature in feedback. A quantitative study on the frequency of occurrences of hedging was carried out done as part of the corpus analysis to show if there were any discrepancies in the uses of the hedging feature in Department A and Department B.

In the next chapter, the results from the genre analysis and corpus analysis findings will be discussed in greater detail.

CHAPTER 6: GENRE ANALYSIS OF FEEDBACK

This research examines the language used in giving feedback to undergraduate students' essays. The previous chapter has looked into the research methodology and discussed some of the research's constraints. This chapter shows the findings from the genre analysis of the written academic feedback (see Chapter 7 for the discussion on the findings of genre analysis). A total of 126 feedback reports were gathered from Department A and Department B for the academic year, 2009/2010. 84 of the feedback reports were analysed for moves, steps, and acts patterns (refer to Appendix 6.4. and Appendix 6.6. for samples of analyses from both departments, full analyses attached in CD). As there were 42 feedback reports from Department A, 42 reports from Department B were randomly selected in order to balance the analysis (also discussed in Chapter 5, Section 5.6.3.) Because of the differences between the feedback template in Department A (free-form writing²⁷) and Department B (criteria-based), the moves are discussed separately from the steps and acts patterns. Section 6.2. investigates the genre analysis obtained from Department A's feedback report, looking at the move patterns which were used across the 42 feedback reports. The steps and acts patterns are also discussed. Following this, the move patterns in Department B's feedback reports are investigated across the five criteria, along with the steps and acts patterns.

6.1. Analysis of feedback

A genre analysis of the feedback reports was carried out to investigate the language or structure applied by tutors in giving feedback. The analysis across the 84 feedback reports

²⁷ Tutors can write their feedback on a given space in the feedback template (as shown in Appendix 5.1.).

shows that there were three major structures of feedback, namely ‘moves’, ‘steps’ and ‘acts’ (illustrated in Figure 6.1.). Four moves, six steps and nine acts were identified in total (shown in Table 6.1.). Refer to Appendix 6.1. for a detailed explanation of the individual moves, steps, and acts, along with their signalling indicators illustrated by examples from the data (see also Chapter 5, Section 5.6.3. for the development of the feedback framework where the moves, steps, and acts were formed).

Figure 6.1. Genre analysis of feedback

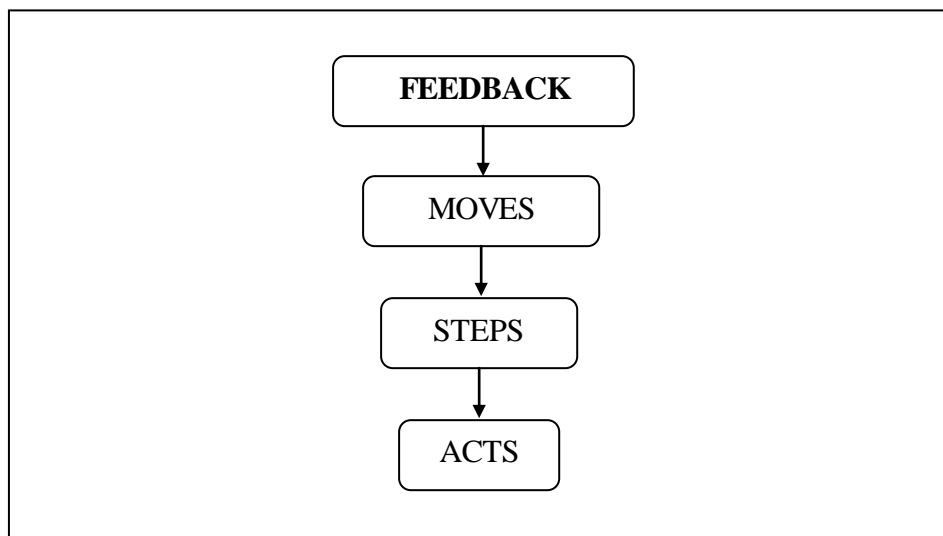


Table 6.1. Written academic feedback framework

Moves	Steps	Acts
Initiation (I)	Focus (FO)	Calling Attention to Weakness (CAW)
Problem (P)	General Impression (GI)	Embedded Problem (EP)
Solution (S)	Highlighting Strength (HS)	Embedded Solution (ES)
Conclusion (C)	Indicating Problem (IP)	Exemplification (EX)
	Overall Judgement (OJ)	Follow-up Reinforcement (FR)
	Suggesting Ways of Improving (SWI)	Meta-statement (MS)
		Mitigation (MI)
		Positive Judgement (PJ)
		Recommendation (RE)

Note:

Abbreviations in brackets.

All moves are emphasised in font size 14, colour-code: **dark purple**, all steps in font size 13, colour-code: **aqua**, and each act is in font size 12, colour-coded accordingly throughout analysis.

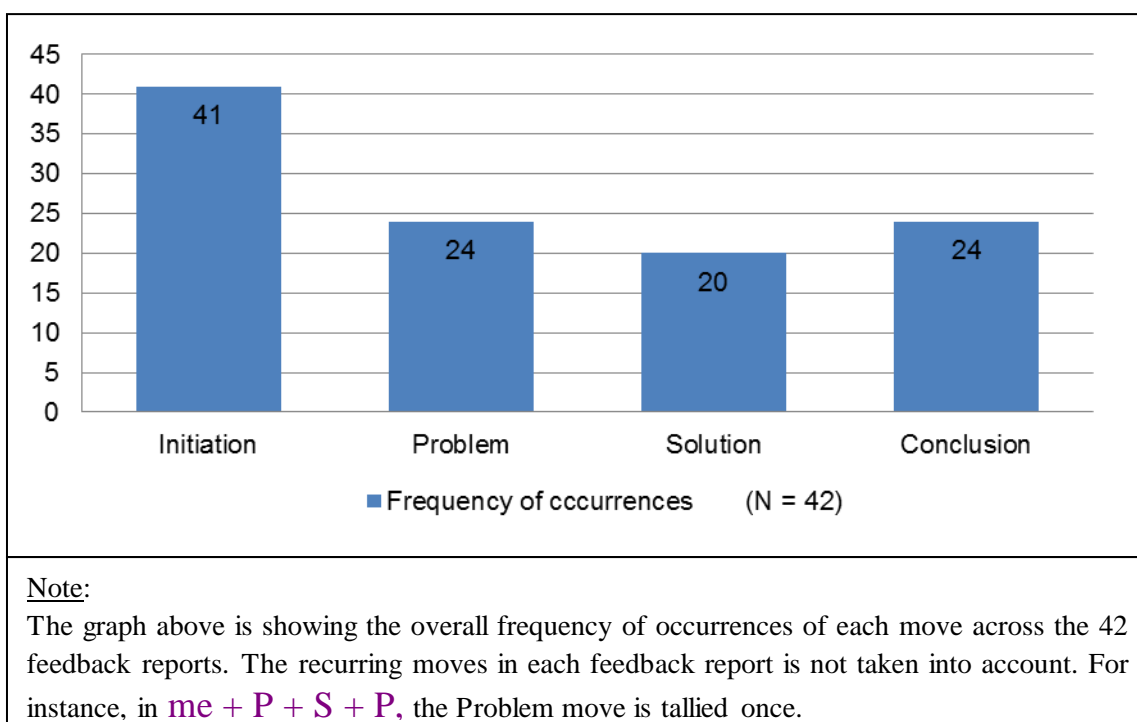
The analysis identified four rhetorical moves incorporating various steps and acts. In the beginning, it was assumed that the Initiation move would be obligatory. However, after 84 analyses (42 from each department), the Initiation move was not designated as obligatory. The following sections discuss the rhetorical moves, steps and acts patterns in both departments, discussing each structure separately in order to provide a detailed understanding of each move, step and act. Due to the use of criteria in Department B template, both departments are discussed separately (in Sections 6.2. and 6.3.). This is due to the complexity in the variations of the moves patterns in Department B (further discussed in Section 6.3.).

6.2. Feedback in Department A

6.2.1. Move patterns

A total of 42 feedback reports from Department A were gathered and analysed (refer to Appendix 6.4. for a sample of feedback analysis, full analysis attached in CD). All four moves (Initiation, Problem, Solution and Conclusion moves) were identified in Department A's feedback, all optional. The Initiation move was most frequently used. 41 feedback reports (out of 42 analysed, 95.2%) had the Initiation move. Problem, Solution, and Conclusion moves are used almost equally (as shown in Figure 6.2.). Each tutor used different move patterns in feedback. As shown in Figure 6.2., some moves were omitted in giving feedback. For instance, one feedback report did not have the Initiation move and another 18 feedback reports did not have the Problem and Conclusion moves.

Figure 6.2. Frequency of occurrences of individual moves in Department A's feedback



It was presumed originally that the most common feedback pattern would be Initiation + Problem + Solution + Conclusion (I + P + S + C). This pattern is considered common as there is a positive beginning (I), before a problem is presented (P), follows by a solution (S) to either the preceding problem, or suggestions for improvements, and ending with a positive conclusion (C) (also discussed in Section 6.2.1.5.). However, the analyses showed otherwise. Various moves patterns were identified across the feedback reports, as shown in Table 6.2. It is possible to give feedback either on one move (for instance, Initiation move only, or Problem move only) or alongside other moves (for instance, I + P + S + C, or I + P + C). Although the Problem-Solution pattern is logical, the Problem move does not have to precede the Solution move (for instance, I + S). This is because the Solution move implies an implicit problem. Hence, it is not necessary to follow a Problem move. Similarly with the Problem move, it is not obligatory to have a Solution move because the Problem move implies an implicit suggestion. (for instance, I + P + C).

All four moves, Initiation, Problem, Solution, and Conclusion (I, P, S, and C) were analysed based on the main focus of the feedback. For instance, *your analysis is fairly good, although at certain places it falters* was analysed as an Initiation move with two acts, Positive Judgement (act PJ) and Embedded Problem (act EP). The analysis becomes clearer in the steps and acts levels. Although the frequencies and percentages of each pattern were relatively small, as only 42 feedback reports were collected and analysed from Department A, they do show the different patterns of how feedback was given.

Table 6.2. Frequency of moves patterns in Department A

Moves Patterns	Department A (N = 42 feedback reports)	
	Freq.	%
I	4	9.5%
I + C	6	14.3%
I + P	6	14.3%
I + P + S	1	2.4%
I + P + C	4	9.5%
I + P + S + C	5	11.9%
I + P + I* + C	1	2.4%
I + P + S + I*	1	2.4%
I + P + S + P	1	2.4%
I + S	3	7.1%
I + S + P	1	2.4%
I + S + C	5	11.9%
I + S + P + C	1	2.4%
I + S + I* + C	1	2.4%
P	1	2.4%
C + I*	1	2.4%

Note:

- I* = Instances where the Initiation move recurs, or instead of being at the beginning of feedback, it is used at the end.
- P = Problem; S = Solution; C = Conclusion.

The following sub-sections will explore some of the more distinctive moves patterns (particularly: I; I + C; I + P; I + P + C; I + P + S + C; I + S; and I + S + C) and other rare patterns (for instance: P; C + I*; I + P + I* + C; I + P + S + I*; and I + P + S + P). It is also worth mentioning that the Initiation does not necessary occur at the beginning of feedback. The Initiation was found to recur after the Problem or Solution move (for instance: I + P + I*) and one occurrence of C + I*. The recurring Initiation move is

marked with * (discussed further in Section 6.2.1.1.). It is also worth mentioning that the Initiation move does not necessarily initiate the feedback but rather, acts as a general comment on the essay.

6.2.1.1. I move pattern

Initiation (I) move is found across 41 feedback reports, the most frequent used move (95.2%). There are 3 occurrences (7.1%) of Initiation move used on its own on the whole feedback report (as shown in Table 6.3.). In this example, as with others where only the Initiation move was used, the tutor highlights all the positive aspects of the essay. It can also be used alongside other moves as discussed earlier (refer to CD, Appendix 6.4., Texts 27, and 34 for other examples).

Table 6.3. Moves pattern: Initiation (I)

Moves	Example
Initiation (I)	<p>You write confidently throughout and deploy * selected references to good effect. You present a coherent, tautly structured case and indicate real thinking in your approach to key issues. You also indicate sophisticated understanding of language issues as they pertain to education and curriculum practice.</p> <p>(* incomprehensible, Text 26, Department A)</p>

What was uncertain about this pattern was whether the quality of essays (for instance, good essays which acquired high marks or good grades) had an effect on the move patterns, resulting in the omission of Problem and Solution moves, simply because there were no technical errors. A closer examination of the marks in relation to the move patterns did not

reveal any vital information (refer to Appendix 6.5.). Although Initiation (I) pattern is found in the first and upper second class marks range (3 occurrences in total), this finding was based on 42 analysed feedback reports. It is uncertain if this pattern will persist given a larger scale of analyses, an area worth investigating in the near future.

6.2.1.2. I + C moves pattern

The Initiation + Conclusion (I + C) moves pattern was used most frequently by tutors in Department A (14.3%), alongside the Initiation + Problem (I + P) pattern. The pattern, I + C, consists of the Initiation move where all the positive comments are listed and a Conclusion move where an overall summary of the whole essay was provided. There were no indications of problems, or solutions to improving the essay. The example in Table 6.4. shows this feedback pattern (refer to CD, Appendix 6.4, Texts 7, 8, 16, 23, and 41 for other examples).

Table 6.4. Moves pattern: Initiation + Conclusion (I + C)

Moves	Example
Initiation (I)	This is a well researched and well written essay. You include some excellent ideas and I have made various suggestions in my marginalia concerning ways to strengthen your analysis even further.
Conclusion (C)	This essay shows great potential and was very pleasing to read. Well done! (Text 11, Department A)

6.2.1.3. I + P moves pattern

The Initiation + Problem (I + P) moves pattern was used as frequently as the Initiation + Conclusion (I + C) pattern (14.3%). This feedback began with the Initiation move commenting on the positive aspects of the essay and indicating the main issues of the essay, the Problem move (example shown in Table 6.5., refer to CD, Appendix 6.4, Texts 15, 30, 35, 36, and 39 for further examples of this pattern). This is an example where there is omission of moves (the Solution and Conclusion moves). The Solution move is omitted because quite often, as in this case, the Problem move has implicitly given the suggestions.

Table 6.5. Moves pattern: Initiation + Problem (I + P)

Moves	Example
Initiation (I)	You have some good ideas and you've conducted some useful research.
Problem (P)	However, I don't think you've spent quite enough time thinking about these texts and issues as many points of your argument still need further development. You don't mention class in your introduction and you never try to state how class is determined. The question of what constitutes class is often debated so there's no easy way to define it. Your inclusion of Althusser could have been strong but there's no indication of any detailed understanding or research into his theories. There are many technical inadequacies throughout the essay and you often express yourself poorly.
(Text 15, Department A)	

6.2.1.4. I + P + C moves pattern

The Initiation + Problem + Conclusion (I + P + C) moves pattern occurred in four feedback reports (9.5%). The example in Table 6.6. shows an analysis of this pattern (refer to CD, Appendix 6.4, Texts 3, 6, and 10 for other examples). The Solution move is

omitted since it has been mentioned implicitly in the Problem move. Following the Problem move, the tutor evaluated the overall essay as positive in order to tone-down the criticisms mentioned previously. This is different from the example shown in the **I + P** moves pattern (shown in Table 6.5. earlier) where the Conclusion move was omitted. Furthermore, this pattern was found only in Department A.

Table 6.6. Moves pattern: Initiation + Problem + Conclusion (**I + P + C**)

Moves	Example
Initiation (I)	This is a thoughtful comparison of 2 film versions of the play which shows understanding of secondary source materials and very careful viewing of the two films.
Problem (P)	I rather missed comment in Jarman's radical treatment of the masque – deliberately outrageous, and using Elisabeth Welch singing 'Stormy Weather' to a ballet of matelots! How could one not remark this as evidence of his determination to be subversive? You don't quite achieve all you could on the 'critical interpretation' aspect of the question, although you note deliberate avoidance by both directors of meddling in anti-or-post colonialism.
Conclusion (C)	Learning objectives certainly achieved; overall a pleasing essay.

(Text 25, Department A)

6.2.1.5. **I + P + S + C** moves pattern

The moves pattern, Initiation + Problem + Solution + Conclusion (**I + P + S + C**), was initially perceived to occur most frequently since this pattern was the most systematic where positive comments were highlighted (in the Initiation move), followed by the Problem and Solution moves, and concluding with an overall evaluation (in the Conclusion move). However, analyses from this research shows only five occurrences (out of 42

feedback reports, 11.9%). Table 6.7. shows an example of this pattern (refer to Appendix 6.4, Texts 2, 21, 22, and 32 for other examples).

Table 6.7. Moves pattern: Initiation + Problem + Solution + Conclusion (**I** + **P** + **S** + **C**)

Moves	Example
Initiation (I)	This is excellent work, well-structured, persuasively written and comprehensively researched. You make good use of key figures like Lacan, Nietzsche and Jameson to further your own well-synthesised perspective on the texts.
Problem (P)	It's occasionally a little descriptive or rhetorical rather than analytical (e.g. the questioning of God on p.11) but this is a minor weakness.
Solution (S)	Also, keep an eye on your presentation – justifying the text would make it easier to read.
Conclusion (C)	Overall though, this is an imaginative and critically astute piece – well done!

(Text 4, Department A)

Arguably, the Solution move in Table 6.7., “*keep an eye on your presentation*” can also be a Problem move. After consultation with the specialist and non-specialist informants (as explained in Section 5.6.3.), it was agreed that it was a Solution move which could be used for revision in subsequent writings. Although the Problem and Solution moves were found in this particular example, the Solution move is not an answer to the preceding problem (*descriptive*). Rather, the Solution move is providing an answer to the presentation problem. The pattern, **I** + **P** + **S** + **C**, was not found in Department B which is largely due to the criteria-based template where there is a criterion on Overall (OV) (further discussed in Section 6.3.1.).

6.2.1.6. I + S pattern

The Initiation + Solution (**I** + **S**) moves pattern was found in three occurrences (7.1%). The example in Table 6.8. illustrates this pattern (refer to CD, Appendix 6.4., Texts 12, and 40 for further examples of this pattern). As with the Initiation + Problem (**I** + **P**) moves pattern where the Solution move is omitted, the **I** + **S** pattern omits the Problem move. Rather, it provides suggestions for improvements where an implicit problem was indicated. For instance, in Table 6.8., the problem area is in the insufficient information presented. Once again, this shows that the Solution move can be presented without the Problem move. It also shows that the Conclusion move can be omitted.

Table 6.8. Moves pattern: Initiation + Solution (**I** + **S**)

Moves	Example
Initiation (I)	Your work demonstrates a systematic understanding of the main issues. The assignment is clearly written. You develop an understanding and coherent level of analysis from your reading of the literature.
Solution (S)	Your work could be improved by a more thorough understanding of linguistics and a wider meaning beyond the basic * points on studies done in this area. (*incomprehensible, Text 28, Department A)

6.2.1.7. I + S + C moves pattern

Alongside the **I** + **P** + **S** + **C** pattern, the Initiation + Solution + Conclusion (**I** + **S** + **C**) pattern also occurred five times (11.9%, example shown in Table 6.9.). Implicit problems are mentioned in the Solution move which could justify why some tutors have chosen to

omit the Problem move (refer to CD, Appendix 6.4, Texts 9, 10, 33, and 38 for other examples). This pattern was found only in Department A.

Table 6.9. Moves pattern: Initiation + Solution + Conclusion (I + S + C)

Moves	Example
Initiation (I)	This is a challenging question and a strong response. You have conducted some very thorough research and hence some good ideas. I have very few criticisms.
Solution (S)	To improve, you might have considered contextual information pertaining to the fantasy genre and the construction of childhood.
Conclusion (C)	On the whole, however, this is a very good essay.

(Text 14, Department A)

6.2.1.8. P move pattern

Apart from the characteristic pattern where all feedback began with an Initiation move, there was one occurrence (2.4%) where only the Problem move was used in the entire feedback (example shown in Table 6.10.). The entire feedback report was critical with very minimal toning-down language apart from “*seem*” functioning as a hedge (*seem* as a hedge is further discussed in Chapter 8, Section 8.2.2.9.4.).

Table 6.10. Moves pattern: Problem (P)

Move	Example
Problem (P)	<p>This is a very short piece of work and you do not seem to have put much effort into it. You do not answer the question - this is a very general essay without structure or focus. You do not provide supporting quotations from your chosen novels and much of your essay is spent retelling the narratives rather than analysing them. You speculate a great deal about the responses of child readers, but this is not part of literary criticism. The few critical quotations you include are general and you didn't engage with them. Your research has been ineffective. There are many critical works on <u>Harry Potter</u> but you haven't consulted any of them. Furthermore, at no point do you discuss the fantasy genre - particularly the position of these texts within the genre and the techniques they employ.</p> <p>(Text 37, underlined in original, Department A)</p>

An examination of the details of the feedback revealed that it was given for an essay which was marked failed (see Appendix 6.5.). As there was only one occurrence of a failed essay, it is difficult to say if the same pattern would occur given similar situations. This pattern is very rare however. In general, tutors tend to give constructive feedback. They will mitigate the criticisms to sound more tentative (further discussed in Chapter 8, hedging).

6.2.1.9. I + P + S + P moves patterns

Problem moves patterns may also recur such as the Initiation + Problem + Solution + Problem (I + P + S + P) pattern (example shown in Table 6.11.). This pattern is also very rare (one occurrence, 2.4%).

Table 6.11. Moves pattern: Initiation + Problem + Solution + Problem (I + P + S + P)

Moves	Example
Initiation (I)	This essay contains evidence of some very good secondary reading. You make use of some interesting ideas and sources, all of which allow you to draw out some strong points. However, I felt that you
Problem (P)	never really capitalise on this. You failed to push your ideas far enough or to engage responsively enough with the novel itself. For instance, it was really good to see you connect Engels' text to Mary Barton. You didn't though, make any specific connections at the level of images or discuss the scene itself in detail. Your references to history were ok but
Solution (S)	often would've benefited from greater precision and analysis. The work flowed well but needed to have a more obvious central thesis.
Problem (P)	You must pursue one line of reasoning, and signpost that throughout. The section on religion was weak.
(Text 31, Department A)	

Similarly, with other patterns where the feedback began with an Initiation move highlighting the positive aspects of the essay, followed by the Problem move – listing the main problems of the essay, “*never really capitalise on this*” or “*failed to push your ideas*”. The Solution move was then presented such as “*would've benefited from greater precision and analysis*”; “*needed to have a more obvious central thesis*”; or “*must pursue*”. The subsequent comment presented another Problem move, indicating yet another problem area, “[t]he section on religion was weak”. There was no concluding move in this particular pattern. This pattern was very rare in usage in both departments, with one occurrence respectively (see Appendix 6.3.). The rarity of this pattern is probably due to the recurrence of the Problem move after a Solution move has been presented.

6.2.1.10. C + I* moves patterns

The Conclusion + Initiation* (C + I*) moves pattern was one of the rare patterns where the Conclusion move was used to begin the feedback, instead of the Initiation move (example shown in Table 6.12.). It began with what had been analysed as a Conclusion move, “*well done*”, following with general comments on the essay, analysed as the Initiation move. This pattern, however, occurred only once (2.4%), and found in Department A’s feedback only. It is still worth mentioning because of the unusual placement of the Initiation move.

Table 6.12. Moves pattern: Conclusion + Initiation (C + I*)

Moves	Example
Conclusion (C)	Well done. This is sound and reasonable. You’ve taken control of your
Initiation* (I*)	own progress and development. You’ve quite right to identify the importance of using the University’s resources and there are so many more to be explored!.
(Text 29, Department A)	

6.2.1.11. I + P + I* + C moves pattern

The Initiation + Problem + Initiation* + Conclusion (I + P + I* + C) pattern was another unusual move pattern found (one occurrence, 2.4%). The example in Table 6.13. illustrates this moves pattern. What is unusual about this pattern is the recurrence of the Initiation move after a Problem move has been presented instead of presenting a Solution move to improve the essay or a Conclusion move to sum up the essay.

Table 6.13. Moves pattern: Initiation + Problem + Initiation* + Conclusion
(I + P + I* + C)

Moves	Example
Initiation (I)	This assignment focuses upon an analysis of a television advertisement. You provide an excellent, detailed transcription of this text in the appendix, along with the URL for the text itself. This is interesting and original data. You provide a clear introduction to the essay, and then go on to provide a thoughtful analysis of the text, commenting on some structural and grammatical features.
Problem (P)	There was a slight tendency in some places for your comments to move away from a strictly linguistic analysis. However, you do link these features clearly to the text's audience and purpose.
Initiation* (I*)	Each point in the analysis is supported and illustrated through the use of examples from the text. You make good use of secondary reading throughout the essay, which helps to support and develop your arguments and provides a theoretical context for your analysis. You demonstrate a good level of critical engagement with this reading. This essay is well-structured and well-written, with arguments being presented in clear and logical number.
Conclusion (C)	Overall, this is impressive work.

(Text 24, Department A)

6.2.1.12. I + P + S + I* moves pattern

The Initiation + Problem + Solution + Initiation* (I + P + S + I*) moves pattern was another rare pattern which was found in Department A's feedback. The recurrence of Initiation* (I*) after the Problem and Solution moves was an interesting feature as it was not anticipated that the Initiation move would recur after other moves, let alone at the end of the feedback (as shown in Table 6.14.).

Table 6.14. Moves pattern: Initiation + Problem + Solution + Initiation* (I + P + S + I*)

Moves	Example
Initiation (I)	[Name omitted], you've clearly worked hard on your placement and in writing this learning diary. Your descriptions on the sessions are succinct and focused and, on the whole, your reflections are good.
Problem (P)	However, these seem more clearly focused on your skills and strategies in the entries where you observe others and not so focused on your improvement/ maintaining of skills in others. You don't adhere to the prescribed structure for each entry – with targets coming at the <u>end</u> of each entry – and this may be a factor in the tendency to disassociate your experience and reflection from the targets/ experience and reflections for subsequent sessions. This means that the significant targets for improving your skills and the strategies you identify in the reflection section seem to often get lost in the actual targets you set. Your targets tend to be about <u>what</u> you'll do rather than <u>how/why</u> you'll improve your skills.
Solution (S)	Your skills need to be a more explicit focus! Your conclusion is clear and does focus on your skills.
Initiation* (I*)	

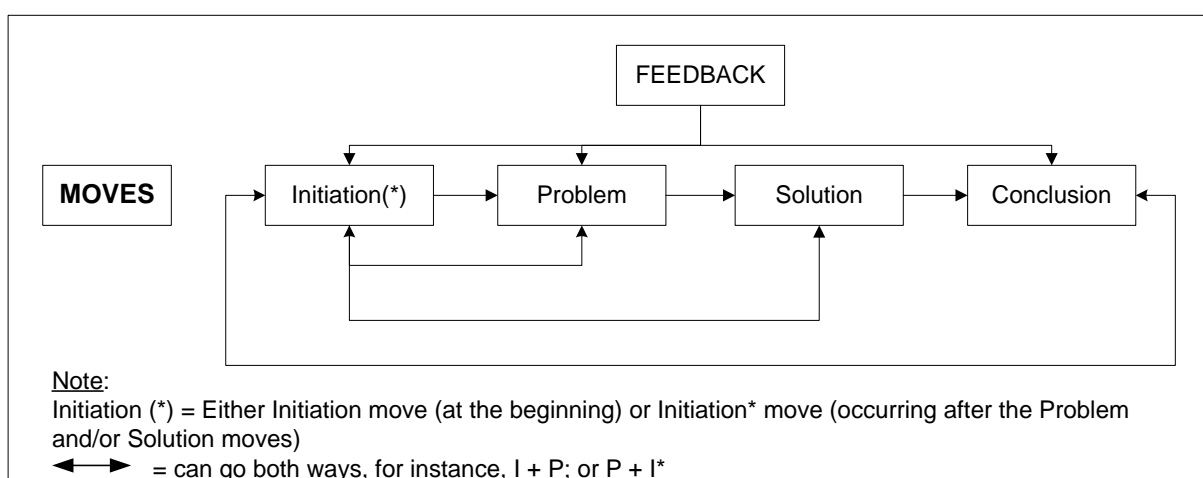
(Text 19, underlined in original, Department A)

6.2.1.13. Summary of moves patterns in Department A

This section has discussed the various move patterns found in Department A's feedback reports. It seems that tutors had their own feedback writing patterns and there is no definite or precise pattern to that feedback. There is no obligatory move. All moves are optional, where all moves may be presented, or one or the other is omitted. The moves patterns vary from feedback to feedback. For instance, the Conclusion move is not necessarily presented in every feedback report or, in one instance, it is presented at the beginning (in the pattern, C + I*). Another variation is where recurrences occur, such as the Initiation move – it may recur after a Problem or Solution moves. Although some of the patterns had small

frequencies of occurrences (and percentages), it is interesting to recognise the various patterns used. The marks which were awarded to each essay could not be used to justify the main reasons why tutors used specific moves patterns (results further shown in Appendix 6.5.). Apart from the Problem (P) pattern which was found in a failed essay, there was no good explanation for the other patterns. Yet, it is uncertain if the P pattern would be used in other essays given a similar situation. Figure 6.3. presents a tree diagram summarising the various moves patterns found in Department A.

Figure 6.3. Summary of moves patterns in Department A



6.2.2. Moves, steps, and acts patterns

Moves consist of steps. There are six steps which are found within moves, namely Focus (FO), General Impression (GI), Highlighting Strength (HS), Indicating Problem (IP), Suggesting Ways of Improving (SWI) and Overall Judgement (OJ) (see Appendix 6.1. for detailed descriptions and signalling features for each step). Some steps are obligatory in specific moves. For example, the step, Indicating Problem (IP) is obligatory in the Problem

move; Suggesting Ways of Improving (**SWI**) is obligatory in the Solution move, and Overall Judgement (**OJ**) is obligatory in the Conclusion move. In addition to this, some steps are found to recur within moves. For instance, General Impression (**GI**) is found not only in the Initiation move, but is also found in the Solution move. Within one move, there could be more than one step (labelled as Step 1, 2, or 3).

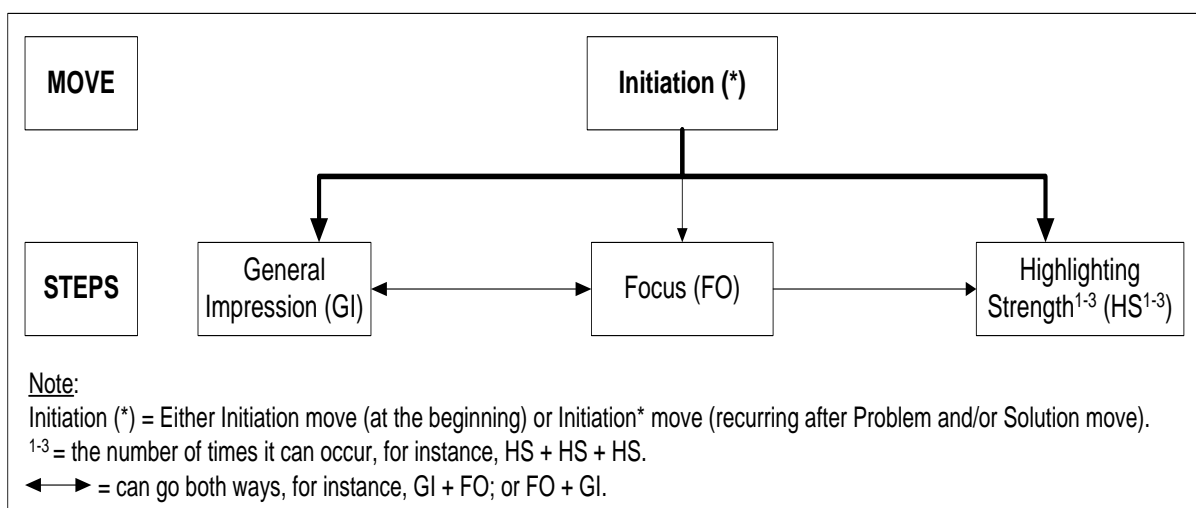
Within steps are acts. There are nine acts which are found in steps. They are Calling Attention to Weakness (**CAW**), Embedded Problem (**EP**), Embedded Solution (**ES**), Exemplification (**EX**), Follow-up Reinforcement (**FR**), Meta-statement (**MS**), Mitigation (**MI**), Positive Judgement (**PJ**) and Recommendation (**RE**). Acts are found to recur within the steps and moves. For instance, **PJ** can be found in the Initiation move in steps General Impression (**GI**) and Highlighting Strength (**HS**), and can also be found in the Conclusion move, in step Overall Judgement (**OJ**). Several acts may be used in one move or step. One step may have more than one acts (labelled as Act 1, 2, or 3) or more than one sub-acts (labelled a, b, or c; for instance, Act 1(a), or Act 1(b)).

The following sections illustrate the different steps and acts patterns which were found in the four main moves (Initiation, Problem, Solution and Conclusion). Due to the various steps and acts patterns which are found in the specific moves, generally of low frequencies, there will not be any discussion on the statistical calculations (frequencies and percentages).

6.2.2.1. Steps and acts in the Initiation move

Focus (FO), General Impression (GI), and Highlighting Strength (HS) were the three main steps which were found to occur in the Initiation move. There is no one obligatory step in the Initiation move as both of these steps are used together or alternately. Figure 6.4. shows the tree diagram of steps GI and HS in relation to the Initiation move.

Figure 6.4. Steps patterns in the Initiation move



In step Focus (FO), the obligatory act was Meta-statement (MS). In steps General Impression (GI) and Highlighting Strength (HS), the main obligatory act was Positive Judgement (PJ). Other optional acts included Follow-up Reinforcement (FR), Embedded Problem (EP), Embedded Solution (ES), and Exemplification (EX). Figure 6.5. shows the tree diagram of the steps and acts patterns in the Initiation move. Some of the acts patterns found in the steps are summarised in Table 6.15.

Figure 6.5. Steps and acts patterns in Initiation move

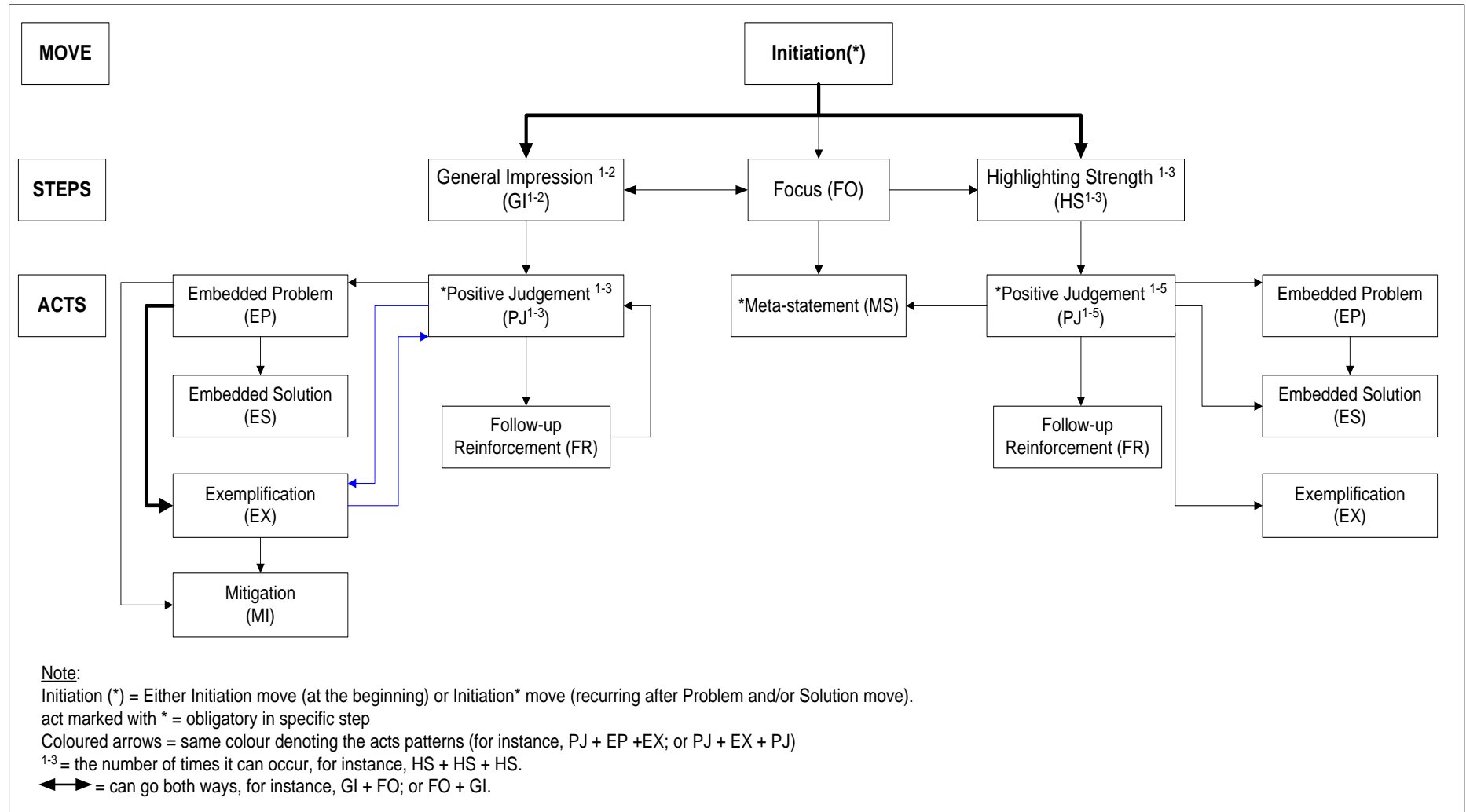


Table 6.15. Examples of acts patterns in the Initiation move

Move	Steps	Acts patterns
Initiation	Focus (FO)	MS
	Highlighting Strength (HS)	PJ, PJ, PJ, PJ
		PJ, ES
		PJ + EP
		PJ + EX
		PJ + PJ + FR
		PJ + ES + PJ
		PJ + MS
	General Impression (GI)	PJ + EX + PJ
		PJ + FR + PJ
		PJ + EP + ES
		PJ + EP + MI

Note:

+ represents the sub-acts within the step such as (Act 1(a), Act 1(b)).

, represents the second act within the step such as (Act 1, Act 2).

- EP = Embedded Problem; ES = Embedded Solution; EX = Exemplification;
FR = Follow-up Reinforcement; MI = Mitigation MS = Meta-statement; PJ = Positive Judgement

The analysis from Department A's feedback shows that steps FO, GI and HS were found in the Initiation move (see Section 6.3.2. for the steps patterns in Department B). Tables 6.16. and 6.17. show two examples of the steps (FO, GI, and HS) and acts (EP, ES, FR, MS, and PJ) patterns in the Initiation move. PJ was found to be the only obligatory act in the Initiation move as it is used in either GI or HS steps. As for act FO, it is obligatory in step FO (as shown in Figure 6.5. above).

Table 6.16. Steps (FO, GI, and HS) and acts (MS, FR, and PJ) analysis in the Initiation move (PJ in blue; FR in brown; and MS in pink)

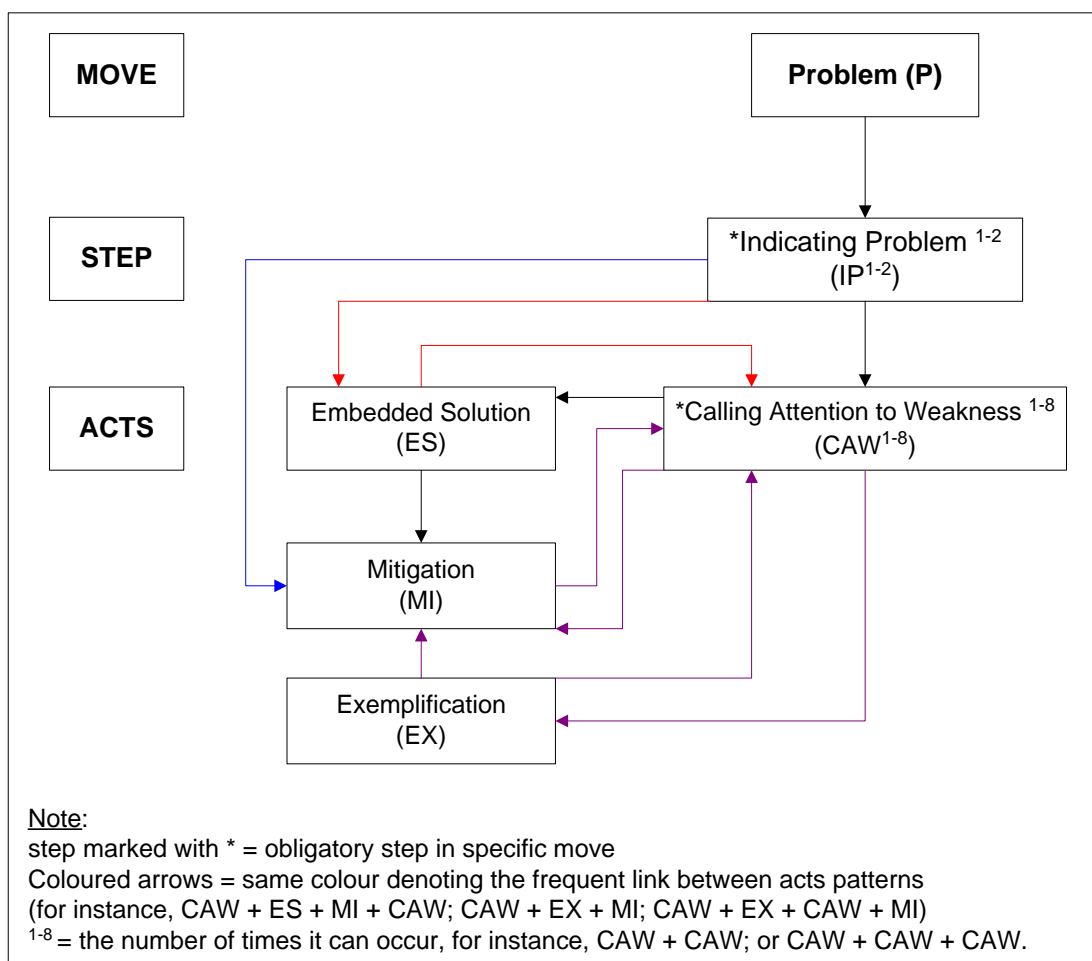
Move	Step	Act	Example:
Initiation	Step 1 Focus	Act 1 Meta-statement	1[This assignment focuses upon a Proppian narrative analysis of 'Hansel and Gretel'.]
	Step 2 General Impression	Act 1 Positive Judgement	1[The text is presented clearly in the appendix.]
		Act 2 (a) Positive Judgement Act 2 (b) Positive Judgement	2a[Propp's morphology is applied accurately to the text,] 2b[and this analysis is clearly presented in table form at the end of the essay.]
	Step 3 Highlighting Strength	Act 1 (a) Positive Judgement Act 1 (b) Follow-up Reinforcement	1a[You also provide a good analysis of clause types attributed to the various character roles] 1b[– this is interesting.]
		Act 2 Positive Judgement	2[You provide some good discussion of your analysis within the essay itself.]
		Act 3 Positive Judgement	3[I like the way your analysis enables you to explore and illustrate some of the limitations of Propp's model.] (Text 20, Department A)

Table 6.17. Steps (GI and HS) and acts (EP, ES, and PJ) analysis in the Initiation move (PJ in blue; EP in red; and ES in green)

Move	Step	Act	Example:
Initiation	Step 1 General Impression	Act 1 (a) Positive Judgement Act 1 (b) Embedded Problem Act 1 (c) Embedded Solution	[Name omitted], 1a[this is solid work,] 1b[although it gets off to a bad start by beginning in the middle of a quotation] 1c[– you need to integrate materials like this more seamlessly.]
	Step 2 Highlighting Strength	Act 1 (a) Positive Judgement Act 1 (b) Embedded Solution	1a[You made some good points about poetic form and literacy devices like the *,] 1b[but some of your points could use development and a greater range of secondary material.] (*incomprehensible, Text 7, Department A)

Indicating Problem (**IP**) was the obligatory and main step found in the Problem move of Department A's feedback. No other steps were found. Within **IP**, Calling Attention to Weakness (**CAW**) is the obligatory act. Other optional acts were also used alongside **CAW**. These included Embedded Solution (**ES**), Exemplification (**EX**), Mitigation (**MI**), and Positive Judgement (**PJ**). Figure 6.6. shows the tree diagram of the steps and acts patterns in the Problem move.

Figure 6.6. Steps and acts patterns in the Problem move



Some of the acts patterns found in step **IP** are summarised in Table 6.18.

Table 6.18. Examples of acts patterns in the Problem move

Move	Step	Acts patterns
Problem	Indicating Problem (IP)	CAW, CAW
		CAW, CAW, MI, CAW
		CAW, CAW, ES + MI
		CAW + CAW
		CAW + ES
		CAW + EX
		CAW + MI
		CAW + EX + CAW
		CAW + EX, CAW + MI
		CAW + ES + MI + CAW
		MI + CAW + CAW

Note:

+ represents the sub-acts within the step such as (Act 1(a), Act 1(b)).

, represents the second act within the step such as (Act 1, Act 2).

- CAW = Calling Attention to Weakness; ES = Embedded Solution; EX = Exemplification; MI = Mitigation.

The analysis from Department A's feedback shows that IP was the step, obligatory, in Problem move. Tables 6.19. and 6.20. show two examples of the step IP and acts (CAW, ES, EX, and MI) patterns in the Problem move.

Table 6.19. Step (IP) and acts (CAW, and ES) analysis in the Problem move (PJ in blue; CAW in dark red; and ES in green)

Move	Step	Act	Example:
Initiation	Step 1 General Impression	Act 1 Positive Judgement	[Name omitted] – 1a[this is very strong work.]
	Step 2 Highlighting Strength	Act 1 Positive Judgement	1[You write very well with a persuasive and authoritative tone combining scholarly rigour and fluency.]
Problem	Step 1 Indicating Problem	Act 1 (a) Calling Attention to Weakness Act 1 (b) Embedded Solution	1a[My only criticism would be that you are occasionally overly-reliant on your secondary sources] 1b[– if you could integrate these more smoothly, while privileging your own, very promising, critical voice, this could be even stronger.] (Text 10, Department A)

Table 6.20. Step (IP) and acts (CAW, EX, and MI) analysis in the Problem move (PJ in blue; CAW in dark red; EP in red; EX in dark blue; and MI in purple)

Move	Step	Act	Example:
Initiation	Step 1 General Impression	Act 1 (a) Positive Judgement Act 1 (b) Embedded Problem Act 1 (c) Exemplification	1a[Although information about the play's original performance conditions, and, indeed, about the plot, is meticulously given,] 1b[there are some misunderstandings] 1c[(number/nature of Chorus for e.g.).]
		Act 2 Mitigation	2[However, the target audience and theatre are sensibly chosen and the justifications for directional choices are pretty well expressed.]
Problem	Step 1 Indicating Problem	Act 1 (a) Calling Attention to Weakness Act 1 (b) Exemplification Act 1 (c) Calling Attention to Weakness Act 1 (d) Mitigation	1a[I'm not entirely convinced that the writer can imaginatively 'see' how the blocking will work] 1b{(where are the Chorus? How does delivery of lines change in a long speech?),} 1c[and there are far too many instances of misplaced apostrophes,] 1d[but overall this is indicative that the module-specific learning outcomes have been, broadly, achieved.] (Text 39, Department A)

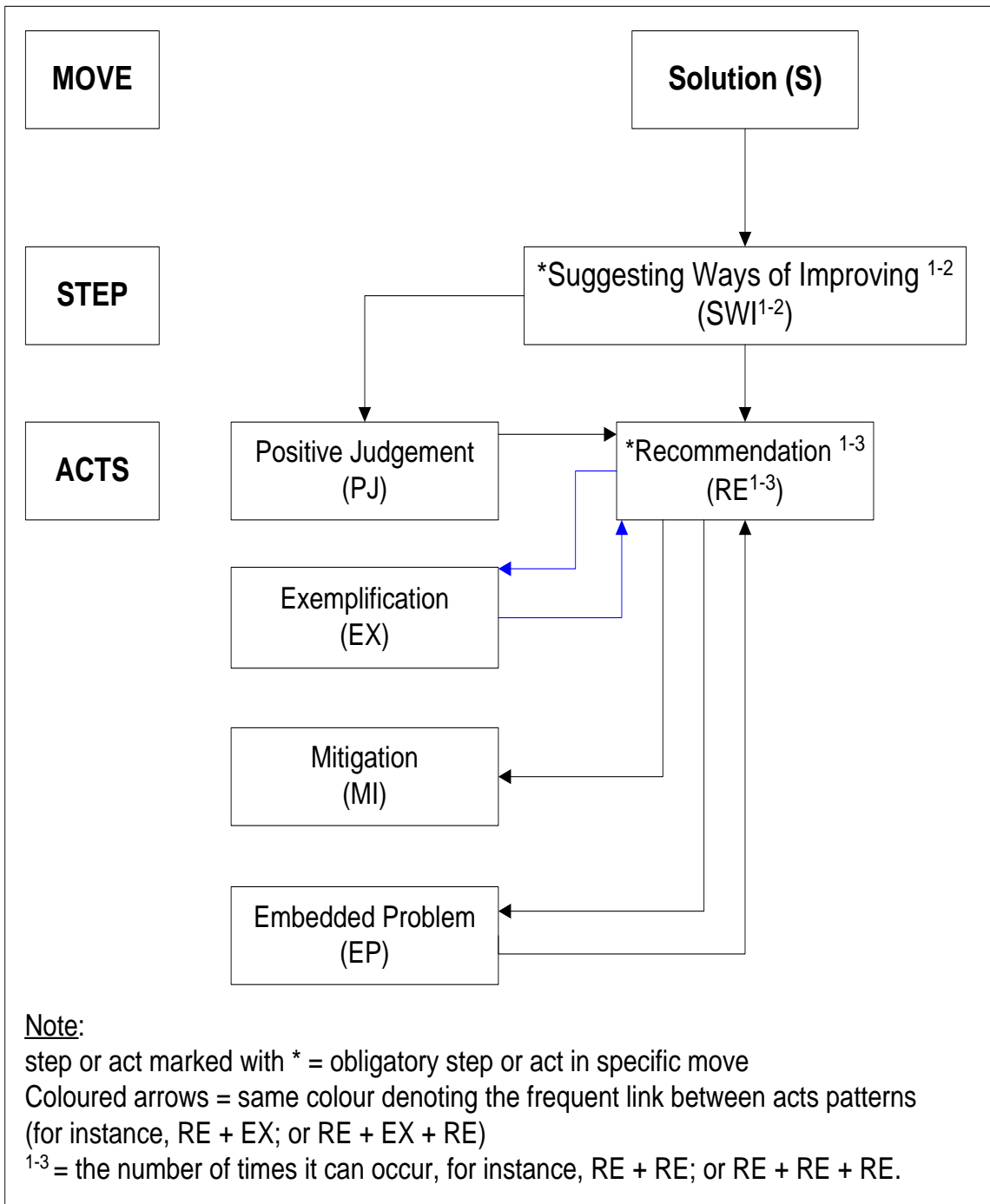
6.2.2.3. Steps and acts in the Solution move

Suggesting Ways of Improving (SWI) was the only step, obligatory, in the Solution move.

Recommendation (RE) was the obligatory act found in SWI. This was found only in Department A's feedback (see Section 6.3.2. for the steps and acts found in Department B).

Figure 6.7. shows the tree diagram of the steps and acts patterns in the Solution move.

Figure 6.7. Steps and acts patterns in the Solution move



Some of the acts patterns found in step **SWI** are summarised in Table 6.21.

Table 6.21. Examples of acts patterns in the Solution move

Move	Step	Acts patterns
Solution	Suggesting Ways of Improving (SWI)	RE
		RE , EP
		RE , RE , RE
		RE + EX
		RE + EX + RE
		RE + RE + EX
		RE + MI
		PJ + RE + RE

Note:

+ represents the sub-acts within the step such as (Act 1(a), Act 1(b)).

, represents the second act within the step such as (Act 1, Act 2).

- EP = Embedded Problem; EX = Exemplification; MI = Mitigation; PJ = Positive Judgement;
RE = Recommendation

Tables 6.22. and 6.23. show two examples of the step SWI and acts (RE, EP, and MI) patterns in the Solution move.

Table 6.22. Step (SWI) and acts (RE, and MI) analysis in the Solution move (CAW in dark red; ES in green; RE in dark green; and MI in purple)

Move	Step	Act	Example:
Problem	Step 1 Indicating Problem	Act 1 (a) Calling Attention to Weakness Act 1 (b) Embedded Solution	1a[There's some slight lack of clarity (confusion) over the concept] 1b[that it would have been useful to elaborate on/explain further.]
Solution	Step 1 Suggesting Ways of Improving	Act 1 (a) Recommendation Act 1 (b) Mitigation	1a[In Mrs D, Elizabeth or Davis would have been better examples] 1b[– though I agree that CD has potential to embrace a less traditional role and her love of freedom. Her experiences in the city suggest her on- going longing for this.]
		Act 2 Recommendation	2[Including more quotations would also help to consolidate and extend some of your points here.] (moves I and C excluded, Text 2, Department A)

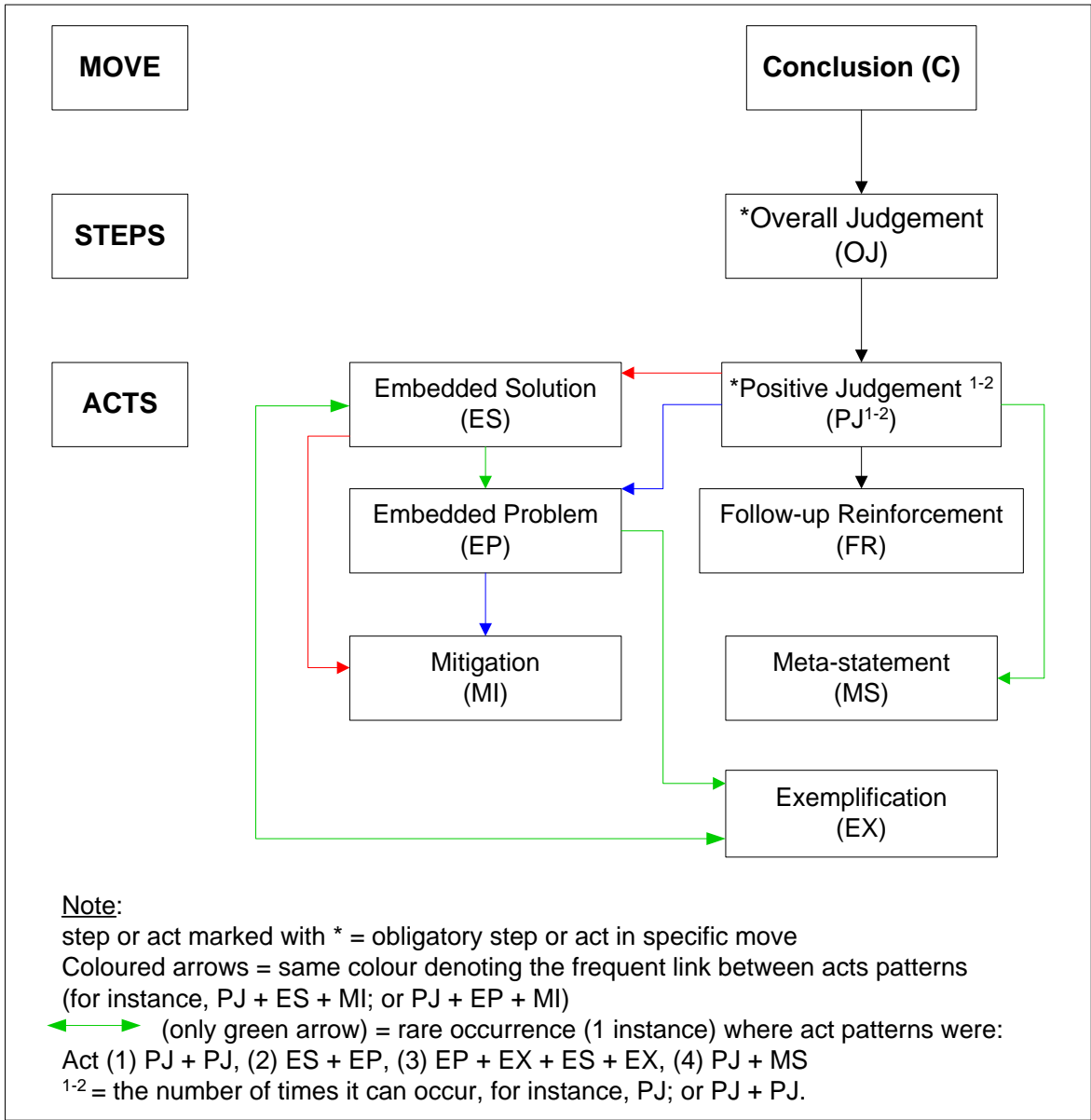
Table 6.23. Step (SWI) and acts (RE, and EP) analysis in the Solution move (PJ in blue; RE in dark green; ES in green; and EP in red)

Move	Step	Act	Example:
Initiation	Step 2 Highlighting Strength	Act 1 (a) Positive Judgement Act 1 (b) Positive Judgement	1a[You write well,] 1b[and some of your close readings of the chosen poems display insight and critical aptitude.]
		Act 2 (a) Positive Judgement Act 2 (b) Embedded Solution	2a[You also integrate your secondary material well,] 2b[though on several occasions I think you could have gone into greater depth with your own perspective on the poem's meaning.]
Solution	Step 1 Suggesting Ways of Improving	Act 1 (a) Recommendation Act 1 (b) Embedded Problem Act 1 (c) Recommendation	1a[Also, be careful of silly mistakes which can be costly] 1b[-did Samuel Jackson really coin the term 'metaphysical'?!] 1c[I suggest you check this.] (Step 1 in the Initiation move, and move C excluded, Text 9, Department A)

6.2.2.4. Steps and acts in the Conclusion move

Overall Judgement (OJ) was the obligatory step found in the Conclusion move. No other steps were found alongside OJ. As for act, Positive Judgement (PJ) was obligatory in OJ. Other optional acts include Follow-up Reinforcement (FR), Embedded Problem (EP), Embedded Solution (ES), or Mitigation (MI). Figure 6.8. shows the tree diagram of the steps and acts patterns in the Conclusion move.

Figure 6.8. Steps and acts patterns in the Conclusion move



Some of the acts patterns found in step **OJ** are summarised in Table 6.24.

Table 6.24. Examples of acts patterns in the Conclusion move

Move	Step	Acts patterns
Conclusion	OJ	PJ
		PJ, FR
		PJ, PJ, FR
		PJ, ES + MI
		PJ, EP
		PJ + PJ
		PJ + ES
		PJ + PJ + FR

Note:

+ represents the sub-acts within the step such as (Act 1(a), Act 1(b)).

, represents the second act within the step such as (Act 1, Act 2).

- EP = Embedded Problem; ES = Embedded Solution; FR = Follow-up Reinforcement; MI = Mitigation; PJ = Positive Judgement

Tables 6.25. and 6.26. show two examples of the step OJ and acts (PJ, FR, EP, and MI) patterns in the Conclusion move.

Table 6.25. Step (OJ) and acts (PJ, and FR) analysis in the Conclusion move (RE in dark green; PJ in blue; and FR in brown)

Move	Step	Act	Example:
Solution	Step 1 Suggesting Ways of Improving	Act 1 (a) Recommendation Act 1 (b) Recommendation	1a[Also, keep an eye on your presentation] 1b[– justifying the text would make it easier to read.]
Conclusion	Step 1 Overall Judgement	Act 1 (a) Positive Judgement Act 1 (b) Follow-up Reinforcement	1a[Overall though, this is an imaginative and critically astute piece] 1b[– well done!] (Text 3, moves I and P excluded, Department A)

Table 6.26. Step (OJ) and acts (PJ, EP, and MI) analysis in the Conclusion move (PJ in blue; EP in red; and MI in purple)

Move	Step	Act	Example:
Initiation	Step 1 Highlighting Strength	Act 1 Positive Judgement	1[Your account of the chapter is very detailed and highlights key features effectively, all the time making an explicit or implicit commentary on the position being expressed as well as referring knowledgeably to the data being presented.]
Conclusion	Step 1 Overall Judgement	Act 1 Positive Judgement	1[All in all this creates the sense of a sophisticated understanding of educational issues raised by the chapter.]
		Act 1 (a) Positive Judgement Act 1 (b) Embedded Problem Act 1 (c) Mitigation	1a[You demonstrate a quite subtle awareness of the history and of the social dimension of education] 1b[and although you don't show much evidence of further reading in your bibliography] 1c[your writing gives the impression of being well-informed.] (70%; listed as 'Critical Commentary') (Text 41, Department A)

There was one rare occurrence of the acts in the Conclusion move where, after presenting some solutions, the tutor made a concluding evaluation of the essay (analysed as PJ, act 1, as shown in Table 6.27.). Following the positive comments, the tutor then highlighted some problematic issues with the essay with examples and solutions (acts 2 and 3 in Table 6.27.) and concluding again with a positive comment (act 4). This variation of acts posed some questions, re-mentioning problems and solutions after a positive comment, but since there was mutual agreement between the specialist and non-specialist informant (as discussed in Section 5.6.4.), it was agreed that it was a Conclusion move with embedded problems and solutions.

Table 6.27. Step (OJ) and acts (PJ, EP, ES, EX, and MS) analysis in the Conclusion move (RE in dark green; PJ in blue; EP in red; ES in green; EX in dark blue; and MS in pink)

Move	Step	Act	Example:
Solution	Step 1 Suggesting Ways of Improving	Act 3 Recommendation	2[Both of these would have not only added evidence, but also increased the linguistic analysis input to the assignment.]
Conclusion	Step 1 Overall Judgement	Act 1 (a) Positive Judgement Act 1 (b) Positive Judgement	1a[Well written,] 1b[good paragraphing.]
		Act 2 (a) Embedded Solution Act 2 (b) Exemplification	2a[Keep to an academic register] 2b[(*aren't, *like).]
		Act 3 (a) Embedded Problem Act 3 (b) Exemplification Act 3 (c) Embedded Solution Act 3 (d) Exemplification	3a[If you don't have a source for claims 3b{(e.g. 'the best way to convince is to state facts')} 3c[then make it clear it is your opinion, or hedge it] 3d[{one of the best ways...}]
		Act 4 (a) Positive Judgement Act 4 (b) Meta-statement	4a[An enjoyable analysis to read,] 4b[thank you.] (67%) (Text 38, Acts 1 and 2 of step SWI, and move I excluded, Department A)

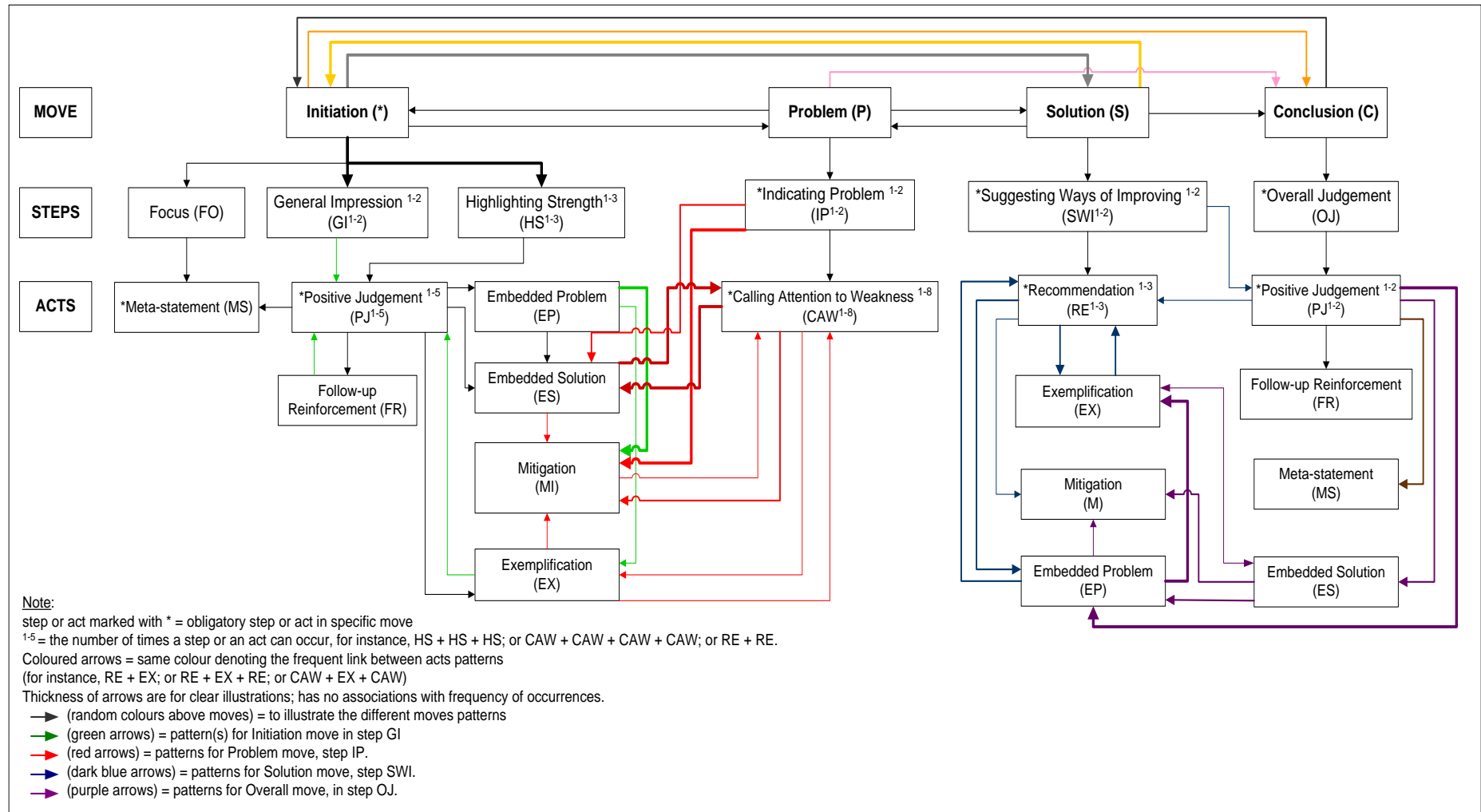
6.2.2.5. Summary of moves, steps, and acts patterns in Department A

This section has looked at the various steps and acts patterns which are found in each move (Initiation, Problem, Solution and Conclusion) of Department A's feedback reports. Some steps and acts are obligatory in specific moves. For instance, Calling Attention to Weakness (CAW) is an obligatory act in step, Indicating Problem (IP), which is obligatory in the Problem move; Act Recommendation (RE) is obligatory in step Suggesting Ways of Improving (SWI) which is obligatory in the Solution move; and act Positive Judgement (PJ) is obligatory in step Overall Judgement (OJ) which is obligatory in the Conclusion move. Other steps and acts are optional as they are used interchangeably in moves and

steps. There are no definite patterns of steps and acts in each of the moves, although some patterns are more evident in certain moves. For example, the **PJ** + **FR** acts pattern is more evident in the Conclusion move and step Overall Judgement (**OJ**). Figure 6.9. shows the overall summary of the feedback patterns (moves, steps, and acts) in Department A's feedback analysis.

This section has so far looked at the analysis of genre on Department A's feedback. The following section will look at the genre analysis of Department B's feedback reports.

Figure 6.9. Summary of moves, steps, and acts patterns in Department A's feedback



6.3 Feedback in Department B

Section 6.2. has looked at the genre analysis of Department A's feedback. This section looks into the genre analysis of Department B's feedback, examining the different patterns emerging from the use of a criteria-based template (as discussed in Chapter 5, Section 5.2., feedback template is shown in Appendix 5.2.).

6.3.1. Moves patterns

A genre analysis was carried out with forty two feedback reports from Department B (refer to Appendix 6.6. for a sample of the feedback analysis, full analysis is attached in CD). As mentioned, Department B implemented a criteria-based template with five set criteria on giving feedback (as shown in Appendix 5.2.). As discussed in Chapter 5 (Section 5.6.3.), the feedback for each criterion was analysed as a separate text because each section was commenting on specific aspect of the essays.

The moves patterns in each criterion varied. The analysis revealed eight moves patterns which were more evident, although some patterns were found in one criterion but not the other (as shown in Table 6.28., refer to Appendix 6.2. for a detailed list of the moves patterns found in Department B). Similarly to Department A, the Initiation move was the most frequent move used in all the five criteria in Department B (as shown in Figure 6.10.). Although the feedback was given with respect to each criterion, most of the moves patterns in Department B were also found in Department A. For instance, **I**; **I + P**; **I + S**; and **P** patterns, which have also been discussed in Section 6.2. (see Appendix 6.3. for a comparison of the moves patterns in both departments).

Table 6.28. Frequency of the moves patterns in Department B.

Criteria Moves Patterns	Acquisition of knowledge (AK)		Interpretation, analysis, construction of argument and relevance (IACAR)		Command of English (CE)		Documentation and presentation (DP)		Overall (OV)	
I	85.7%	(36)	2.4%	(1)	26.2%	(11)	14.3%	(6)	85.7%	(36)
I + P	4.8%	(2)	11.9%	(5)	33.3%	(14)	11.9%	(5)	–	
I + P + I*	–		14.3%	(6)	–		–		–	
I + S	4.8%	(2)	16.7%	(7)	16.7%	(7)	42.9%	(18)	4.8%	(2)
I + S + I*	2.4%	(1)	14.3%	(6)	–		–		–	
P	2.4%	(1)	–		11.9%	(5)	7.1%	(3)	7.1%	(3)
P + S	–		–		–		9.5%	(4)	–	
S	–		–		2.4%	(1)	11.9%	(5)	2.4%	(1)

Note:

Figures in brackets show the raw frequency.

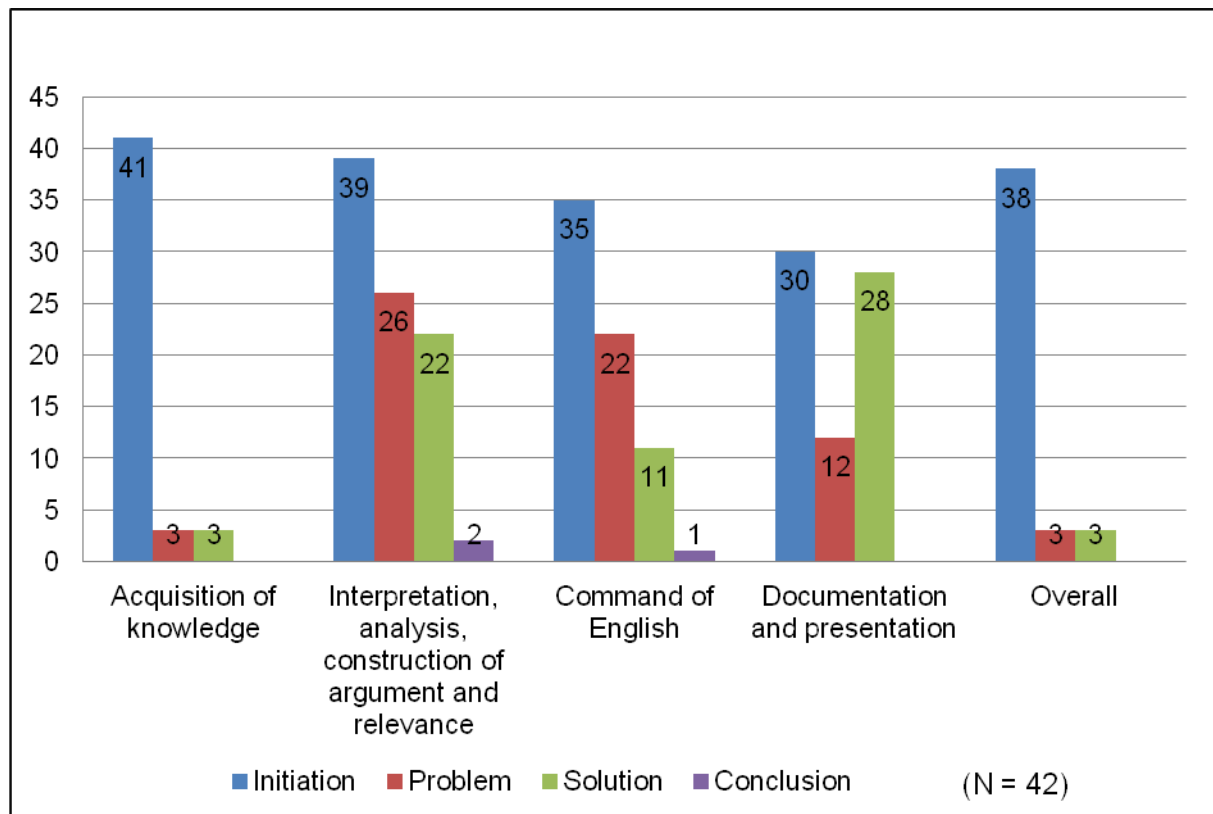
Figures in blue indicate where the move patterns occur most.

I* = Instances where the Initiation move recurs, or instead of being at the beginning of feedback, it is used at the end of feedback under each criterion.

P = Problem

S = Solution

Figure 6.10. Frequency of occurrences of individual moves in Department B's feedback



It is interesting to note that the Conclusion move was rarely found in Department B's feedback (4.8% in IACAR, and 2.4% in CE). This is probably affected by the criterion, Overall (OV), where the tutor summarised the whole essay (discussed further in Section 6.2.2.5.). The following sub-sections discuss the moves patterns in each criterion and the other more evident patterns which have not been discussed thus far.

6.3.1.1. Moves patterns in 'Acquisition of Knowledge' (AK)

The Initiation move was the most frequent move found in Acquisition of Knowledge (AK) (97.6% in total). It was either found independently in the **I** (Initiation) pattern (85.7%), or with other moves such as Initiation + Problem (**I + P**) (4.8%); Initiation + Solution (**I + S**)

(4.8%); or **I** + **S** + **I*** (2.4%). Examples of these patterns are further shown from Table 6.29. to Table 6.32. (refer to Appendix 6.6. in CD for other examples of the I pattern).

Table 6.29. Moves pattern in AK: Initiation (**I**)

Move	Example
Initiation (I)	This essay demonstrates that you understand the basic concepts taught on the course about the nature of academic discourse. You have read a number of sources and integrated what you have read into your essay. (Text 44, Department B)

Table 6.30. Moves pattern in AK: Initiation + Problem (**I** + **P**)

Move	Example
Initiation (I)	The essay demonstrates that you have read the relevant sources. It also shows that you have grasped the basic theoretical issues raised in the course.
Problem (P)	There are some concerns with your interpretation of the question and the use of some of your sources. These points are highlighted in the following section. (Text 72, Department B)

Table 6.31. Moves pattern in AK: Initiation + Solution (**I** + **S**)

Move	Example
Initiation (I)	This essay demonstrates a basic understanding of the theories of behaviourism and cognitivism (or the innatist theory, as we called it in the seminars).
Solution (S)	You cite the main proponents of these theories however you fail to develop your understanding any further than the basic definition. In order to show that you have knowledge of these theories is to read beyond a couple of sources for each, read a more up-to-date version of your primary source (Harmer 2001 or 2007 and not Harmer 1991) and include relevant criticisms of the theories which we discussed in the seminars. The essay also needed to show a more thorough understanding of the audio-lingual method. Your account is simplistic. You could have explored the drawbacks of the methods and contrasted them more explicitly with other relevant teaching methods. (Text 63, Department B)

Table 6.32. Moves pattern in AK: Initiation + Solution + Initiation* (I + S + I*)

Move	Example
Initiation (I)	This essay demonstrates a wide reading of a range of sources. You display a fairly sound grasp of Krashen's theory although it is not always made relevant to the discussion at hand (see points below). Your discussion on the <u>interactionist theories and associated practice (CLT)</u> is adequate. The essay could have benefited from more
Solution (S)	argument and less description. The essay uses a good range of other evidence (classroom activities cited in the appendix) to substantiate
Initiation* (I*)	and explain some of the points.

(Text 65, Department B)

The Problem (P) move pattern was also found in AK, relatively low frequency (2.4%, as shown in Table 6.33.).

Table 6.33. Other moves pattern in AK: Problem (P)

Move	Example
Problem (P)	The essay does not show a sufficient reading of a range of sources. The two books you have referred to are the core textbooks for the course but you needed to have read more widely to achieve a better understanding of the theories taught on the course. Only some of the information here is relevant and accurately interpreted.

(Text 60, Department B)

The four moves patterns (I; I + P; I + S; and P patterns) were also found in Department A. I + S + I* moves pattern (as shown in Table 6.32.) was found only in Department B, where the Problem move was omitted. There was however, an implicit problem in the Solution move where the tutor was indirectly saying the essay was too descriptive and lacking in arguments. This could explain why one of the other moves (Problem or Solution) was omitted. This move pattern, however, was rarely found.

6.3.1.2. Moves patterns in ‘Interpretation, analysis, construction of argument and relevance’ (IACAR)

The Initiation move was found in 39 feedback reports (out of 42, a percentage of 92.9%). The most frequent pattern was Initiation + Solution (**I** + **S**) (16.7%), followed by Initiation + Problem + Initiation* (**I** + **P** + **I***) and Initiation + Solution + Initiation* (**I** + **S** + **I***) patterns (14.3% respectively), **I** + **P** (11.9%) and **I** + **P** + **P** (7.1%). Tables 6.34. to 6.38. show examples of these patterns in IACAR.

Table 6.34. Moves pattern in IACAR: Initiation + Solution (**I** + **S**)

Moves	Example
Initiation (I)	You have interpreted the question accurately and demonstrate a clear understanding of the material. You draw on a sufficient range of sources to explain your main points... The argument in this essay is organised clearly and progresses well.
Solution (S)	There are a few points you should note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your introduction could be a little better with a more explicit link between the two major distinctions you make about theories of language acquisition and behaviourism and interactionism. • ... (Text 67, Department B, detailed analysis in Appendix 6.6. in CD)

(Refer to Texts 44, 46, 56, 57, 64, and 83 for other examples of this pattern in Appendix 6.6. in CD)

Table 6.35. Moves pattern in IACAR: Initiation + Problem + Initiation* (I + P + I*)

Moves	Example
Initiation (I)	Your essay attempts to construct a good argument. Your points are relevant and you do try and organise your essay in a useful way for the reader. Here are a few points for you to note:
Problem (P)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On page 1, at the bottom of the page, you say ‘Two additional features of academic written discourse are the use of personal pronouns and non-exist language’. You repeat ‘non-exist’ in the following line. I think you mean ‘non-sexist’ and academic language is meant to use non-sexist language not avoid it. It should avoid sexist language. ...
Initiation* (I*)	<p>Your conclusion is good as it highlights some of the prevailing issues which surround academic discourse today. It usefully brings together the main points in your essay.</p> <p>(Text 49, Department B, detailed analysis in Appendix 6.6. in CD)</p>

(Refer to Texts 45, 47, 48, 70, and 81 for other examples of this pattern in Appendix 6.6. in CD)

Table 6.36. Moves pattern in IACAR: Initiation + Solution + Initiation* (I + S + I*)

Moves	Example
Initiation (I)	Your essay constructs a reasonable argument and is fairly well organised. There are points in the essay where your analysis and interpretation need more explanation. I have highlighted a few examples for you:
Solution (S)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On page 1, you mention that the colours used in the DKNY advertisement are ‘eye catching, capturing the imagination of the potential target audience.’ – what exactly does this mean? In an academic essay of this nature, an analysis of colours should use some of the terminology in the field of semiotics to substantiate your observation. ... <p>The introduction of your essay could also benefit from...</p>
Initiation* (I*)	<p>Your essay does have some good analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In particular, your analysis of intertextuality with reference to the DKNY advertisement is good. <p>(Text 80, Department B, detailed analysis in Appendix 6.6. in CD)</p>

(Refer to Texts 51, 52, 76, 77, and 78 for other examples of this pattern in Appendix 6.6. in CD)

Table 6.37. Moves pattern in IACAR: Initiation + Problem (I + P)

Moves	Example
Initiation (I)	A good introduction which shows an attempt at grappling with the different issues in the essay. It effectively demonstrates what your views are on the issue...
Problem (P)	<p>There are a couple of points I would like to highlight:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While you have spent a large portion of your essay on grammatical rules and UG in SLA, you haven't quite defined or developed your interpretation of the phrase 'communicate in the language'. ... <p>(Text 58, Department B, detailed analysis in Appendix 6.6. in CD)</p>

(Refer to Texts 65, 66, 71, and 84 for other examples of this pattern in Appendix 6.6. in CD)

Table 6.38. Moves pattern in IACAR: Initiation + Problem + Problem (I + P + P)

Moves	Example
Initiation (I)	The essay shows that you understand the demands of the question and the material in your essay is relevant...
Problem (P)	<p>There are a few places in the essay where you need some explanation or where your argument is not very clear. I have listed a few examples:</p> <p>Here are some examples of where you need a better explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page 1 – 'However it does not fit in all cases.' – what is 'it' referring to? Are you trying to say that in some cases age is not a significant factor for language learning? • ...
Problem (P)	<p>Here are some examples where your point or the argument you are making is not clear or needs development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page 2 – the sentence at the end of your first paragraph and the sentence at the beginning of the second paragraph say very different things. If 'we do not know how motivation contributes to language learning...' how can we then say that it is 'one of the most important factors leading to success in second language learning'? • ... <p>(Text 73, Department B, detailed analysis in Appendix 6.6. in CD)</p>

(Refer to Texts 60 and 61 for other examples of this pattern in Appendix 6.6. in CD)

Amongst the five patterns (**I + S**; **I + P + I***; **I + S + I***; **I + P**; and **I + P + P**), **I + P** and **I + S** patterns were the most common in IACAR, whether in other criteria (AK, CE, DP, and OV) or in Department A. The other three patterns were less common but were still found in other criteria such as **I + S + I*** was found in criterion, AK (as discussed in Section 6.3.1.1., in Table 6.32.); and **I + P + P** in criterion, CE (as discussed in Section 6.3.1.3.). Other similar moves patterns in IACAR which were also found in Department A include **I + P + S + P**; **I + S + I* + C**; and **C + I*** (as discussed in Section 6.2.). It is also worth noting that the Conclusion move was found in IACAR (4.8%), as shown in Table 6.39. below (see also Text 75 in Appendix 6.6. in CD for another example), as well as in criterion, CE (2.4%). The Conclusion move was not found in the other three criteria (AK, DP, and OV).

Table 6.39. Moves pattern in IACAR: Initiation + Conclusion (**I + C**)

Moves	Example
Initiation (I)	<p>The essay is a well constructed, convincing argument. You show good analytical skills and interpret your observations in light of your readings. This is good. Here are a few places in the essay where your work is outstanding and also a few suggestions for how to improve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your introduction presents a clear review of work on academic discourse. You show that you understand that academic discourse is a complex issue.
Conclusion (C)	<p>Overall, the points you discuss in the essay are relevant and the discussion insightful.</p> <p>(Text 53, Department B, detailed analysis in Appendix 6.6. in CD)</p>

Apart from these patterns, the other moves patterns in IACAR were slightly more unpredictable. For instance, nine other move patterns, although very low frequencies (1 occurrence each) were found only in IACAR such as:

(a) I + P + P + P;	(b) I + P + I + S;	(c) I + S + P + I*;
(d) I + S + P + S;	(e) P + P;	(f) P + P + P + P;
(g) P + I*;	(h) P + S + I*;	(i) S + P.

These various patterns show that there is no definite placement of moves, or which moves should occur where in the feedback. Each move may be used alternately with other moves or omitted completely. These patterns show how the different feedback template and the feedback writing practices can affect the moves patterns. For instance, the tutor in Department B used bullet points to list out the comments (as shown in Tables 6.34. to 6.39., and a sample shown in Appendix 5.4.) which in some cases resulted in listing a subsequent list of problems after problems, hence the pattern I + P + P (as shown in Table 6.38.); or P + P (shown in Table 6.40. below).

Table 6.40. Moves pattern in IACAR: Problem + Problem (P + P)

Moves	Example
Problem (P)	The essay does not construct a convincing argument although you do show some indication of having understood some of the material. The main concern is in the ways in which you have interpreted the question – there doesn't appear to be much distinction between the various categories of 'language', 'learner' and 'learning process' but rather your essay reads like a general essay on language acquisition.
Problem (P)	<p>Here are a few more specific points for you to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your opening paragraph could be more useful to the reader in terms of providing more detail of the theories you will be discussing in the essay as opposed to beginning with a disclaimer that the essay is unable to reflect on more than just the three unnamed theories. • Behaviourism as a theory did not suggest that young children are reliant on linguistic knowledge to communicate with others. This was an extension of their claim that linguistic knowledge could be acquired through habitual practice. • ... <p>(Text 72, Department B, detailed analysis in Appendix 6.6. in CD)</p>

Although suggestions were implied, “[y]our opening paragraph could be more useful to the reader”, they were analysed at the act level, Embedded Solution (ES) (discussed in Section 6.3.2.2.). The whole move was analysed as a Problem move due to the subsequent comments all being on the problem area. The moves patterns would be complex if each solution were analysed accordingly (as discussed in Chapter 5, Section 5.6.3.).

6.3.1.3. Moves patterns in ‘Command of English’ (CE)

The Initiation + Problem (I + P) moves pattern was found to be the most frequently used pattern in Command of English (CE) (33.3%), followed by the I pattern (26.2%), Initiation

+ Solution (**I** + **S**) pattern (16.7%), and **P** pattern (11.9%). Examples of each of these patterns are further shown below (Table 6.41. to Table 6.44.).

Table 6.41. Moves pattern in CE: Initiation + Problem (**I** + **P**)

Moves	Example
Initiation (I)	Your essay is written generally in fairly good English.
Problem (P)	There is one example of an incomplete sentence and a few minor slips: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Generally in academic discourse to acquire some sense of formality, maybe even objectivity.’ – this is not a complete sentence.

(Text 45, Department B)

(Refer to Texts 45, 46, 47, 48, 55, 56, 58, 65, 66, 74, 75, 76, 78, and 80 for other examples of this pattern in Appendix 6.6. in CD)

Table 6.42. Moves pattern in CE: Initiation (**I**)

Moves	Example
Initiation (I)	Your essay is written in good English. It is accurate and there are no errors which impede the meanings you intend to convey in your essay. Your essay also demonstrates that you are aware of the conventions of writing in an academic style.

(Text 50, Department B)

(Refer to Texts 43, 44, 49, 50, 51, 52, 54, 64, and 70 for other examples of this pattern in Appendix 6.6. in CD)

Table 6.43. Moves pattern in CE: Initiation + Solution (**I** + **S**)

Moves	Example
Initiation (I)	Your essay is written in an appropriate academic style and the errors in language do not impede meaning.
Solution (S)	However, you do need to take note of a few errors (punctuation and spelling, in particular) which could have been avoided with careful proofreading before submission – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • page 6 - please double check your quote from Long. You have a repetition of ‘and especially’ • ...

(Text 67, Department B, detailed analysis in Appendix 6.6. in CD)

(Refer to Texts 53, 59, 71, 73, 77, and 84 for other examples of this pattern in Appendix 6.6. in CD)

Table 6.44. Moves pattern in CE: Problem (P)

Moves	Example
Problem (P)	<p>Here are a few examples of awkward language use or language that is not appropriate for an academic essay:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘evidences’ (page 5), • ... <p>(Text 69, Department B, detailed analysis in Appendix 6.6. in CD)</p> <p>(Refer to Texts 60, 61, 62, and 72 for other examples of this pattern in Appendix 6.6. in CD)</p>

Other move pattern which was found in Command of English (CE) included the Solution move pattern (S pattern), although a relative low frequency (2.4%). The S pattern was also found in criteria, DP (discussed in Section 6.3.1.4.) and OV (discussed in Section 6.3.1.5.). This pattern was not found in criteria, AK and IACAR, or in Department A. Table 6.45. below shows this pattern in CE.

Table 6.45. Moves pattern in CE: Solution (S)

Moves	Example
Solution (S)	<p>Here are a few points for you to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Repeated use of ‘practise’ as verb used when it should be ‘practice’ as noun. ❖ Your essay needed to be proof read for spelling errors before submission. <p>(Text 63, Department B)</p>

In addition to this, the Conclusion move was also found in CE alongside the Solution move (in S + C pattern). An example of this pattern is shown in Table 6.46.

Table 6.46. Moves pattern in CE: Solution + Conclusion (**S** + **C**)

Moves	Example
Solution (S)	<p>There are several errors throughout the essay which could have been easily avoided if you had proofread your essay prior to submission. Here are a few examples from every page of your essay except the last:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top of page 2 – ‘According to Harmer, by talking of the rules of a language...’
Conclusion (C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... Overall, the essay is written in an appropriate academic style. (Text 57, Department B, detailed analysis in Appendix 6.6. in CD)

Although the Initiation move (**I** pattern) was used most frequently in CE, there were occurrences of these rare patterns such as **S**, or **S** + **C** patterns where the Initiation move was omitted.

6.3.1.4. Moves patterns in ‘Documentation and presentation’ (DP)

The moves patterns found in Documentation and Presentation (DP) were varied. The Initiation + Solution (**I** + **S**) pattern was the most frequent pattern (42.9%). This was followed by the **I** pattern (14.3%), Initiation + Problem (**I** + **P**) pattern, and **S** pattern (11.9% respectively). As mentioned, the **S** pattern was also found in criteria, CE (as shown in Table 6.45. above, Section 6.3.1.3.), and in OV (discussed in Section 6.3.1.5). Table 6.47. to Table 6.50. show these patterns (**I** + **S**; **I**; **I** + **P**; and **S** patterns) in DP.

Table 6.47. Moves pattern in DP: Initiation + Solution (I + S)

Move	Example
Initiation (I)	This is good and your essay mostly adheres to the conventions stipulated in the Style Guide.
Solution (S)	You do need to take note of where to place the full stop following a reference in your sentence.

(Text 45, Department B)

(Refer to Texts 43, 44, 48, 49, 51, 53–56, 67, 72, and 76 – 82 for other examples of this pattern in Appendix 6.6. in CD)

Table 6.48. Moves pattern in DP: Initiation (I)

Move	Example
Initiation (I)	You have adhered to the conventions of referencing and your essay follows the guidelines stipulated in the Style Guide. The essay is neatly presented.

(Text 59, Department B)

(Refer to Texts 46, 50, 52, and 70 for other examples of this pattern in Appendix 6.6. in CD)

Table 6.49. Moves pattern in DP: Initiation + Problem (I + P)

Moves	Example
Initiation (I)	This is largely accurate. You have shown a good attempt at paraphrasing information from your source texts and you ought to be commended for that effort.
Problem (P)	Just a few minor points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your reference to ‘Pasty et al’ is incorrect. It should be a reference to ‘Lightbown and Spada’. • ...

(Text 73, Department B, detailed analysis in Appendix 6.6. in CD)

(Refer to Texts 47, 58, 69, and 79 for other examples of this pattern in Appendix 6.6. in CD)

Table 6.50. Moves pattern in DP: Solution (S)

Moves	Example
Solution (S)	You need to check with the Style Guide on the use of punctuation following quotations. Full stops occur after the reference. Your essay needs to be submitted as a single-sided copy.

(Text 60, Department B)

(Refer to Texts 65, 66, 74, and 84 for other examples of this pattern in Appendix 6.6. in CD)

The Initiation move was still generally used to begin the opening comment in Documentation and Presentation (DP) (37 occurrences in total, 83.3%). Nonetheless, as discussed above, some feedback, 11.9% to be precise, was initiated with the **S** pattern and only contained Solution move (as shown in Table 6.50.). There was one rare occurrence of **S + I*** pattern which occurred only in DP (as shown in Table 6.51. below).

Table 6.51. Moves pattern in DP: Solution + Initiation* (**S + I***)

Moves	Example
Solution (S)	You need to include punctuation marks within your reference for e.g. (Mitchel and Myers 2004, 31).
Initiation* (I*)	Your essay is generally well presented. (Text 71, Department B)

Apart from the **S** pattern or **S + I*** pattern, the **P** pattern was also found to begin feedback in DP (9.5%). Table 6.52. further illustrates this pattern. In addition to the Problem move, **P + S** pattern was another rare pattern which was found only in DP (7.1% of occurrences). Table 6.53. shows this pattern further.

Table 6.52. Moves pattern in DP: Problem (**P**)

Moves	Example
Problem (P)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While you have been consistent with the way in which you have referenced your sources, it is not common to use colons and semicolons to separate author, date and page. Do check the Referencing Guide. • You do not need a colon before you quote. For e.g. ‘Similarly, Skinner “rejected any explanation.. ()’ page 1. • ... <p>(Text 68, Department B, detailed analysis in Appendix 6.6. in CD)</p> <p>(Refer to Texts 63, 64, and 83 for other examples of this pattern in Appendix 6.6. in CD)</p>

Table 6.53. Moves pattern in DP: Problem + Solution (P + S)

Moves	Example
Problem (P)	Skinner (2005) – Skinner died in 1990. Your reference is to a book he wrote in 1953. Ellis (2006) – it's not China: Oxford University Press. Please check all bibliographical details carefully.
Solution (S)	You need to check how punctuation is used following a quotation in a sentence. You also need to check how to reference in-text citations. There are several instances in your essay where you only have date and page number, for e.g., (2001:53) and there is no indication of who the author is.
(Text 61, Department B)	

6.3.1.5. Moves patterns in 'Overall' (OV)

The Initiation move (I pattern) was the most frequent pattern found in Overall (OV) (85.7%). Other patterns which were found include the P pattern (7.1%), and I + S pattern (4.8%). Table 6.54. to Table 6.56. further illustrate these patterns.

Table 6.54. Moves pattern in OV: Initiation (I)

Move	Example
Initiation (I)	This is a fairly good essay that shows some good analysis and discusses various relevant points about academic discourse.
(Text 45, Department B)	
(Refer to Texts 43, 44, 47–53, 55–59, 62, 64–71, 73–84 for other examples of this pattern in Appendix 6.6. in CD)	

Table 6.55. Moves pattern in OV: Problem (P)

Moves	Example
Problem (P)	The essay achieves its aims in a limited manner. There is much scope for improvement in terms of how sources have been interpreted and how the argument in the essay has been constructed. When we meet we will discuss these points and consider how you could have improved the argument in your essay.
(Text 61, Department B)	
(Refer to Texts 60 and 72 for other examples of this pattern in Appendix 6.6. in CD)	

Table 6.56. Moves pattern in OV: Initiation + Solution (I + S)

Moves	Example
Initiation (I)	A good essay which shows that you have understood the nature and features of academic writing.
Solution (S)	The essay could have achieved more if the analysis was a little more detailed.

(Text 54, Department B)

(Refer to Text 46 for other example of this pattern in Appendix 6.6. in CD)

The Solution move (S pattern) was also found in the criterion, Overall (OV) (2.4%). This pattern was also found in Command of English (CE) (as shown in Table 6.45. above, in Section 6.3.1.3) and Documentation and Presentation (DP) (as shown in Table 6.50. above, in Section 6.3.1.4.). This pattern was not found in Department A's feedback. Table 6.57. further shows the S pattern occurring in OV.

Table 6.57. Moves pattern in OV: Solution (S)

Moves	Example
Solution (S)	Here are a few points for you to note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeated use of 'practise' as verb used when it should be 'practice' as noun. Your essay needed to be proof read for spelling errors before submission.

(Text63, Department B)

It can be argued that the move analysis carried out in OV could be seen as a Conclusion move instead of Initiation move (as shown in the initiating feedback in Table 6.54. and Table 6.56.). However, this analysis takes the approach of the feedback in the criterion OV as the overall evaluation of the essay where the tutor evaluates or expresses thoughts on the overall essay, rather than a concluding remark as shown in Department A's feedback.

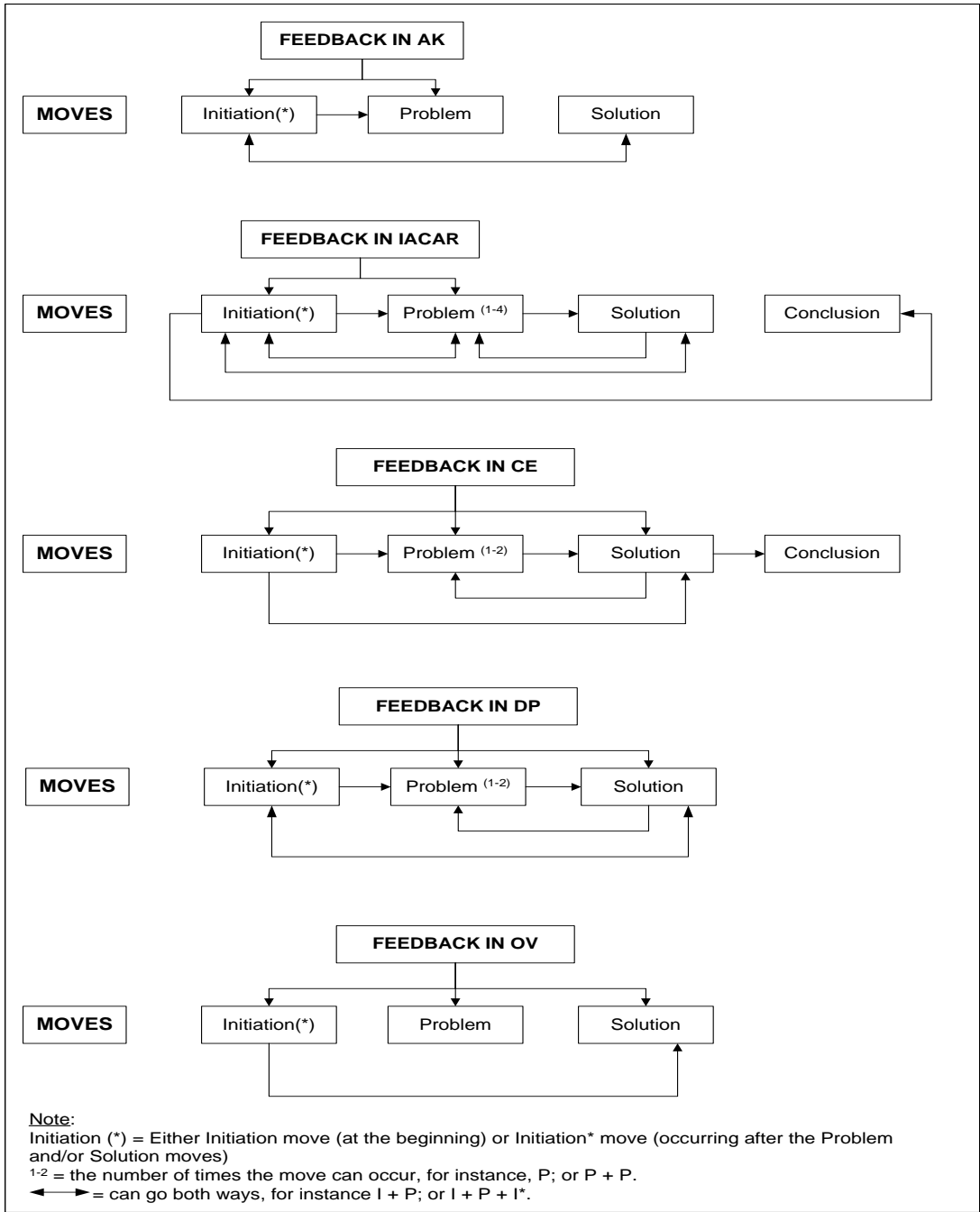
6.3.1.6. Summary of moves patterns in Department B

This section has looked at the various move patterns which occur in Department B. Although the feedback reports were gathered from one tutor, it seems that some of the move patterns were similar to or can be found in Department A's feedback (also shown in Appendix 6.3.). All moves are optional. As shown in the analysis, not all feedback began with the Initiation move. The Problem or Solution moves could be used as the starting comments. Unlike the feedback in Department A where the Conclusion move is used quite frequently (57.14% of feedback in Department A had the Conclusion move), Department B's feedback had fewer Conclusion move. The Conclusion move was found in only three feedback reports where two occurrences (4.8%) were found in Interpretation, analysis, construction of argument and relevance (IACAR) and one occurrence (2.4%) in Command of English (CE).

The analysis from Department B's feedback corresponded with Department A's feedback analysis. The analysis from both departments shows that there is no definite way of giving feedback where each move is systematically presented or used. Moves may be used alternately or omitted. The feedback writing style, as has been discussed, also affects the moves patterns in a few cases, where the Problem moves would recur after one another. However, this occurred only in the criterion, IACAR. The marks awarded to each essay do not seem to suggest any fixed pattern associated with each criterion (as shown in Appendix 6.7.).

Based on the move analysis carried out with both departments' feedback, it is practical to suggest move patterns do exist in feedback. Figure 6.11. shows the tree diagrams summarising the moves patterns found across the five criteria (AK, IACAR, CE, DP, and OV).

Figure 6.11. Summary of moves patterns in Department B



Having looked at the different moves patterns which occurred in each of the criterion in Department B's feedback, it is appropriate to discuss further the analysis for this research. This brings us to the next process of analysis, the steps and acts structures.

6.3.2. Moves, steps, and acts patterns

Unlike the findings from Department A where all four moves were found or used in the feedback reports, three main moves, Initiation, Problem and Solution, were more evident in Department B. The Conclusion move occurred in three instances in two criteria (4.8% in IACAR, and 2.4% in CE, as mentioned earlier). The steps and acts recurred within moves, which was similar to the findings from Department A.

6.3.2.1. Steps and acts in 'Acquisition of Knowledge' (AK)

There was no obligatory move in the criterion, Acquisition of Knowledge (AK). However, the Initiation move was the most frequent move in AK in four patterns namely, **I**; **I** + **P**; **I** + **S**; or **I** + **S** + **I***. The **P** pattern (Problem move only) was also found in one instance (all moves patterns were shown in Appendix 6.2.). Two steps, General Impression (**GI**) and Highlighting Strengths (**HS**), were found in the Initiation move where both steps were optional. These two steps either co-occurred in the Initiation move or one or the other step was used. Three patterns: **GI**, **HS**, or **GI** + **HS** were mostly found. The **GI** + **HS** steps pattern was used most frequently (71.4%) and **HS** + **GI** pattern was found once (2.4%). As with the **GI** and **HS** steps in the Initiation move in Department A's feedback reports, Positive Judgement (**PJ**) was also the main obligatory act in both **GI** and **HS** steps of the

Initiation move in AK. Other optional acts found in step General Impression (GI) included, Embedded Problem (EP), Embedded Solution (ES), Exemplification (EX), and Meta-statement (MS), while other optional steps found in step HS included Positive Judgement (PJ), Follow-up Reinforcement (FR), Embedded Problem (EP), Embedded Solution (ES), Mitigation (MI), and Meta-statement (MS). However, these optional acts were used all at the same time. Table 6.58. shows the different acts patterns which were found in each step.

Table 6.58. Examples of acts patterns in Initiation, Problem, and Solution moves in AK

Move	Step	Acts patterns
Initiation	General Impression (GI)	PJ PJ + EP + MS + PJ PJ + EP, ES, MI PJ, MS, PJ + EP + MS
	General Impression (GI)	PJ PJ + PJ, PJ PJ, PJ + PJ, PJ + FR PJ + EP PJ, PJ, ES + ES, MS
Problem	Indicating Problem (IP)	CAW, CAW + CAW CAW, MS
Solution	Suggesting Ways of Improving (SWI)	RE RE + RE + EX + RE, RE, EP, RE

Note:

+ represents the sub-acts within the step such as (Act 1(a), Act 1(b)).

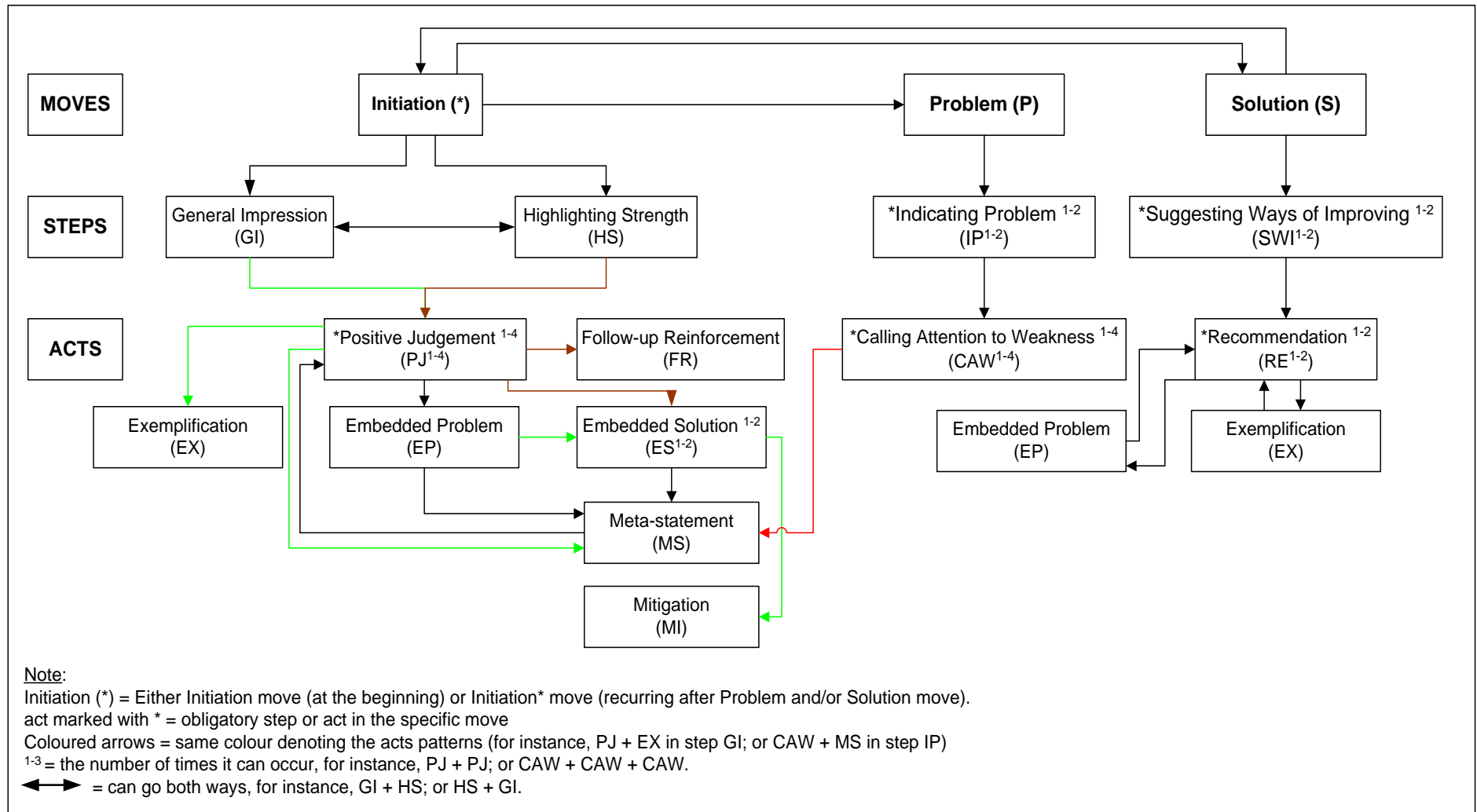
, represents the second act within the step such as (Act 1, Act 2).

- CAW = Calling Attention to Weakness; EP = Embedded Problem; ES = Embedded Solution; EX = Exemplification; FR = Follow-up Reinforcement; MI = Mitigation; MS = Meta-statement; PJ = Positive Judgement; RE = Recommendation

In the Problem move (used either in the I + P pattern, or P pattern), Indicating Problem (IP) was the main obligatory step with Calling Attention to Weakness (CAW) as the

obligatory step. The optional move was Meta-statement (MS). In the Solution move (used either in the I + S pattern, or I + S + I* pattern), Suggesting Ways of Improving (SWI) was the obligatory step with Recommendation (RE) as the obligatory act. The optional acts included Embedded Problem (EP) and Exemplification (EX). These obligatory acts were similar to Department A's feedback analysis on the Initiation, Problem, or Solution moves (see Table 6.58. for the steps and acts patterns which were found in the Problem and Solution moves). Figure 6.12. shows the tree diagram of the moves, steps and acts patterns in AK.

Figure 6.12. Summary of moves, steps and acts patterns in 'Acquisition of Knowledge' (AK)



As been mentioned, four patterns (**I**; **I + S**; **I + S + I***; and **P**) were found in the criterion, Acquisition of Knowledge (AK) (discussed in Section 6.3.1.1.). The Initiation move was most frequently used. The examples below (Table 6.59. and Table 6.60.) show the steps and acts patterns found in **I + S + I*** and **P** patterns.

Table 6.59. Steps and acts analysis in the Initiation(*) and Solution moves in Acquisition of Knowledge (AK)

(**PJ** in blue; **EX** in dark blue; **EP** in red; **MS** in pink; and **RE** in dark green)

Move	Step	Act	Example:
Initiation	Step 1 General Impression	Act 1 Positive Judgement	1[This essay demonstrates a wide reading of a range of sources.]
	Step 2 Highlighting Strength	Act 1 (a) Positive Judgement Act 1 (b) Embedded Problem Act 1 (c) Meta-statement	1a[You display a fairly sound grasp of Krashen's theory] 1b[although it is not always made relevant to the discussion at hand] 1c[(see points below).]
		Act 2 Positive Judgement	2[Your discussion on the interactionist theories and associated practice (CLT) is adequate.]
Solution	Step 1 Suggesting Ways of Improving	Act 1 Recommendation	1[The essay could have benefited from more argument and less description.]
Initiation*	Step 1 General Impression	Act 1 (a) Positive Judgement Act 1 (b) Exemplification	1a[The essay uses a good range of other evidence 1b{(classroom activities cited in the appendix)} to substantiate and explain some of the points.] (Text 65, Department B)

Table 6.60. Steps and acts analysis in the Initiation and Problem moves in AK

(PJ in blue; CAW in dark red; and MS in pink)

Move	Step	Act	Example:
Initiation	Step 1 Highlighting Strength	Act 1 (a) Positive Judgement Act 1 (b) Positive Judgement	1a[The essay demonstrates that you have read the required reading on the topic] 1b[and you provide some examples of the points you make in your essay.]
Problem	Step 1 Indicating Problem	Act 1 Calling Attention to Weakness	1[However, there is some misinterpretation of information which affects the clarity of the argument in your essay.]
		Act 2 Meta-statement	2[These are highlighted in the next section.] (Text 61, Department B)

6.3.2.2. Steps and acts in ‘Interpretation, analysis, construction of argument and relevance’ (IACAR)

Unlike the other criteria in Department B’s feedback reports or Department A’s, this criterion uses various move patterns (as discussed in Section 6.3.1.2., or refer to Appendix 6.2. for the detailed list of moves patterns). No obligatory move was found in the criterion, Interpretation, analysis, construction of argument and relevance (IACAR), although the Initiation move was widely used as it was found in 39 feedback reports (out of 42, 92.9%). Steps Focus (FO), General Impression (GI), and Highlighting Strength (HS) were all optional, in patterns such as GI; HS; GI + HS; or GI + FO + HS. As for acts, MS (Meta-statement) was obligatory in step FO only, while act Positive Judgement (PJ) was obligatory in steps GI, and HS. Table 6.61. shows the various acts patterns which were found in each step.

The Problem, Solution, and Conclusion moves were also found, although frequencies were somewhat fewer (as shown in Figure 6.10. earlier in this chapter). Indicating Problem (IP) was the obligatory step found in the Problem move in patterns such as IP; FO + IP; IP + FO + IP; or IP + GI + IP + HS. Unlike the other criteria (AK, CE, DP, or OV) and in the Problem move in Department A's feedback analysis, the Calling Attention to Weakness (CAW) act was found to be obligatory. In criterion, IACAR, no obligatory act was found. The optional acts included CAW, Embedded Solution (ES), Exemplification (EX), Mitigation (MI), Meta-statement (MS), and Positive Judgement (PJ). It may seem strange to have steps GI, and HS in the Problem move, but, as mentioned earlier, this was due to the tutor's feedback writing practice of a list of feedback (a sample shown in Appendix 5.4.). Table 6.61. shows the steps and acts patterns which were found in Problem moves.

In Solution move, Suggesting Ways of Improving (SWI) was the obligatory step. Other optional steps included FO, and HS, in patterns such as SWI; FO + SWI; FO + SWI + HS + SWI. No obligatory acts were found in SWI. Optional acts included were EP (Embedded Problem), EX, MS, PJ, and RE (Recommendation), while in the Conclusion move, Overall Judgement (OJ) was the obligatory step, with PJ as the obligatory act. No optional acts were found (see Table 6.61. for the acts patterns which were found in the Solution and Conclusion moves). A summary of the moves, steps and acts patterns in IACAR is shown in Figure 6.13.

Table 6.61. Examples of acts patterns in Initiation, Problem, and Solution moves in IACAR

Move	Step	Acts patterns
Initiation	Focus (FO)	MS
	General Impression (GI)	PJ + PJ PJ + EP PJ + MS
	Highlighting Strength (HS)	MI, PJ + PJ PJ + EP PJ + ES PJ + FR PJ + MS PJ + PJ, PJ + EX, FR
Problem	Focus (FO)	MS MS, CAW, MS + CAW CAW + CAW ES + CAW, CAW ES + EX, ES MS + CAW + ES PJ + ES, EX, CAW, CAW
	General Impression (GI)	PJ + PJ
	Highlighting Strength (HS)	PJ + EP
Solution	Focus (FO)	MS
	Suggesting Ways of Improving (SWI)	PJ, RE, RE PJ, EP, RE MS, RE RE, RE + EP, CAW MS + EP + EX, RE
Conclusion	Overall Judgement (OJ)	PJ PJ + PJ

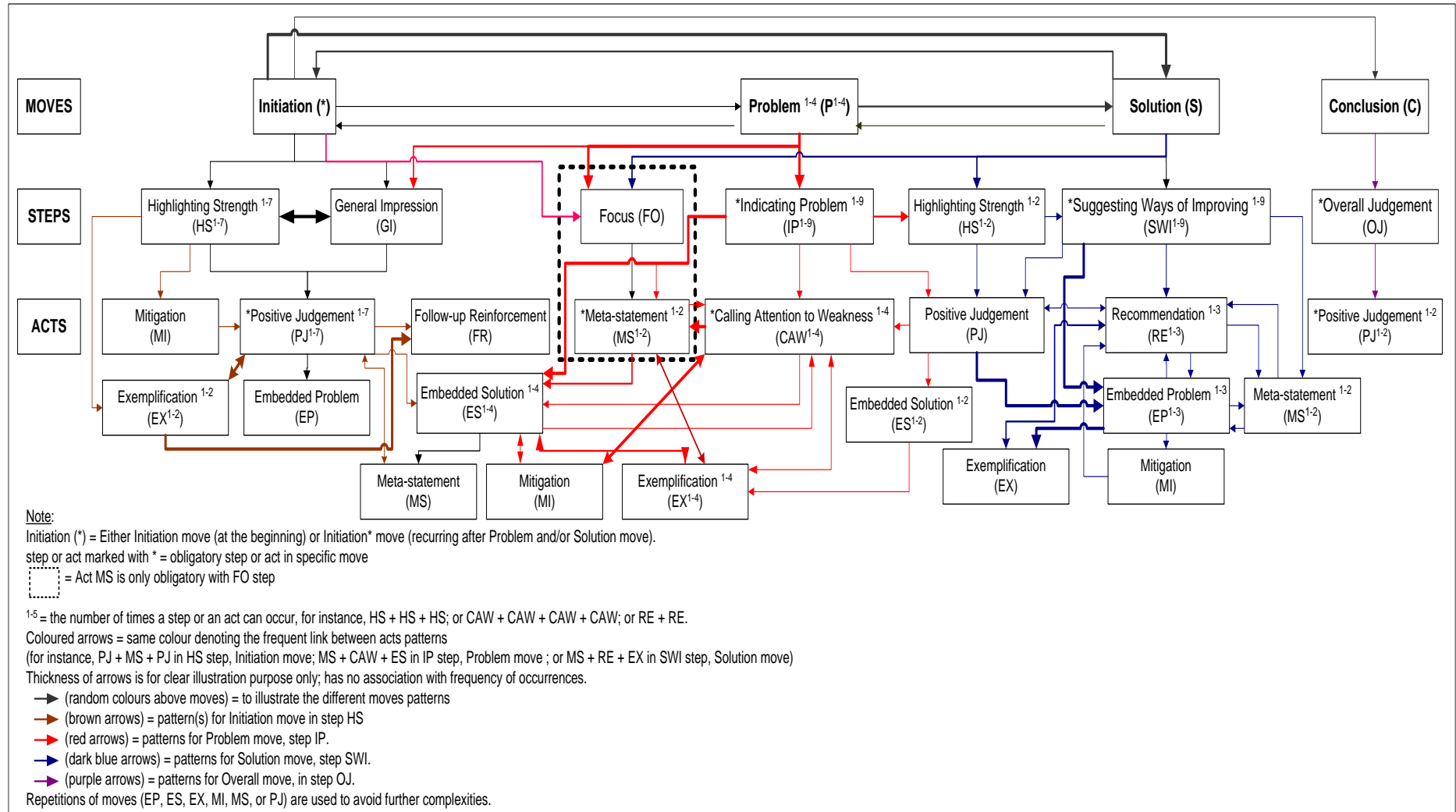
Note:

+ represents the sub-acts within the step such as (Act 1(a), Act 1(b)).

, represents the second act within the step such as (Act 1, Act 2).

- CAW = Calling Attention to Weakness; EP = Embedded Problem; ES = Embedded Solution;
EX = Exemplification; FR = Follow-up Reinforcement; MI = Mitigation; MS = Meta-statement;
PJ = Positive Judgement; RE = Recommendation

Figure 6.13. Summary of moves, steps and acts patterns in ‘Interpretation, analysis, construction of argument and relevance’ (IACAR)



The example in Table 6.62. shows one of the unusual steps and acts patterns which were found in the criterion, IACAR. For instance, the occurrences of General Impression (GI) and Highlighting Strength (HS) steps (steps 2 and 5) in the Problem move. As the subsequent comment is a list of problems (in steps 3 and 4), the whole chunk of texts (beginning of Focus (FO) in step 1) was analysed as the Problem move. Based on the analyses from the other feedback reports, IACAR was found to be the criterion which raised most concerns about the essay, given in a list of comments, often initiated with a meta-statement (for example: *some point for you to note*), possibly influencing the analysis.

Table 6.62. Steps and acts analysis in the Initiation(*) and Problem moves in IACAR
(PJ in blue; CAW in dark red; EP in red; ES in green; EX in dark blue; and MS in pink)

Move	Step	Act	Example:
Initiation	Step 1 General Impression	Act 1 (a) Positive Judgement Act 1 (b) Positive Judgement	1a[The essay constructs a good argument] 1b[and your points are all relevant.]
	Step 2 Highlighting Strength	Act 1 (a) Positive Judgement Act 1 (b) Embedded Problem	1a[Your analysis is fairly good] 1b[although at certain places it falters.]
Problem	Step 1 Focus	Act 1 Meta-statement	1[Here are some points for you to note:]
	Step 2 General Impression	Act 1 (a) Positive Judgement Act 1 (b) Positive Judgement	• 1a[Your analysis of reporting verbs is good] 1b[and you have given examples to support your evaluation of the features of academic discourse.]
	Step 3 Indicating Problem	Act 1 (a) Embedded Solution Act 1 (b) Calling Attention to Weakness	• 1a[The analysis of conjunctions could be better] 1b[as you only have one example of Halliday's categories.]
		Act 2 Calling Attention to Weakness	2[I'm not sure if you analysed the text for the other two categories as you do not say anything more about it beyond a definition of what these categories are.]
	Step 4 Indicating Problem	Act 1 (a) Calling Attention to Weakness Act 1 (b) Calling Attention to Weakness	• 1a[Your example of a passive is not a passive] 1b[and your explanation of the use of this is not clear.]
	Step 5 Highlighting Strength	Act 1 Positive Judgement	• 1[You had a good point about the use of definition.]
		Act 2 Embedded Solution	2[This could have been better if you had used Jones' points mentioned at the end of the analysis earlier to support your example.] (Text 48, Department B, Initiation* move excluded, detailed analysis in Appendix 6.6. in CD)

IACAR was also the criterion where the tutor was most critical in giving feedback on the essay, as compared with the other criteria (AK, CE, DP, and OV). Further examples are shown in Table 6.63. where the feedback was presenting a list of problems after problems in the pattern, **P + P + P + P** (similar issues on **P + P** pattern was shown in Table 6.40. earlier).

Table 6.63. Steps and acts analysis in the Problem moves in IACAR
(CAW in dark red; ES in green; EX in dark blue; MI in purple; and MS in pink)

Move	Step	Act	Example:
Problem	Step 1 Indicating Problem	Act 1 Calling Attention to Weakness	1[The essay appears more a summary of concepts than an analysis of how the theory influences practice.]
		Act 2 Embedded Solution	2[Your initial discussion of behaviourism and cognitivism could have been strengthened by showing the link with language acquisition more explicitly.]
		Act 3 Meta-statement	3[We covered these in class.]
Problem	Step 1 Indicating Problem	Act 1 Calling Attention to Weakness	1[Your interpretation is worrying inaccurate in the essay.]
		Act 2 Meta-statement	2[Here are some examples:]
	Step 2 Indicating Problem	Act 1 (a) Calling Attention to Weakness Act 1 (b) Exemplification	• 1a[Throughout the essay you refer to behaviourism or cognitivism and their theories,] 1b[for e.g. top of page 2 'Instead, its theories...' and page 4 'Cognitivism bases its theories...'.]
		Act 2 Calling Attention to Weakness	3[Behaviourism and cognitivism are theories in themselves.]
	Step 3 Indicating Problem	Act 1 Calling Attention to Weakness	• 1[Throughout the essay you refer to cognitivism and what the theory 'teaches us' to do.]
		Act 2 Calling Attention to Weakness	2[The theory does not teach us to do anything.]
		Act 3 Calling Attention to Weakness	3[It influences practice.]
	Step 4 Indicating Problem	Act 1 (a) Meta-statement Act 1 (b) Calling Attention to Weakness	• 1a[Page 3:] 1b[Your quotation on what Cook says about universal grammar is inaccurate.]
			(Text 63, Department B, parts of analyses excluded, refer to Appendix 6.6. in CD for full analysis)

It is open to argument whether there were embedded solutions (ES) within the step Indicating Problem (IP), such as *[b]ehaviourism and cognitivism are theories in themselves* (step 2, act 2) or *[l]inguistic or grammatical competence which is based on Chomsky's work suggests that speakers know the grammar of their language without having to study it explicitly* (step 4, act 2). In both these cases, the tutor was explaining why the student's interpretations were wrong, but based on the context of the whole text however, they were analysed as the Calling Attention to Weakness (CAW) act as they were on the whole negative. Thus, they were interpreted as commenting on the student's failing to comprehend the sources accurately. However, this was a very rare situation since it occurred only twice in the 42 feedback reports which were analysed. The other feedback reports were mostly initiated with positive comments or had positive comments at the end.

As mentioned, the Solution move was also found in IACAR. Table 6.64. shows the Initiation + Solution (I + S) pattern where suggestions were proposed, even though there were also embedded problems (EP).

Table 6.64. Steps and acts analysis in the Initiation and Solution moves in IACAR
(RE in dark green; PJ in blue; EP in red; and MS in pink)

Move	Step	Act	Example:
Initiation	Step 1 General Impression	Act 1 Positive Judgement	1[The essay demonstrates that you have a central core argument.]
	Step 2 Highlighting Strength	Act 1 Positive Judgement	1[Of particular merit is your discussion of the audiolingual approach and its disadvantages and Krashen's learning/acquiring distinction and its relationship with suggestopedia.]
		Act 2 Positive Judgement	2[This is particularly well done.]
		Act 3 Positive Judgement	3[Generally, you have interpreted the theories fairly accurately.]
Solution	Step 1 Suggesting Ways of Improving	Act 1 Recommendation	1[There are some points in your essay which would have benefited from a clearer explanation or more evidence.]
		Act 2 Meta-statement	2[I list a few for you to note:]
	Step 2 Suggesting Ways of Improving	Act 1 (a) Meta-statement Act 1 (b) Embedded Problem	• 1a[Page 3, end of first para:] 1b[The quotation from Brown doesn't quite substantiate the point you are making.]
		Act 2 Embedded Problem	2[His point was a more general one about methods of teaching.]
	Step 3 Suggesting Ways of Improving	Act 1 (a) Meta-statement Act 1 (b) Positive Judgement Act 1 (c) Recommendation	• 1a[Page 3:] 1b[you provide a useful example] 1c[but you could have analysed it further.]
		Act 2 (a) Recommendation Act 2 (b) Meta-statement	2a[What you could have done is linked some of what Cook says 2b{(summarised in the next paragraph)} to this example.]
		Act 3 Recommendation	3[This would have then provided more illustration of your point and developed your core argument.] (Text 64, Department B, parts of analysis excluded, refer to Appendix 6.6. in CD for full analysis)

The examples showed in this section (Tables 6.63. and 6.64.) show one of the main reasons why a feedback structure consisting of moves, steps, and acts has to be proposed. It is important to recognize the complexities of the feedback writing practice in order to raise awareness with student teachers as well as current tutors, to deliver effective and quality

feedback. The move structure looked at large passages of text where each small passage was then analysed for steps before looking at the clause level of sentences for acts.

The recurrence of patterns and the lengthy feedback of steps and acts patterns made it difficult to calculate the frequency of occurrences of each pattern in the respective move. However, the main objective of this research is to investigate the various patterns which are produced from feedback as a genre, thus explaining the lesser focus on statistical counts.

6.3.2.3. Steps and acts in ‘Command of English’ (CE)

No obligatory move was found in Command of English (CE). All four moves (Initiation, Problem, Solution, and Conclusion) were found in CE, although Conclusion was found only once (2.4%) in the Solution + Conclusion (**S** + **C**) pattern. The Initiation move was the most frequently used, in patterns such as **I**; **I** + **P**; **I** + **S**; or **I** + **P** + **S**. As with the other criteria discussed above (AK and IACAR), steps **GI** and **HS** were the optional steps found in the Initiation move where Positive Judgement (**PJ**) was the obligatory act. Step Highlighting Strength (**HS**), in the **HS** pattern, was found more frequently (65.7%) in the Initiation move as compared with the General Impression (**GI**) pattern (25.7%); **GI** + **HS** pattern or **HS** + **GI** pattern (8.6%). The optional acts include Embedded Problem (**EP**), Embedded Solution (**ES**), Exemplification (**EX**), and Meta-statement (**MS**) (see Table 6.65. for the various acts pattern which were found in each step).

In the Problem move, step Indicating Problem (**IP**) was the obligatory step and step Focus (**FO**) was optional. No obligatory act was found in step **IP**. The optional acts included Calling Attention to Weakness (**CAW**), Embedded Solution (**ES**), Exemplification (**EX**), Mitigation (**MI**), and Meta-statement (**MS**). The act **MS** was obligatory step **FO** only. As for the Solution move, the optional moves included **RE** (Recommendation), **EP** (Embedded Problem), **EX**, and **MS** (see Table 6.65. for the various acts pattern which were found in each move and step). A summary of the moves, steps and acts patterns in IACAR is shown in Figure 6.14.

Table 6.65. Examples of acts patterns in the Initiation, Problem, Solution, and Conclusion moves in CE

Move	Step	Acts patterns
Initiation	Focus (FO)	MS
	General Impression (GI)	PJ, PJ PJ, ES PJ + ES, EX + MS
	Highlighting Strength (HS)	PJ PJ, EP + MI, PJ PJ, EP + MI, PJ PJ + ES PJ + PJ + PJ PJ + EP, EX + MS
Problem	Focus (FO)	MS
	Indicating Problem (IP)	CAW, EX + CAW CAW + MS CAW + MI CAW + EX + ES, MI EX + MS MS + EX, ES
Solution	Focus (FO)	MS
	Suggesting Ways of Improving (SWI)	RE + EX + MS EX + MS + RE MS + EX MS + RE, EP
Conclusion	OJ	PJ

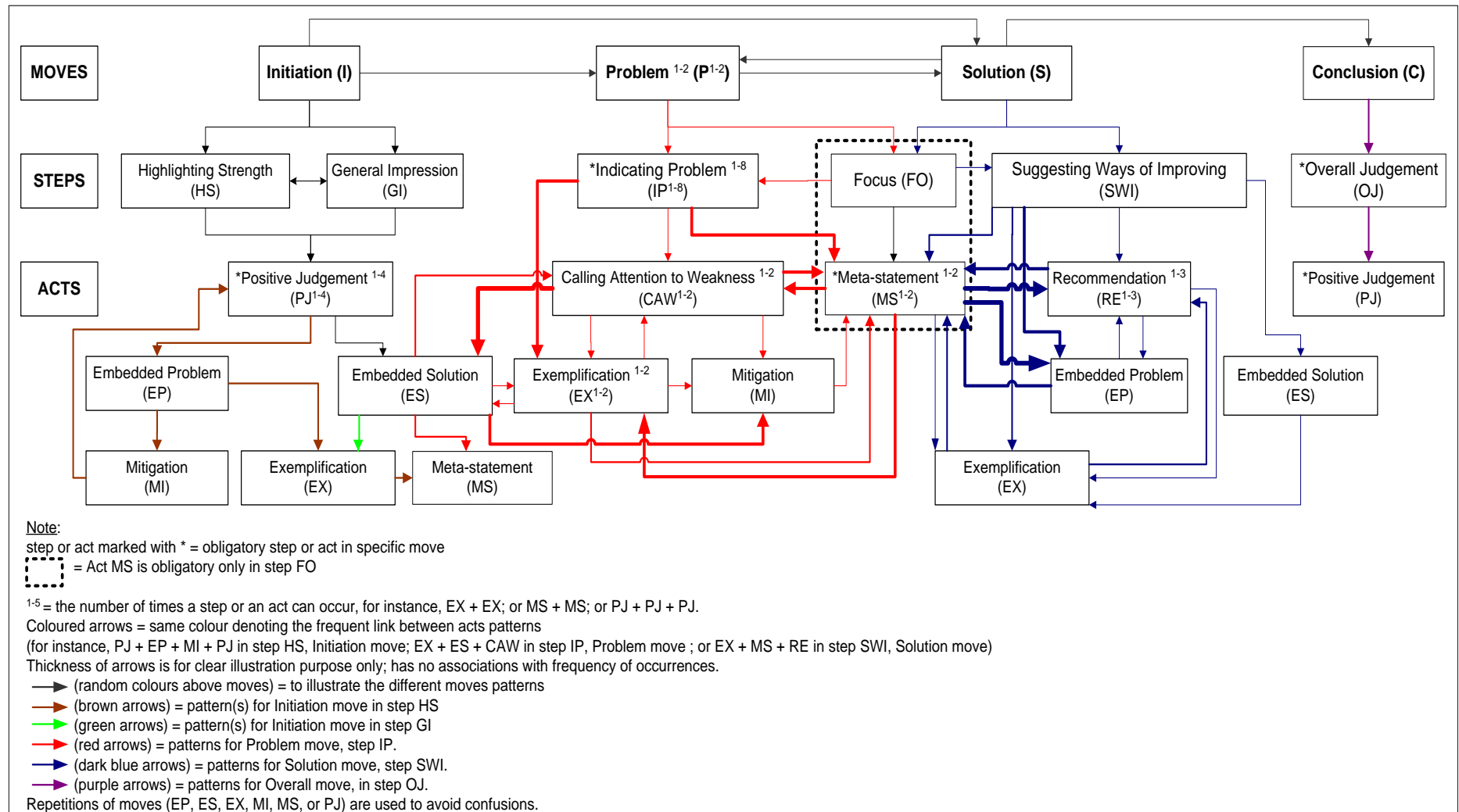
Note:

+ represents the sub-acts within the step such as (Act 1(a), Act 1(b)).

, represents the second act within the step such as (Act 1, Act 2).

- CAW = Calling Attention to Weakness; EP = Embedded Problem; ES = Embedded Solution;
EX = Exemplification; FR = Follow-up Reinforcement; MI = Mitigation; MS = Meta-statement;
PJ = Positive Judgement; RE = Recommendation

Figure 6.14. Summary of moves, steps and acts patterns in 'Command of English' (CE)



On the whole, the feedback in Command of English (CE) was very positive, often with positive comments (in act PJ), example is further shown in Table 6.66.

Table 6.66. Steps and acts analysis in the Initiation move in Command of English (CE) (PJ in blue)

Move	Step	Act	Example:
Initiation	Step 1 General Impression	Act 1 Positive Judgement	1[This essay displays a good command of English.]
		Act 2 Positive Judgement	2[It is also written in an appropriate style for an academic essay.] (Text 83, Department B)

The Problem and Solution moves (as discussed in Section 6.3.1.3.) may also be found alongside the Initiation move. Table 6.67. further shows the steps and acts patterns which were found in the Problem and Solution moves.

Table 6.67. Steps and acts analysis in the Initiation, Problem, and Solution moves in CE
(PJ in blue; CAW in dark red; EX in dark blue; ES in green; MS in pink; and RE in dark green)

Move	Step	Act	Example:
Initiation	Step 1 General Impression	Act 1 (a) Positive Judgement Act 1 (b) Embedded Solution	1a[The essay demonstrates a fairly good academic style] 1b[although some phrases/words could be revised.]
		Act 2 (a) Exemplification Act 2 (b) Meta-statement	2a[For example, 'positives and negatives of the theories..'] 2b[(page 1),] 2a['contexts they were born from...'] 2b[(page 1),] 2a['one negative to such drills...'] 2b[(page 2).]
Problem	Step 1 Indicating Problem	Act 1 (a) Calling Attention to Weakness Act 1 (b) Exemplification	1a[These are some sentences, 1b{especially sentences with integrated quotations} that are awkward in phrasing and thus unclear.]
		Act 2 (a) Exemplification Act 2 (b) Meta-statement	2a[For example, 'Language is seen as a complex faculty...by general cognition complex'] 2b[(page 3).]
Solution	Step 1 Suggesting Ways of Improving	Act 1 (a) Recommendation Act 1 (b) Exemplification	1a[There is no need for you to capitalise words 1b{such as 'behaviourism', 'language acquisition', 'audiolingual'} unless they occur at the beginning of sentences.]
	Step 2 Suggesting Ways of Improving	Act 1 Recommendation	1[There are some sentences that needed to be rephrased to ensure that the meaning you intended was reflected in the sentence.]
		Act 2 Meta-statement	2[Here are three examples:]
	Step 3 Suggesting Ways of Improving	Act 1 (a) Exemplification Act 1 (b) Meta-statement	• 1a['Additionally, they may willing to speak in the target country as they will be used to have silence as a security blanket'] 1b[(page 3).] (Text 68, Department B, parts of analysis excluded, refer to Appendix 6.6. in CD for full analysis)

There were also 11.9% of the feedback reports where the Problem move (as discussed in Section 6.3.1.3., and shown in Table 6.44.) was used on its own. Table 6.68. further shows an example of this along with the steps and acts analysis.

Table 6.68. Examples of acts patterns in the Problem move in CE

(CAW in dark red; EX in dark blue; ES in green; and MS in pink)

Move	Step	Act	Example:
Problem	Step 1 Indicating Problem	Act 1 (a) Calling Attention to Weakness Act 1 (b) Embedded Solution	1a[There are some errors in your essay] 1b[which could have been avoided if you had proofread it before submission.]
	Step 2 Focus	Act 1 Meta-statement	1[Here are a few examples:]
	Step 3 Indicating Problem	Act 1 Exemplification	• 1[page 2, 'optimum age to learn a second language us']
	Step 4 Indicating Problem	Act 1 Exemplification	• 1[page 3 'Lenneberg argues that...works successful..']
	Step 5 Indicating Problem	Act 1 Exemplification	• 1[page 3 'The better <i>their</i> master of their first language...']
	Step 6 Indicating Problem	Act 1 Exemplification	• 1[page 5 'Bruder <i>group</i> drills...'].] (Text 62, Department B)

6.3.2.4. Steps and acts in 'Documentation and Presentation' (DP)

The Initiation move was the most frequent move found across this criterion, as with other criteria (AK, IACAR, CE, and OV), in the patterns, **I**; **I + P**; **I + S**; or **S + I** *. There was no obligatory step in the Initiation move. The optional steps included General Impression (**GI**), and Highlighting Strength (**HS**). Step **HS** was the most frequent step found in the Initiation move of Documentation and Presentation (DP) (70%), followed by step **GI** (20%), and **GI + HS** (10%). As with the other criteria, the act Positive Judgement (**PJ**) was the obligatory act in either steps **GI** or **HS**. Other optional acts included Embedded Problem (**EP**), and Embedded Solution (**ES**). Table 6.69. shows the different acts patterns which were found in each step.

The Problem move was used less in Documentation and Presentation (DP) (28.6%) as compared with the criteria, IACAR (61.9%) or CE (52.4%). Indicating Problem (**IP**) was the obligatory step in the Problem move and Focus (**FO**) as the optional step, in the patterns **IP** (91.7% in Problem move), and **FO + IP** (8.3%). Optional acts in step **IP** of the Problem move included Calling Attention to Weakness (**CAW**), Embedded Solution (**ES**), Exemplification (**EX**), Mitigation (**MI**), and Meta-statement (**MS**) (see Table 6.69. for the acts patterns found in the Problem move). As for the Solution move, it was more frequent in DP (66.7%) than in the other criteria, AK, IACAR, CE, or OV (examples as shown in Section 6.3.1.4.). The obligatory step in the Solution move was Suggesting Ways of Improving (**SWI**) and steps Focus (**FO**) and General Impression (**GI**) were optional, found in the patterns **SWI** (78.6%), or **FO + SWI** (14.3%), or **GI + SWI** (7.1%). The obligatory acts in **SWI** were Recommendation (**RE**), Embedded Problem (**EP**), **EX**, **MI**, and **MS**. As for step **FO**, the obligatory act remained **MS** and act **PJ** for the step **GI** (see Table 6.69. for the acts patterns which were found in Solution move). A summary of the moves, steps and acts patterns in DP is shown in Figure 6.15.

Table 6.69. Examples of acts patterns in the Initiation, Problem, and Solution moves in DP

Move	Step	Acts patterns
Initiation	General Impression (GI)	PJ PJ + PJ
	Highlighting Strength (HS)	PJ , PJ PJ, ES, EP
Problem	Focus (FO)	MS
	Indicating Problem (IP)	CAW CAW, CAW, MS + CAW CAW + ES + CAW CAW + EX, ES + EX MI + CAW
Solution	Focus (FO)	MS
	General Impression (GI)	PJ PJ, MS
	Suggesting Ways of Improving (SWI)	RE EP, RE RE, RE, EP + EX + EP MS + RE EP + RE, EX

Note:

+ represents the sub-acts within the step such as (Act 1(a), Act 1(b)).

, represents the second act within the step such as (Act 1, Act 2).

- CAW = Calling Attention to Weakness; EP = Embedded Problem; ES = Embedded Solution;
EX = Exemplification; FR = Follow-up Reinforcement; MI = Mitigation; MS = Meta-statement;
PJ = Positive Judgement; RE = Recommendation

The examples below in Tables 6.70. to 6.72. show the steps and acts analysis found in the Initiation, Problem, and Solution moves of the criterion DP.

Table 6.70. Steps and acts analysis in the Initiation move in DP
(PJ in blue)

Move	Step	Act	Example:
Initiation	Step 1 Highlighting Strength	Act 1 (a) Positive Judgement Act 1 (b) Positive Judgement	1a[You have adhered to the conventions of referencing] 1b[and your essay follows the guidelines stipulated in the Style Guide.]
	Step 2 General Impression	Act 1 Positive Judgement	1[The essay is neatly presented.]

Table 6.71. Steps and acts analysis in the Problem move in DP

(CAW in dark red; and MS in pink)

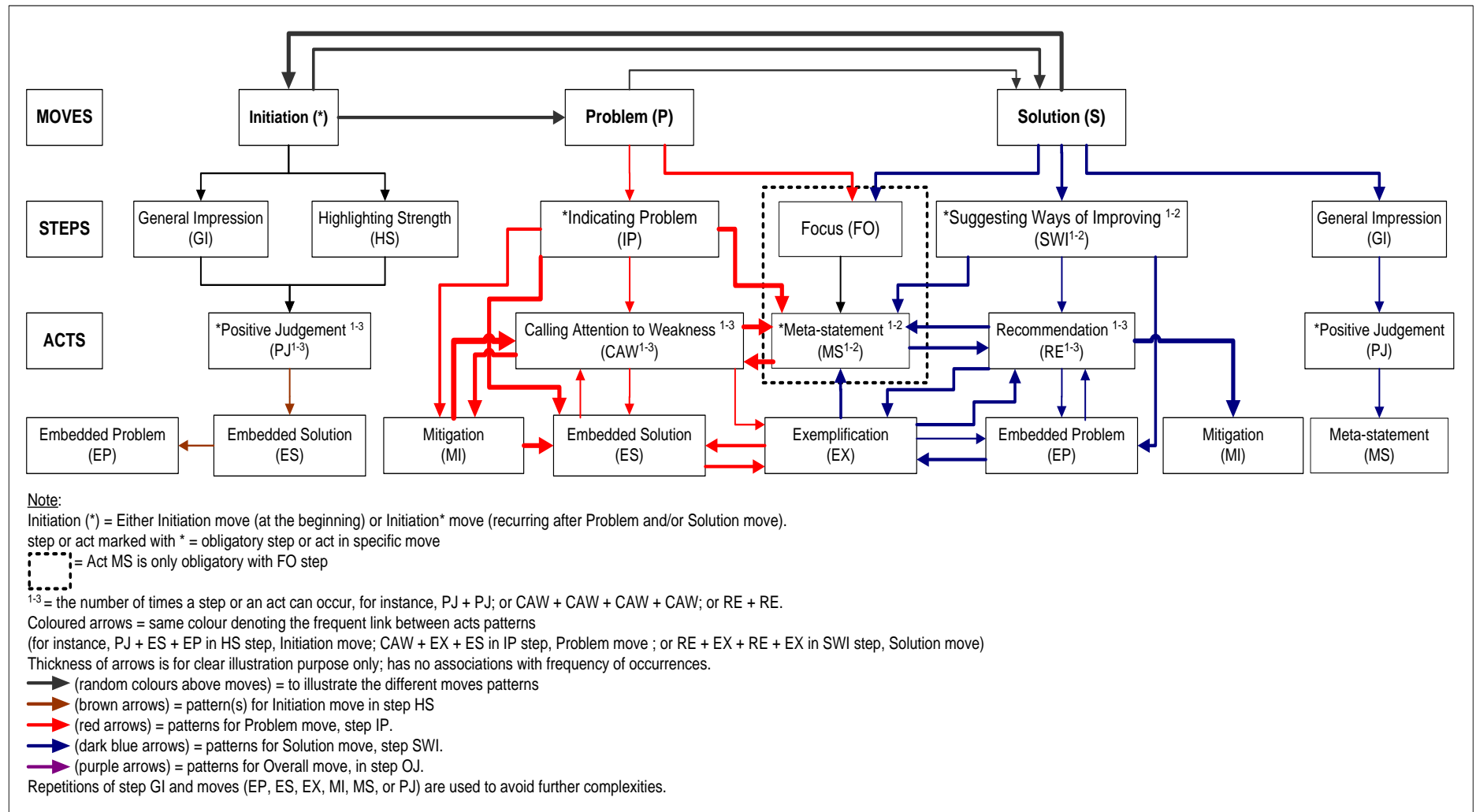
Move	Step	Act	Example:
Problem	Step 1 Indicating Problem	Act 1 Calling Attention to Weakness	1[This is the area of most concern.]
		Act 2 Calling Attention to Weakness	2[Many references within the essay are not part of your reference list at the end of the essay.]
		Act 3 (a) Meta-statement Act 3 (b) Calling Attention to Weakness	3a[You provide an extensive list of 'works cited' and 'works consulted'] 3b[however much of your cited references lack full bibliographical details.] (Text 65, Department B)

Table 6.72. Steps and acts analysis in the Solution move in DP

(RE in dark green; EX in dark blue)

Move	Step	Act	Example:
Solution	Step 1 Suggesting Ways of Improving	Act 1 (a) Recommendation Act 1 (b) Exemplification	1a[When you refer to a text within your essay, you only need the author's surname and publication date of the book you are referring to] 1b[– (Machin, 2007).]
		Act 2 Recommendation	2[Do check the Style Guide for how to present your Bibliography.]
		Act 3 Recommendation	3[Please do remember to add page numbers to your essay.] (Text 65, Department B)

Figure 6.15. Summary of moves, steps and acts patterns in 'Documentation and Presentation' (DP)



6.3.2.5. Steps and acts in ‘Overall’ (OV)

Although not obligatory, the Initiation move was the most frequent move in Overall (OV) (90.5%), in the patterns, **I** or **I + S** (Initiation + Solution). In OV, step General Impression (**GI**) was found to be obligatory in the Initiation move, in patterns such as **GI** (63.1%); **GI + FO** (Focus) (31.6%); or **GI + HS** (Highlighting Strength) (5.3%). Act Positive Judgement (**PJ**) was obligatory in step **GI** and act Meta-statement (**MS**) in step **FO**. The other optional acts found were Embedded Solution (**ES**), Follow-up Reinforcement (**FR**), and **MS**.

The Problem and Solution moves were less frequent (7.1% respectively) in the patterns, **P** for Problem move and **S** or **I + S** for Solution move. In the Problem move, the main step pattern found was **IP + FO** where act Calling Attention to Weakness (**CAW**) was obligatory in step Indicating Problem (**IP**) and act Meta-statement (**MS**) in step Focus (**FO**). Other optional acts included Embedded Solution (**ES**), Mitigation (**MI**), and **MS**. As for the Solution move, step Suggesting Ways of Improving (**SWI**) was obligatory and step **FO** was optional, in the patterns **SWI** or **SWI + FO**. Act Recommendation (**RE**) was the main obligatory act found in the Solution move of OV. Table 6.73. shows the different acts patterns which were found in each step and move. A summary of the moves, steps and acts patterns in OV is shown in Figure 6.16.

Table 6.73. Examples of acts patterns in the Initiation, Problem, and Solution moves in OV

Move	Step	Acts patterns
Initiation	Focus (FO)	MS
	General Impression (GI)	PJ PJ, PJ, FR PJ, PJ + ES PJ, MS, FR
	Highlighting Strength (HS)	PJ, FR PJ + PJ, FR
Problem	Focus (FO)	MS MS, MS, MS
	Indicating Problem (IP)	CAW, MI + CAW
Solution	Focus (FO)	MS
	Suggesting Ways of Improving (SWI)	RE

Note:

+ represents the sub-acts within the step such as (Act 1(a), Act 1(b)).

, represents the second act within the step such as (Act 1, Act 2).

• CAW = Calling Attention to Weakness; ES = Embedded Solution; FR = Follow-up Reinforcement;

MS = Meta-statement; MI = Mitigation; RE = Recommendation

The examples below in Tables 6.74. to 6.76. show the steps and acts analysis found in the Initiation, Problem, and Solution moves of the criterion, Overall (OV).

Table 6.74. Steps and acts analysis in the Initiation move in OV

(PJ in blue; and MS in pink)

Move	Step	Act	Example:
Initiation	Step 1 General Impression	Act 1 Positive Judgement	1[A good and competent essay which covers the essential points in fairly good detail.]
	Step 2 Focus	Act 1 Meta-statement	1[I look forward to discussing it with you in greater detail when we meet.] (Text 59, Department B)

Table 6.75. Steps and acts analysis in the Problem move in OV

(CAW in dark red; MI in purple; and MS in pink)

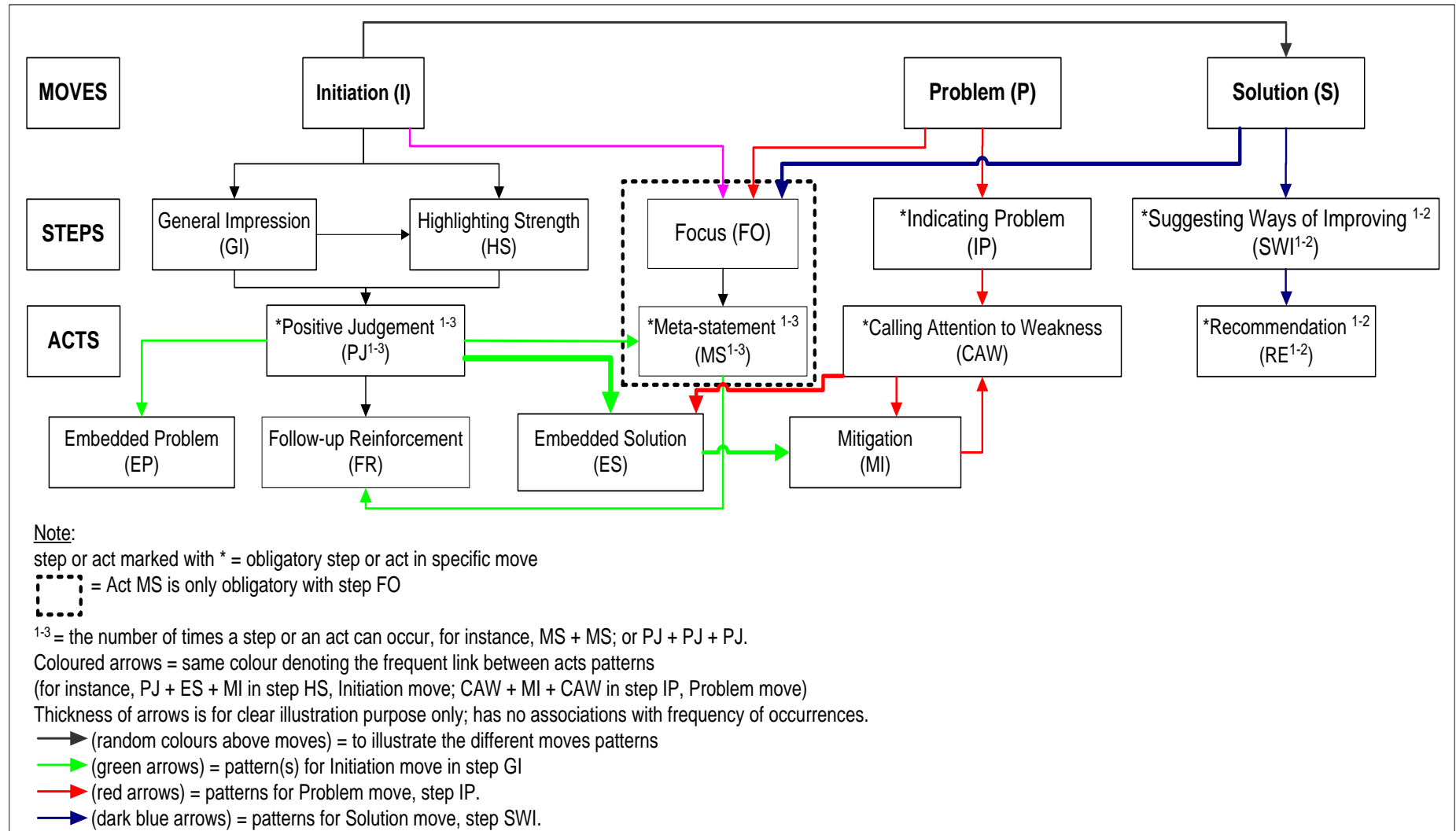
Move	Step	Act	Example:
Problem	Step 1 Indicating Problem	Act 1 Calling Attention to Weakness	1[This essay does not answer the question with relevant information.]
		Act 2 (a) Mitigation Act 2 (b) Calling Attention to Weakness	2a[It covers some of the material covered on the course] 2b[but does not put this information together in a coherent form necessary of an academic essay.]
	Step 2 Focus	Act 1 Meta-statement	1[When we meet, we will discuss your essay in further detail and work out how best you could have used some of the material here to construct your argument.]
		Act 2 Meta-statement	2[We will also discuss what other sources you might have read and referred to in answering this question.]
		Act 3 Meta-statement	3[Please do take up my offer of discussing assignment 2 before you begin writing it as I think it will be helpful for us to meet.] (Text 60, Department B)

Table 6.76. Steps and acts analysis in the Solution move in OV

(RE in dark green; and MS in pink)

Move	Step	Act	Example:
Solution	Step 1 Suggesting Ways of Improving	Act 1 Recommendation	1[An essay that needs more thorough research of relevant and more recent sources and substantially more in-depth exploration of the main issues in the question.]
	Step 2 Focus	Act 1 Meta-statement	1[We will discuss this essay in further detail when we meet.] (Text 63, Department B)

Figure 6.16. Summary of moves, steps and acts patterns in Overall (OV)



6.3.2.6. Summary of moves, steps, and acts patterns in Department B

This section has looked at the different steps and acts patterns found in the five criteria (AK, IACAR, CE, DP, and OV) of Department B's feedback reports. As has been discussed, some steps and acts were obligatory in certain moves. However, the obligatory and optional steps and acts varied across the five criteria. For instance, General Impression (GI) was an obligatory step in the criterion Overall (OV). Unlike Department A, it is difficult to draw a summary tree diagram for the five criteria, hence the reason each criterion is discussed separately, and tree diagrams are drawn for all five criteria respectively. One thing which is the same between both departments is that there seemed to be no definite steps and acts patterns for each move within each criterion.

This chapter has looked at the genre analysis of feedback from Department A and Department B, exploring the moves, steps, and acts patterns of feedback. The findings from the genre analysis of written academic feedback can be related back to my research questions as outlined in Chapter 1. Written academic feedback has a distinctive genre on its own, made up of four moves, five steps, and nine acts. The moves, steps, and acts were all optional, depending largely on the feedback template, personal feedback writing style, as well as departmental practice. The next chapter will discuss the main findings gathered from the analyses further.

CHAPTER 7: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION ON GENRE ANALYSIS

The previous chapter has looked at the findings from the genre analysis of feedback, exploring the different patterns emerging from the feedback writing practices of tutors from both Departments A and B. This chapter presents the discussion from the results of the feedback analysis from Chapter 6. It will discuss the genre of feedback consisting of moves, steps and acts structures. This chapter will combine and discuss the results from both departments as there are similarities between both sets of feedback reports.

7.1. Account of findings

From the analysis in Chapter 6, there are a number of distinctive structures in the feedback in Department A and Department B. As seen from the previous chapter, the genre of feedback consists of a structure of moves, steps and acts, moves being the highest level and acts the lowest. Four main moves are found: Initiation (**I**), Problem (**P**), Solution (**S**) and Conclusion (**C**) (a summary of each moves, steps and acts along with their descriptions and examples are shown in Appendix 6.1.). All four moves are optional, even with the preset criteria in Department B's feedback template, although it was originally thought that the Initiation move would be obligatory. As discussed in Chapter 6, various patterns were found across the 84 feedback reports (for instance, **I + P**, **I + C**, or **I + P + S**).

Unlike Swales's (1981, 1990) CARS model (as discussed in Section 3.2.2.) whereby specific steps are associated with each move, it has been a challenging task in this research to relate a specific step to a move (as discussed in Chapter 5). Hence, the steps and acts are

not linked to a specific move. The moves patterns used in both departments tend to vary which could be due to the feedback writing practices in both departments; free-form feedback template in Department A and criteria-based feedback template in Department B (discussed further in subsequent sections). The steps and acts structures are found to recur in different moves. For instance, step Highlighting Strength (**HS**) can be found in the Initiation move as well as the Conclusion move. Similarly, the acts are not associated with specific steps or moves. For instance, in the Initiation move, steps General Impression (**GI**) and Highlighting Strength (**HS**) were used with the act Positive Judgement (**PJ**). At the same time, the act Positive Judgement (**PJ**) can also be found in the Conclusion move in step Overall Judgement (**OJ**).

7.2. Moves patterns in Department A and Department B

7.2.1. Initiation move

An interesting finding on the Initiation move was that it is an optional move. The Initiation move can be omitted although it was originally assumed to occur consistently in all the feedback reports since it is an introduction of the basic thoughts with regard to the quality of the essay, mainly commenting on general aspects of essays. Three optional steps; Focus (**FO**), General Impression (**GI**), and Highlighting Strength (**HS**) were found in the Initiation move. Meta-statement (**MS**) act is obligatory in **FO** and Positive Judgement (**PJ**) act is obligatory in both steps **GI** and **HS**. Other optional act in steps **GI** and **HS** include act **FR** (Follow-up Reinforcement).

The analysis of the Initiation move from both departments has also shown that in cases where the Initiation move is found, it is in general conveyed positively (almost 100%), except for the rare negative feedback found in one of the weak essays. Further examples of the positive Initiation move (highlighted in blue) are shown in Figure 7.1.

Figure 7.1. Examples of positive comments in the Initiation move

(1) You've researched this topic well and use some apt quotations from critics to help support your points....	[Text 1, Department A]
(2) Your account of the chapter is very detailed and highlights key features effectively, all the time making an explicit or implicit commentary on the position being expressed as well as referring knowledgeably to the data being presented...	[Text 41, Department A]
(3) This essay demonstrates a full and complete understanding of the concepts taught on the course. You have read widely and referred to a number of different sources as you construct your argument about academic discourse.	[Text 54, Department B, in AK]
(4) The essay generally constructs a good argument and is relevant.	[Text 54, Department B, in IACAR]
(5) Your essay is written in good English. It is fluent and reflects a good command of the English language. You also show an awareness of writing within an academic setting by using an appropriate style.	[Text 54, Department B, in CE]
(6) This is well done. Your essay adheres to the guidelines stipulated in the Style Guide.	[Text 54, Department B, in DP]
(7) A good essay which shows that you have understood the nature and features of academic writing.	[Text 54, Department B, in OV]

Apart from using the Initiation move at the beginning of the feedback, the Initiation move was also found to recur, either after a Problem move or a Solution move, indicated by: Initiation* or I* (for instance, in the patterns: I + P + I*; or I + S + I* + C). There was a rare occurrence in Department A where the Initiation move was used after a Conclusion

move, in the pattern **C + I*** (as shown in Section 6.2.1.10., Table 6.12.). It is uncertain for this rare occurrence.

Amongst the five criteria in Department B, the Initiation* move (the recurrence of the Initiation move after the Problem or Solution moves) was not found in the criteria, Command of English (CE) and Overall (OV). All the Initiation* moves were also found to be positive, similar to the Initiation move (as shown in Figure 7.1. earlier). Further examples of the positive Initiation* move are shown in Figure 7.2. (highlighted in blue).

Figure 7.2. Examples of positive comments in the Initiation* move

(8) Your conclusion is clear and does focus on your skills .	[after Solution move; Text 19, Department A]
(9) Each point in the analysis is supported and illustrated through the use of examples from the text.	[after Problem move; Text 24, Department A]
(10) The essay uses a good range of other evidence (classroom activities cited in the appendix) to substantiate and explain some of the points.	[after Solution move; Text 65, Department B, in AK]
(11) Your essay is extremely good in terms of the following: • It has attempted a sustained comparison of the different elements of your analysis. This is definitely a strength in your essay.	[after Problem move; Text 43, Department B, in IACAR]
(12) Your essay is generally well presented .	[after Solution move; Text 71, Department B, in DP]

Based on experience and observations from the analysis, tutors are constantly trying to be supportive. Apart from providing a conducive classroom learning environment for students, one of the other ways is to provide positive and encouraging feedback for them to be better learners or writers (Hyland & Hyland, 2001:186; Rust, 2002:152). This is reflected in the feedback practice where the Initiation move (almost 100%) was found to be

the most frequent move used in the feedback reports from both departments, including the five criteria in Department B. Hyland and Hyland (2001) also found 44% of their study on feedback (in a L2 setting) was praise, 31% criticism, and 25% explicit suggestion. The ESL tutors in their research were aware of the consequence of negative feedback, such as affecting students' self-confidence, and tried not to overuse negative feedback. Mutch's (2003) study (in a L1 setting), however, showed that positive and negative feedback were almost on an equal scale. Hyatt's (2005) research on Masters degree student assignments (L1 setting) revealed similar findings where tutors' commentaries on the positive aspects of student writing were very apparent, although he had not anticipated it. This seems to suggest that tutors are on the whole very positive and encouraging and they strongly value the effects of negative comments on students.

Step Focus (FO) and act Meta-statement (MS) are general statements made about the essay which have no evaluative meanings in them (as shown in the examples in Chapter 6 earlier). One noticeable feature of MS implies a level of idiosyncrasy or could also be the tutor's personal feedback writing style. For instance, in Department A's feedback reports, five meta-statements (out of eight) were found from the same tutor, as shown in Figure 7.3. (examples 13–17). In Department B, similar meta-statements were used by the same tutor, such as *some points for you to note* or *looking forward to discuss* (as shown in Figure 7.3., examples 18–20). Other similar idiosyncratic features will be mentioned as this chapter progresses.

Figure 7.3. Examples of meta-statements

(13) This assignment focuses upon a Proppian narrative analysis of ‘Hansel and Gretel’.	[Text 20, Department A]
(14) Propp’s ‘Morphology of the Folk Tale’ is the model used to account for the structural features of the text.	[Text 21, Department A]
(15) This assignment focuses on a narrative analysis of two versions of ‘The Boy Who Cried Wolf’.	[Text 22, Department A]
(16) This assignment focuses on a structural narrative analysis of ‘Cinderella’.	[Text 23, Department A]
(17) This assignment focuses upon an analysis of a television advertisement.	[Text 24, Department A]
(18) Here are some specific points I wish to commend you for:	[Text 50, Department B, in IACAR]
(19) ...a few suggestions for how to improve:	[Text 53, Department B, in IACAR]
(20) I look forward to discussing it with you when we meet.	[Text 57, Department B, in OV]

7.2.2. Problem move

Hoey’s Problem-Solution structure (1979, 1983, 1994) was adapted as the problem and solution pattern was very evident right from the initial stage of developing the framework of feedback (Chapter 5, Figure 5.2.). The Problem move is where the tutor states the weakness(es) of the essay. Step Indicating Problem (**IP**) is the main obligatory step in the Problem move. As seen from Chapter 6, because of the tutor’s feedback writing practice in Department B, there is no obligatory act in step **IP**, although act Calling Attention to Weakness (**CAW**) is obligatory in Department A and some criteria in Department B (for instance, AK, IACAR, and OV). On the whole however, act **CAW** is not an obligatory act in step **IP** of the Problem move, as it is largely dependent on individual tutor’s writing practices. One of Hoey’s indicators of the Problem function is the explicit mention of *problem* in the discourse (Hoey, 1979:43-44; 1983:70-71; 1994:37-38). In fact, it is in

Hoey's words: "unsurprisingly a very common signal of the discourse" (Hoey, 1979:43). In this research, the term '*problem*' seemed to be avoided by tutors. There was no mention in Department A and only two occurrences in Department B (as shown in Figure 7.4.). The main reason why *problem* is avoided is due to the negative connotation associated with it. The tutor is trying to avoid causing any face-threatening acts that might cause the student to lose face. Although *problem* is not explicitly mentioned in most cases, the Problem move was found to have negative meanings, such as *errors*, *failings*, or *inaccuracies*, or emphasised in negatives such as *do(es) not*, or *is/are not* (as shown in Figure 7.4.).

Although the Problem move was negative, tutors were hedging their comments (as underlined in Figure 7.4.) in order to soften the problems through the use of lexical verbs such as *seemed to*, or use of modal verbs such as *may be* or *could be* and use of vague language such as *some* (hedging is further discussed in Chapters 8 and 9). Tutors were found to be more assertive when commenting on the mechanical issues such as referencing, spelling, or academic writing practices (examples 27 and 28 in Figure 7.4.) because they are conventions of writing which students should be familiar with, hence the assertiveness (as discussed in the previous chapter).

Figure 7.4. Negativity in Problem move

(21)	There appears to be a fundamental problem with your understanding of what a ‘theory’ refers to.	[Text 60, Department B, in IACAR]
(22)	Your essay displays problems with sentence construction, textual coherence and expressions which are inappropriate for an academic essay.	[Text 72, Department B, in CE]
(23)	Your discussion of The * in particular <u>seemed to drift</u> from the question.	[Text 1, Department A]
(24)	You don’t adhere to the prescribed structure for each entry – with targets coming at the end of each entry – and this <u>may be</u> a factor in the tendency to disassociate your experience and reflection from the targets/experience and reflections for subsequent sessions.	[Text 19, Department A]
(25)	However, there is <u>some misinterpretation of information</u> which affects the clarity of the argument in your essay.	[Text 61, Department B, in AK]
(26)	• Your use of the theories is not as accurate <u>as it could be</u> . Proponents of the Behaviourist theory did not discuss language acquisition or learning in any way. Your question is asking you to reflect on how these theories have influenced language teaching.	[Text 61, Department B, in IACAR]
(27)	• Page 1, para 2, 3 – ‘roughly speaking’, ‘brief sketch’, is too colloquial for an academic essay .	[Text 61, Department B, in CE]
(28)	• Skinner (2005) – Skinner died in 1990. Your reference is to a book he wrote in 1953. • Ellis (2006) – it’s not China: Oxford University Press.	[Text 61, Department B, in DP]
(29)	The essay achieves its aims in a limited manner.	[Text 61, Department B, in OV]

In addition to hedging, there were also mitigations, for instance, positive comment following a negative. The pattern of positive comment (POS) following negative comment (NEG) was very evident in the analysis, in the patterns POS + NEG; or NEG + POS. In Connors and Lunsford’s (1993) research, they found POS + NEG pattern (42%) being more frequent than NEG + POS pattern (11%). It is crucial to mix the feedback with both positive and negative comments [POS + NEG, or NEG + POS] in order to promote

learning and not hinder students' self-esteem and self-confidence. Although Connors and Lunsford (1993) state that the POS + NEG pattern is almost formulaic where tutors will always try to state at least one positive point before presenting the negative, the analysis of this research has shown that it is also possible to present the negativity before positive. Although a statistical count was not carried out as part of this research given the nature of this research, the research focus was limited to examining the content and structure of feedback. Despite this, the patterns were apparent. Examples of these patterns are illustrated in Figure 7.5. (POS in blue and NEG in red).

Figure 7.5. Patterns: POS + NEG; or NEG + POS

(30) There was a slight tendency in some places for your comments to move away from a strictly linguistic analysis. However, you do link these features clearly to the text's audience and purpose.	[Text 24, Department A]
(31) There is considerable (+ commendable) work in this: care has been taken to give evidence of knowledge of the generating contexts of the play, and every decision is justified or rationalised. However, some decisions are unworkable (e.g.. the Chorus on a forestage *, the numerous tear-stage set changes in rapid succession),and the rationale does not quite explain just what the issues are in Oedipus King which would seem relevant to a modern audience.	[Text 30, Department A]
(32) You cite the main proponents of these theories, however, you fail to develop your understanding any further than the basic definition.	[Text 63, Department B, in AK]
(33) You provide an extensive list of 'works cited' and 'works consulted', however, much of your cited references lack full bibliographical details.	[Text 64, Department B, in DP]

Falchikov (1995:158) claims that the "order of delivery" (POS then NEG) has an effect on how the students (L1 setting) would perceive the feedback. It is better to give positive

[229]

feedback before negative feedback as it helps to increase students' self-esteem and reduce anxiety. With regards to this research, it is not known to what extent the choices made by the tutors regarding the order of delivery would have an impact on the students. Nevertheless, Ferguson's (2011) study on graduate and undergraduate students in an Australian university did show that the students preferred it if the tutor mentioned the positive aspects first. What is certain in this research is that the tutors were not trying to demean students.

There is a considerable amount of lexical signalling in the feedback data, mainly through the use of *although*, *but*, and *however* (as shown in Figure 7.5. above). Despite the belief in supportive tutors, an unexpected finding was in the Problem move being used in an entire feedback report (as discussed in Chapter 6 earlier). In Department A, the **P** move pattern was found in an essay scored 44% (as shown in Appendix 6.5.). There was no distinguish patterning of the **P** pattern in Department B as the pattern was found across the criteria (in AK, CE, DP, and OV) across different range of marks (45% to 65% in different criteria). There were two essays, one marked 45% and another 48%, where the move patterns in the five criteria between these two feedback reports varied (as shown in Appendix 6.7.). Hence, no justification could be made in relation to the patterns and the quality of the essays, as first class essays (marks ranging between 70% – 100%) also had the Problem move in them alongside the Initiation or Solution move (as shown in Appendix 6.5. and 6.7.). In Connors and Lunsford's (1993) study (in L1 setting), they found papers containing all negative feedback were far more common (23%) than those with positive comments (9%) and the negative feedback was always associated with poorly graded essays. This was partially reflected in this research in that one out of 42 feedback reports in this study was

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entirely negative while Connors and Lunsford study is based on more samples. With a fixed feedback template like Department B, it is difficult for the tutor to give a feedback report which is entirely negative. However, in commenting on the mechanical aspects of writing, such as the criteria, Documentation and Presentation (DP) or Command of English (CE), it is possible to find negative feedback because DP and CE are considered writing conventions (as discussed earlier).

The effect on the thorough use of the **P** pattern in the feedback on the particular student was uncertain. However, research over the years has shown that students felt disheartened when they received only criticisms regarding their work. For instance, in Ferguson's (2011) research, he found that negative feedback would lead students to quit even though some of his respondents were experienced participants (teachers) in giving and receiving feedback.

7.2.3. Solution move

The Solution move is where the tutors suggest areas which could be improved. Intuitively, a Solution move would follow a Problem move, as with Hoey's Problem-Solution structure (Hoey, 1979, 1983, 1994). However, the findings from this research show something different. As shown in Chapter 6, there was no definite placement of the Solution move as it can be presented after an Initiation move (for instance, in, **I + S** pattern); before a Problem move (for instance, in the pattern, **I + S + P**); on its own (for instance, in the **S** pattern); or omitted completely. The explanation for the omission of the Solution move is most likely due to the Problem move which often contains an implicit solution. Similarly,

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with the case for omitting a Problem move, the Solution move is conveying an implicit problem; hence either move could be interchanged.

Step Suggesting Ways of Improving (SWI) is the only obligatory step in the Solution move. It has no obligatory act with relation to the Problem move; individual tutor's feedback writing practice and the feedback templates. The Solution move is realised by the use of modal verbs in most cases. Examples of the Solution move are further shown in Figure 7.6. (highlighted in **green** and **bold**).

Figure 7.6. Use of modals in Solution move

(34)	You could have quantified some of your analyses to add weight - e.g. tracking the use of pronouns through the text might have further illuminated your point about I and we.	[Text 38, Department A]
(35)	I think your work will be enhanced by more research and advise you to develop this dimension of essay construction, especially given the positive qualities you display in other aspects of your writing.	[Text 40, Department A]
(36)	There could have been more explicit description of the audiolingual approach and suggestopedia before launching into a discussion of their advantages and disadvantages.	[Text 64, Department B, in AK]
(37)	There are some points in your essay which would have benefited from a clearer explanation or more evidence.	[Text 64, Department B, in IACAR]
(38)	There are a few errors that could have been easily avoided if you had proofread your essay before submission.	[Text 77, Department B, in CE]
(39)	You do however need to note that punctuation marks occur after the reference in the sentence.	[Text 77, Department B, in DP]
(40)	The analysis could have been more specific and linked to the discussion more explicitly.	[Text 46, Department B, in OV]

The use of modals in these examples indicates tentativeness. The use of *I think* as a vague expression (example 35, Figure 7.6.) shows yet another degree of tentativeness with the

clustering of hedges (further discussed in Chapter 8, Section 8.2.2.9.1.). The respondents in Ferguson's (2011) research said they preferred the hedging phrases such as *you could have done X or Y* rather than explicit mention of problem such as *you did not provide a good explanation of X or Y*. The uses of modals and *I think* show that the tutors are trying to avoid sounding too direct (as shown in previous research by Farr, 2011; Hyland, 1995; 1996b, 1998b, 1998c, 2005a, 2009a; Lea & Street, 1998:166-168; Myers, 1989, 1991, 1992). A further investigation on modals is discussed in Chapters 8 and 9.

In contrast to Hoey's Problem-Solution structure where *avoid* and *need* were analysed as having the problem function (1979:44-45, 47-48; 1983:71-73; 1994:38-39), this research has analysed *avoid* (four occurrences, all within Department B) and *need to* (124 occurrences in the feedback corpus) as solutions, either in the Solution move or in act Embedded Solution (ES) if they appear elsewhere in other moves (Initiation, Problem, or Conclusion moves). Although I do agree with Hoey, *need to* can be paraphrased as *have to* (1979:44; 1983:71; 1994:38), but in relation to this research context, *need to* is given as a suggestion for students to make improvements in their work, instead of being a problem.

7.2.4. Conclusion move

The Conclusion move is a generalisation of the essay, primarily an overview of the whole essay. This move was initially presumed to appear at the end of every feedback report but the analysis from this research shows it can be omitted (as indicated in Chapter 6). Seventeen out of 42 of the feedback reports in Department A (40.7%) did not have the Conclusion move. While in Department B, the Conclusion move was found only in the

criteria, IACAR (4.8%) and CE (2.4%). The Conclusion move was found to be mainly positive in the feedback reports, as shown in Figure 7.7., although there were embedded problem or embedded solution (analysed in acts structure as **EP** and **ES** respectively).

Figure 7.7. Examples of positive comments in the Conclusion move

(41)	Great potential!	[Text 1, Department A]
(42)	On the whole , a very good essay . Well done .	[Text 2, Department A]
(43)	Overall , the points you discuss in the essay are relevant and the discussion insightful .	[Text 53, Department B, in IACAR]
(44)	Overall , the essay is written in an appropriate academic style .	[Text 77, Department B, in CE]

Examples (41) to (44) show the similarity in the way the positive comments were conveyed in the Conclusion move in both departments. For instance, ‘appropriate’, ‘good’, ‘great’, or ‘relevant’ (highlighted in **blue**). As mentioned in Chapter 6 (and shown in Appendix 6.1.), the Conclusion move is generally signalled through the use of adverbs such as ‘*on the whole*’, ‘*in sum*’, ‘*all in all*’, or ‘*overall*’ (in **bold**).

Under Mirador’s (2000) move analysis of feedback, one of the evident patterns she found was the *Clinching Pattern*. Most of Mirador’s (2000) analysis of moves was named as steps in my research, for instance, General Impression (**GI**), Highlighting Strength (**HS**), Calling Attention to Weakness (**CAW**), and Overall Judgement (**OJ**), which formed the basis of the *Clinching Pattern* along with the *Recapitulation* move. While in Yelland’s (2011) research, 18.4% of the feedback samples he analysed has the *Clinching Pattern*, with the exception that it has no **OJ** move at the end as in Mirador’s research. There is no

distinctive patterning of feedback in my research. However, in the Conclusion move of my research, Overall Judgement (OJ) is an obligatory step. As mentioned earlier, all moves in my research are optional. There are some feedback reports where tutors have not applied the Conclusion move. This came as a surprise, particularly in Department A's feedback when there was no predetermined criteria template, yet some of the tutors had not included an overall summary of the essay. In defence of this, Yelland (2011:228) states that both General Impression (GI) and OJ moves in his (and Mirador's) research were known as the "framing devices". Hence, the feedback has a choice of omitting the end move since feedback is a monologic text, it can simply end, even without a concluding statement (Yelland, 2011:228).

Based on the definition of conclusion, the Conclusion move should occur at the end of the feedback. However, there was a rare occasion in Department A (as shown in Section 6.2.1.10.) where it was found at the beginning, in the pattern, C + I*. However, the reason for the C + I* pattern could not be verified.

7.3. Other apparent features

Apart from step Focus (FO), and act Meta-statement (MS) appear to be idiosyncratic (found only in Department B's feedback), in particular the repetitions of *here are some points for you to note*, and other similar phrases.

One noticeable feature about Department B’s feedback lies in the criterion, Documentation and Presentation (DP) where the Style Guide was the key aspect which the tutor was seeking. *Style Guide* was repeated in 31 of the feedback reports (out of 42 which were analysed, and a total of 66 occurrences in the whole Department B corpus, discussed in Chapter 8, Section 8.1.1.). Examples of these are shown in Figure 7.8. (and in example 6 in Figure 7.1. earlier):

Figure 7.8. Repeated mentioned of *Style Guide*

(45)	Your essay adheres to the style stipulated in the Style Guide for in-text referencing.	[Text 43, Department B, in DP]
(46)	You have adhered to the conventions of style as stipulated in the Style Guide .	[Text 44, Department B, in DP]
(47)	This is good and your essay mostly adheres to the conventions stipulated in the Style Guide .	[Text 45, Department B, in DP]
(48)	Your essay adheres to the guidelines as stipulated in the Style Guide and your bibliography is neatly and accurately presented.	[Text 46, Department B, in DP]
(49)	You have adhered to the guidelines stipulated in the Style Guide .	[Text 47, Department B, in DP]
(50)	This is largely accurate and conforms to the guidelines stated in the Style Guide .	[Text 48, Department B, in DP]
(51)	Generally, your in-text referencing follows the stipulated guidelines in the Style Guide .	[Text 53, Department B, in DP]

The common verbs found with *Style Guide* were *adhere* (highlighted in purple in Figure 7.8.), or *stipulate* (highlighted in dark blue). The nouns which were associated with *Style Guide* include *conventions* (highlighted in red), and *guidelines* (highlighted in green). This feature was found only in Department B and was largely produced by the predetermined criterion.

Another aspect which was also caused by the predetermined criteria can be noted in criterion CE where student's command of English (Figure 7.9., in **bold**) and writing style (Figure 7.9., in *italics*) were the main aspects the tutor commented on. *Command of English* was found in six of the feedback reports which were analysed, all with the positive adjective, *good* (highlighted in blue). Examples are further shown in Figure 7.9.

Figure 7.9. Repeated mentioned of *command of English*

(52)	Your essay shows a good command of English and an awareness of an appropriate <i>style of writing</i> for an academic setting.	[Text 44, Department B, in CE]
(53)	Your command of English is good and you <i>write in a style</i> appropriate for an academic setting.	[Text 46, Department B, in CE]
(54)	Your command of English is good .	[Text 56, Department B, in CE]
(55)	You have a good command of English and you <i>write in a clear style</i> .	[Text 78, Department B, in CE]
(56)	This essay displays a good command of English .	[Text 83, Department B, in CE]
(57)	The essay displays a good command of English and you <i>write in a style</i> that is appropriate for an academic essay.	[Text 84, Department B, in CE]

Writing style was also found in Department A's feedback reports, although not all were positive. Further examples are shown in Figure 7.10. (positivity highlighted in blue and negativity highlighted in red).

Figure 7.10. Comments on *writing style* in Department A

(58)	Your <i>writing style</i> is fluent for the most part, and you sometimes are prone to over-generalisations.	[Text 5, Department A]
(59)	Overall, <i>style of writing</i> and presentation are of a good standard .	[Text 16, Department A]
(60)	Your <i>style of writing</i> can be rather colloquial (chatty) and you sometimes mix the present and past tenses.	[Text 17, Department A]
(61)	Your <i>style of writing</i> is only just adequate .	[Text 18, Department A]

7.4. Summary

This chapter has discussed the written academic feedback as a genre looking at the four main moves involved in giving feedback in both departments. All four moves are optional where one or more moves can be omitted in giving feedback. Although the Initiation move was the most frequent move used in giving feedback, it can be omitted. Tutors were also found to be very positive in general, especially at the beginning of the feedback. Based on the genre analysis, it appears that not all feedback has the Problem or Solution moves, as one or the other could be omitted. The Problem move often has implicit suggestions and the Solution move has implicit problems. Even though, in some cases where the Solution move is omitted (for instance, **I + P** pattern), the suggestions, albeit implicit, were mentioned nonetheless, which is one of the reasons why tutors switch between the two moves. It is also possible for the Solution move to occur without any explicit mention of the Problem move.

Based on the results and findings, there is no definite pattern for giving feedback as it depends on the quality of the work or on individual tutor's writing practices. The steps and acts are recurring in all four moves, although some steps are obligatory in specific moves (for instance, step Overall Judgement (**OJ**) in the Conclusion move, as discussed earlier) and some acts are obligatory in specific steps (for instance, act Positive Judgement (**PJ**) in step **OJ**). One definite thing, however, is that there is a genre of feedback. Mirador's earlier research (2000) shows that feedback is made up of moves. Building on Mirador's work, Yelland (2011) reaffirms the notion of feedback as a genre where he states that all of Swales's criteria of genre were met in feedback (as discussed in Chapter 3), although he is

uncertain of the extent to which students are considered members of the discourse community. This is because students may not share the same knowledge and may have different viewpoints from their tutors. This is shown in his research where, in an experiment conducted with students, the students did not necessarily follow the same pattern as Mirador has claimed. One of the main reasons is due to the students' lack of experience in giving feedback. As for my research and Mirador's (2000), the tutors have experiences in writing feedback and based on the findings of this thesis, feedback is definitely a genre.

This section has also discovered the POS + NEG pattern of feedback. Even though criticisms may occur, tutors in general are very positive. Hedging devices are used in order to mitigate negativity. The use of modal verbs such as *could* or *would* in the Solution move was also found to indicate tentativeness (hedging is further discussed in Chapters 8 and 9). Although the effect of the "order of delivery" (Falchikov, 1995:158); POS + NEG; or NEG + POS, was not further explored due to the constraints of this research, it does show the pattern, POS + NEG or NEG + POS, in this research and in previous research.

CHAPTER 8: FINDINGS ON CORPUS STUDY

This chapter presents the findings from the corpus study. In accordance with the corpus-driven nature of this research, I decided to look at certain aspects (for instance, most frequent nouns, evaluative adjectives and adverbs) to see what interesting evidence they would produce. Section 8.1. begins by discussing the corpus findings looking at the top 50 frequent words of the EdEng corpus. The items under investigation include the nouns (*essay, analysis, language, points/point, style, discussion*), the one adjective (*good*) and compound adjectives (such as *well structured* or *well written*), and the one adverb (*well*). The lexical item (such as *page*) which was found exclusively in one department will not be further discussed (see also Section 8.1.).

Examining the nouns gives an overall view of the specific things tutors are commenting on. The one adjective and adverb are further investigated because they are evaluative and I think it would be interesting to see the collocations and colligations of these evaluative terms. Collocations refer to the co-occurring words in a text (Sinclair, 1991:170) while colligations refer to not only the collocations of the lexical item but inclusive of the grammatical patterns of the text (McEnery & Hardie, 2012). Another area I am interested in is to find out if there are any patterns attached to the evaluative terms and nouns. Certain aspects (for instance, the occurrences of other vague expression such as *I think*, or *I am not sure*) were further examined and developed as the research progressed. The other adjective (*academic*) was rejected because it was found only in Department B (as discussed in Section 8.1.).

Although other lexical items such as articles (*a, an, the*), prepositions (*of, on, to*), determiners (*this, that*) or verbs (*read, use*) were in the top 50 frequent words in the EdEng corpus, they were not further investigated because I thought they would not lead to any interesting findings with regard to the genre of feedback. A further exploration into the concordances of *read* and *use* did not reveal distinctive usage of both verbs. *Read* and *use* were both used to highlight strengths, indicating problems, or as suggestions. For instance, to highlight strengths: *you have read the required readings, you use relevant literature to explain your points*; to indicate problems: *you do not adequately integrate what you have read with the observations, you do not need to use any bullets*; and as suggestions: *justifying the text would make it easier to read, this is solid work, but could use a little development*.

Section 8.2. discusses in greater detail the notion of hedging in the EdEng corpus. In this research, the main hedging features which were examined were when the tutors were expressing uncertainty, or softening or mitigating utterances. This includes examining the core modals (such as *can, could, may, might, must, should, will, and would*), vague language (such as *something, a little, or a few*) and other vague language expressions (such as *I think, I'm not sure, appear*), stance adverbs (such as *perhaps, or generally*), and submodifiers (such as *quite, or really*). The modals will be discussed in relation to their functions (such as possibility, or suggestion). There will be no classifications based on epistemic, deontic, or dynamic modality, as the main concern of this research is the function of modals, and, in particular, identifying how tutors hedged their comments. Hence, each of the items in the sub-components of hedging (modals, vague language,

stance adverbs, and submodifiers) will be discussed in relation to their functions in general (such as criticism or necessity), and the hedging and non-hedging use.

It is worth noting that the frequency of occurrences of each modal is relatively low. This is to be expected since the corpus for this study is small yet specialised. However, when all the hedging features (such as modals, all the vague language items, stance adverbs, and submodifiers) are added up, they are very evident in the EdEng corpus (as shown in the individual sub-components of hedging and in the chapter summary, Table 8.51.). The frequencies of occurrences will still be shown to illustrate the frequency of each modal in terms of its usage in the corpus. The concordances for the more prevalent items (such as *could*, *might*, *should*, *would*, *some*, *more*, *perhaps*, and *really*) are attached as appendices, while the concordances for the items with fewer occurrences are shown and mentioned in respective sections.

There are two types of patterns which are discussed in this chapter: first, the general grammatical patterns for each of the hedging items under investigation; second, the feedback pattern, [POS], [NEG], or [SUG], will be shown for the items. All examples are colour-coded (node word in **pink**, positivity in **blue**, negativity in **dark red**, negation (*not*) in **red** except for concordances extracted using ConcGram© to search for patterns such as *good* + *but*, suggestions in **green**, clusters of hedging in **dark blue**, and mitigation in **purple**).

8.1. Corpus findings

126 feedback reports were collated into one corpus, the EdEng corpus, generating 35,941 words. In addition to this, the five individual sections from Department B's feedback reports were compiled into five sub-corpora to check for skewing of data. The five sections are:

- i. Acquisition of Knowledge (AK);
- ii. Interpretation, Analysis, Construction of Argument and Relevance (IACAR);
- iii. Command of English (CE);
- iv. Documentation and Presentation (DP); and
- v. Overall (OV).

With the five criteria in Department B, each feedback report is longer than Department A's feedback (266 words difference). The average number of words in each corpus is shown in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1. Average number of words in the EdEng corpus

	Total no. of words	Average no. of words per report
Department A	4527	108
Department B	31414	374
Total (Dept A + B)	35941	285

Since feedback is a genre, the feedback reports from both departments were compiled as a whole corpus (as discussed in Chapter 5). Table 8.2. shows the top 50 words in the EdEng corpus. As mentioned in Chapter 5 (Section 5.4.1.), idiosyncrasies were examined for each word under investigation. For instance, '[p]age' (rank 21, shaded in Table 8.2.) was found

exclusively in Department B. A closer look at the concordances reveal that it is one of the tutor's writing practices where page numbers of essays are indicated specifically to emphasise the positive or negative aspects on the particular page, or to offer suggestions (for instance, *page 4*; or *top of page 3*). Other noticeable idiosyncratic features include *academic* (rank 26, only 1.1% in Department A), in the pattern: *academic* + noun; where the nouns include *audience*, *discourse*, *essay*, *setting*, *style*, *texts*, and *writing*. These idiosyncrasies (use of *academic*, or *page*) are not further discussed.

From Table 8.2., *the* is the most frequent article in the EdEng corpus, although it is statistically more frequent in Department B than A (see Appendix 8.1.). The other top 50 words in the EdEng corpus include pronouns such as *you* (rank 3), in the linguistic pattern, *you* + verb; *your* (rank 5), in the pattern, *your* + noun, and *I* (rank 36). *I* was found to be used in hedging such as *I (don't) think* or *I am not sure...* (further discussed in Sections 8.2.2.8.1. and 8.2.2.8.2.). Other forms included declarative statements such as *I have listed a few points for you to note* or *I look forward to discussing*. However, declarative statements were idiosyncratic features found only in Department B and are not discussed.

Table 8.2. Top 50 words in the EdEng corpus

		Raw frequency ²⁸	Words per thou.			Raw frequency	Words per thou.
1	THE	2420	67.3	26	ACADEMIC	176	4.9
2	OF	1362	37.9	27	MORE	175	4.9
3	YOU	1170	32.6	28	WITH	174	4.8
4	AND	1058	29.4	29	WELL	172	4.8
5	YOUR	1045	29.1	30	AS	169	4.7
6	TO	988	27.5	31	COULD	160	4.5
7	A	764	21.3	32	THERE	159	4.4
8	IN	746	20.8	33	LANGUAGE	153	4.3
9	ESSAY	683	19.0	34	BEEN	146	4.1
10	IS	647	18.0	35	ALSO	141	3.9
11	HAVE	632	17.6	36	I	140	3.9
12	ON	473	13.2	37	WHAT	137	3.8
13	THIS	418	11.6	38	POINT	135	3.8
14	THAT	385	10.7	39	USE	132	3.7
15	FOR	356	9.9	40	DO	122	3.4
16	ARE	345	9.6	41	NEED	122	3.4
17	GOOD	307	8.5	42	STYLE	122	3.4
18	IT	278	7.7	43	WHICH	122	3.4
19	SOME	268	7.5	44	DISCUSSION	121	3.4
20	AN	266	7.4	45	HOW	120	3.3
21	PAGE	260	7.2	46	READ	114	3.2
22	NOT	253	7.0	47	WAS	110	3.1
23	ANALYSIS	230	6.4	48	THESE	109	3.0
24	POINTS	199	5.5	49	WOULD	105	2.9
25	BE	181	5.0	50	BUT	99	2.8

Note:

words in blue indicate positivity .

words in red are negative.

words in *italics* are frequent nouns (discussed subsequently).

words in **bold** are hedging features (discussed in Section 8.2.).

row shaded in grey occurs only in Department B.

²⁸ Raw frequency = number of occurrences of each word in the whole corpus. They are not differentiated.

Apart from looking at the left and right collocates of each word, a log-likelihood test was carried out to examine if there were any significant statistical differences (as mentioned in Chapter 5). Appendix 8.1. shows the log-likelihood test of the top 50 words in the EdEng corpus. Words highlighted in red are higher than the cut-off score, 15.13, showing they are highly significant statistically differences between the two sub-corpora (Departments A and B). A plus or minus (+/–) sign preceding the log-likelihood scores shows the over-representation or under-representation of each word in the first corpus relative to the second corpus.

As mentioned, *page* and *academic* were mainly indications of idiosyncrasies found only in Department B and they are statistically different (log-likelihood scores of –70.01 and –33.25 respectively). Other words which are of statistical difference include nouns such as *essay* and *language* (see Section 8.1.1.); the adverb, *well* (see Section 8.1.3.) and the demonstrative pronouns, *this* and *that* (see Appendix 8.1. for detailed findings of the log-likelihood test). Of these, I discuss *essay*, *language*, and other nouns in the top 50 most frequent words (*analysis*, *points/point*, *style*, *discussion*), the adjective (*good*) including compound adjective (*well developed* or *well organised*), and adverb (*well*).

8.1.1. Nouns in the top 50 frequent words of the EdEng corpus

Distinctive nouns in the top 50 list of the EdEng corpus include *essay* (rank 9), *analysis* (rank 23), *points* (rank 24), *language* (rank 33), *point* (rank 38), *style* (rank 42) and *discussion* (rank 44). All these nouns are discussed later. A closer look at the left and right collocates of each node word shows various grammatical patterns (example: ADJ + NOUN

+ wh-clause, *a good essay that could be strengthened with...*), as well as feedback patterns (example: [POS]; [NEG]; or [SUG]). These patterns are analysed for each of the nouns under investigation. It is worth mentioning that the tables for the grammatical patterns are for illustrative purposes only. They are only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus. As mentioned earlier, all examples are colour-coded (node word in pink, positivity in blue, negativity in red, suggestions in green).

Essay

It is not surprising that *essay* appears to be a frequent noun since the feedback comments on students' essays. What is surprising with a close examination of *essay* is that it is found more frequently in Department B (difference of 12.4 words per thousand, and a log-likelihood score of -39.54 which is statistically significant, as shown in Appendix 8.1.). However, looking at the result from another point of view, there are 42 feedback reports in Department A and there are 37 occurrences of *essay* in Department A (as shown in Table 5.1.). A cross-reference to the 42 feedback reports in Department A shows that five of the feedback reports opted for *assignment* instead of *essay*. On the other hand, there are 84 feedback reports in Department B and there are 646 occurrences of *essay*. This means that on average, there are at least seven occurrences of *essay* in every feedback report, which is based on a five criteria feedback template. This shows that the criteria-based template might have an effect on the occurrences of *essay*.

The analysis on *essay* shows that *essay* is almost always associated with positivity (69.8%), linked with positive adjectives such as *good*, *excellent*, or *interesting*. There were

also a small percentage of negative comments (11%) which is submodified with negative adjective such as *a very general essay*, or through the use of negations such as *your essay does not construct a convincing argument* (analysed as the Problem move in genre analysis, discussed in Chapter 6). In addition to this, modal auxiliaries were also found in the co-texts of *essay* indicating suggestions (there is 19.2% of suggestion linked with *essay*, suggestion is emphasised as the Solution move in genre analysis). Modal auxiliaries are further discussed in Section 8.2.1. Table 8.3. illustrates a selection of the grammatical patterns of *essay* in the EdEng corpus.

Table 8.3. shows that when *essay* is premodified, apart from the one occasion (*a very general essay*), it is always associated with positivity (such as *a competent essay*, *an excellent essay*, *a good essay*, or *an outstanding essay*). When *essay* is not premodified, there appears to be a mixture of positivity (such as *your essay is written in good English*), straight negations (such as *your essay does not fully adhere*), or implicit criticisms (such as *the essay could have benefited from more argument and less description*). On the whole, tutors seemed to be very positive (almost always) on the overall piece of work. Tutors tend to be slightly more negative in commenting on the specific aspects of the work (for instance, *your point on culture and sports was not sufficiently explained*, or *your Bibliography does not need to be bulleted*, negative comments found in the data are discussed respectively).

Table 8.3. Grammatical patterns of *essay*

Note: Each row is to be read across. For example: *your essay is accurate*, or *your essay is written in good English*.

DET	essay	VB	ADJ / ADV[POS]
your		is	accurate
		is written	in good English
		is	well structured
this		demonstrates	an excellent understanding
the		shows	great potential
		displays	a wide use of...
(INT+) ADJ [POS]		that/wh- clause	
a (very) good		that shows...	
a competent		that makes...	
an excellent/interesting		which covers...	
a fair		which demonstrates...	
(ADV) + ADJ		that/wh- clause	MODAL[SUG]
a good		that	could have been better if...
a fairly/reasonably good		that	could be strengthened with...
DET			MODAL[SUG]
the			needs an introduction
			could have achieved more...
(INT+) ADJ [NEG]			
a (very) general			
PRONOUN / DET	[NEG'T]		
the	does not construct		
	does not quite achieve...		
	does not fully adhere...		
your	then does not fully explore		

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

Table 8.3. probes further investigation into the EdEng corpus examining the collocates of *essay* on the use of negation, *not*. Interestingly, *essay + not* was found only in Department B's dataset. Another interesting finding in relation to that was the explicit criticism (*essay + not*) on the mechanical aspects of writing, such as referencing or presentation (see Appendix 8.2. for the concordances). Apart from idiosyncrasies, the criteria-based template in Department B seemed to have an effect on the feedback writing practices.

The criterion, Documentation and Presentation (DP), is where the tutor gives feedback on the referencing aspect and the criterion, Command of English (CE), is where the tutor gives feedback on the students' use of English. In both these criteria, DP and CE, the tutor seemed to display a degree of strong certainty, hence, the explicit use of *not*. This is because students were expected to be familiar with academic writing and essay writing requirements given they were in their second year of study. There is also less likelihood of causing offence to the students because the mechanical aspect of writing is a rule, so the tutors do not have to express criticism as an opinion.

Although *essay + not* implied negativity, the co-text of *essay + not* is not entirely negative. The negativity was either presented after a positive comment, or mitigated with positive comments (as shown in Figure 8.1.). There was also a degree of criticism between *an essay* or *your essay*. There was the general reference to the essay such as

*an **essay** that has **not** fully achieved the aims of the assignment,*

or the specific reference to a particular area in the essay, such as

*your reference to Stevick appears to have had a footnote which is **not** in your **essay**.*

The latter comment is more specific, criticising the omission of a reference in the bibliography list rather than criticising the *essay* itself.

Figure 8.1. Hedged or mitigated comments on **essay** following negation, **not**

- | | |
|-----|--|
| (1) | Your discussion at the end of the essay (the variables of age and proficiency) does not seem altogether relevant to the essay . You do make a few interesting comments which <i>you could have incorporated more usefully in the rest of your essay.</i> <SUG> |
| (2) | This essay has not answered the question as successfully as it could have, <i>although there is evidence of sufficient reading and an attempt at dealing with mostly relevant issues.</i> We will discuss this further during our appointment on essay 1. <END> |
| (3) | Your essay is written in good English although it is not good for you to begin your essay with an error in the first line: <NEG + POS> |

Note:

node word in **pink**

phrases in **blue** = positivity

phrases in **dark red** = negativity

phrases in **green** = suggestion

negation (**not**) in **red**

<...> subsequent comment(s) or pattern(s)

The POS + NEG, NEG + POS, or NEG + SUG patterns were evident across all the feedback reports, and they were also found in the case of *essay*. The POS, NEG patterns were mostly signalled through the use of adjuncts, *although*, or *however* and the coordinating conjunction, *but*. The SUG pattern was signalled through the use of modal verbs (as discussed in the Solution move in genre analysis, Chapter 7, Section 7.2.3., modals are further discussed in Section 8.2.1.). It seems that when a positive comment is mentioned there is an anticipation of negativity. Similarly, when a negative comment is

mentioned, there will be a positive comment or suggestion to tone down the negativity (examples are further shown in Appendix 8.2. in (b), (c), and (d)).

Analysis

In the use of *analysis*, positive adjectives (such as *good*, or *thorough*), negative adjectives or negations (such as *too brief*, or *not presented*), and suggestions expressed through the use of modals were found. *Analysis* was slightly more frequent in Department A (difference of 2.2 words per thousand, as shown in Appendix 8.1.). Table 8.4. further illustrates the patterns of analysis.

Suggestions, expressed through the use of modals (for instance, [*t*]he *analysis could have been more specific and linked to the discussion more explicitly*) was also evident in the co-text of *analysis* (as shown in Table 8.4.). Another similar pattern which was noticeable in the co-text of *analysis* was the POS + NEG pattern, where a positive comment (such as *fairly good analysis*) would precede the negative, signalled through the use of the adjunct, *although*, or the coordinating conjunction, *but* (further discussed *good* in Section 8.1.2.). For instance,

you also show the ability to do analysis although at times your analysis is not presented,

or

most of your points are relevant. However, occasionally your essays lack accurate analysis and the interpretation needs to refer to the sources you have read (further examples are shown in Appendix 8.3. in (d)).

Table 8.4. Grammatical patterns of *analysis*

Note: The table is not a substitution table. Each row is to be read across. For example: *the analysis is good*.

pos-DET / DET	analysis	(ADV +) ADJ[POS]	[NEG]
your / the		is good	
		is thorough	
		is sound	
		is fairly good	although...
(INT +) ADJ			
a (very) sound			
a reasonable			
a good			
a competent			
(hedge +) pos-DET		[NEG]	
your		is far too brief	
at times, your		lacks some accuracy	
		is not presented very clearly	
pos-DET / DET			MODAL[SUG]
your		of the use of passives	could be better
the			could have been...

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

There is also a degree of criticism in *analysis*, where it can refer to the analysis in general such as

*your **analysis** is far too brief,*

or on a specific analysis approach such as

*your **analysis of the classroom** does not do anything more than merely point out where there is error correction, praise or questions.*

Strikingly, an investigation into the use of negation (such as *not*) with *analysis* reveals that it is found only in Department B, while a similar situation is found also with *essay* (refer to Appendix 8.3. for the concordances of *analysis* with the co-occurring word, *not*). Similarly with the negation found in *essay*, each negative in *analysis* was hedged using a vague expression (such as *at times*), or mitigated with positive comments either before or after the negation was implied, as shown in Figure 8.2.

Figure 8.2. Hedged or mitigated comments on *analysis* following negation, *not*

- | |
|--|
| <p>(4) While your essay shows a good knowledge of academic discourse, it does not show sufficient analysis of your text. <SUG></p> <p>(5) Most of the interpretations are fairly accurate although at times you do not explain yourself as well as you could. <List of comments></p> <p>(6) You also show the ability to do analysis although at times your analysis is not presented very clearly. The essay demonstrates that you have read a few source texts and you have incorporated these into your essay to support some of your observations and conclusions. <NEXT CRITERIA></p> |
|--|

Note:

node word in **pink**
 phrases in **blue** = positivity
 phrases in **dark red** = negativity
 phrases in **green** = suggestion
dark blue = hedged expressions
 negation (**not**) in **red**
 <...> subsequent comment(s) or pattern(s)

The hedged expression, *at times*, is another interesting finding in the co-text of *analysis* where the tutor was being vague, avoiding mentioning where and when the errors were in order to avoid sounding too direct. As shown in Farr's (2011:118-119) research, the main reason tutors opted for vague language was to avoid being overtly critical (other vague language features are further discussed in Section 8.2.2.).

Points/point

Points and *point* were also among the top 50 words of the EdEng corpus (5.5 words per thousand in Department A and 3.8 words per thousand in Department B). Similarly, with *essay* and *analysis* (as discussed earlier), positive adjectives were also found with *points* and *point*, for example:

[y]ou make some *very good points* about academic discourse

and negativity (hedged or softened with modals or vague language (in *dark blue*)), for example:

[t]here is a *concern* that you *might be overstating* some of your *points*

or negations, *not*, for example:

[y]our *point* on culture and sports was *not sufficiently explained*.

In addition to the hedging of negativity (as shown in the example above), implicit criticisms were also found in the co-text of *analysis*, expressed as suggestions which were signalled through the use of modal verbs (as discussed in the genre analysis in the Solution move, Chapter 7, Section 7.2.3., modals are also further discussed in Section 8.2.1.). Tables 8.5. and 8.6. further show the patterns of *points* and *point* in the EdEng corpus.

Table 8.5. Grammatical patterns of *points*

Note: The table is not a substitution table. Each row is to be read across. For example: *some very good points*.

VL + (ADV +) ADJ	points	
some (very) good		
some (extremely) interesting		
some (very) relevant		
MOD + [NEG]		
might be overstating some of your		
VL		[SUG]
some		need developing
one of the		that could have been highlighted

- Note:
- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
 - The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

Table 8.6. Grammatical patterns of *point*

Note: The table is not a substitution table. Each row is to be read across. For example: *a good point about...*

ADJ [POS]		point	
a good			about...
an excellent			on the use of the...
ADJ [POS]			MODAL [SUG]
an interesting			you could have mentioned...
pos-DET			[SUG]
your			on motivation needs some development
			[NEG]
your			here doesn't really come through clearly
[NEG]	pos-DET		
not very clear what	your		is
I'm not entirely sure what	your		here is
MODAL [SUG]			
would have been a more useful			for you to bring up
could explain the			on the...
need to develop	your		on...
need to refocus	your		

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

As with *essay* and *analysis* (discussed earlier), the POS + NEG, NEG + POS, or NEG + SUG patterns were also found in *point* and *points* in the EdEng corpus, found in the patterns *point/points* + but; or *points* + however (full concordances and occurrences of *point* or *points* are further shown in Appendix 8.4.). The negation, *not*, (*point/points* + *not*) was again not found in Department A. *Point/points* were also premodified with positive

adjectives (such as *you make some very relevant and interesting points*), although there were also suggestions given in relations to the *point/points*.

Language

Unlike the other nouns (*essay, analysis, point/points, and discussion*), *language* was not used to refer to the students’ use of language, with the few exceptions shown in Table 8.7. *Language* was largely used with reference to subject matter such as *communicative language teaching, practice of language teaching, language acquisition, or second language learning*, all of which were found only in Department B. Only 2.6% of the use of *language* was found in Department A.

Table 8.7. Grammatical patterns of *language*

Note: The table is not a substitution table. Each row is to be read across. For example: *you need to ensure that the language you use in your essay is accurate....*

MODAL [SUG]	language	
you need to ensure that the		you use in your essay is accurate...
NP/ ADJ [NEG]		ADJ [NEG] (+ NOUN)
a tendency towards using colloquial		and inaccurate vocabulary
your use of		a little overwrought
ADJP / VP [POS]	English language	
good grasp of the		
adhere to the rules of the		

- Note:
- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
 - The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

There will be no further discussion on *language* since the use of *language* could be an idiosyncratic feature, resulting from the criteria template. Twelve occurrences of *language* were found only in Command of English (CE). The occurrences of *language* could also be related to a specific module or an essay question, presumably on *language teaching* (24 occurrences), *language learning* (20 occurrences), or *language acquisition* (14 occurrences).

Style

Style was used to refer to the writing style required by both departments, mentioned in various ways in the EdEng corpus such as *academic style*, *writing style* or *style of writing*, and *the Style Guide* (as shown in Table 8.8., also discussed in Chapter 7 earlier, Section 7.4.). Only 4.9% of the use of *style* was found in Department A. This is clearly another area where the criteria template has an effect on feedback writing practices as there were 66 occurrences of *Style Guide* in Department B alone. Hence, there will be no further discussion on *style*.

Table 8.8. Grammatical patterns of *style*

Note: The table is not a substitution table. Each row is to be read across. For example: *write in a style appropriate for....*

VB (+ ADJ)[POS]	style	ADJ[POS]/ VP
write in a		appropriate for...
written in an appropriate		for an academic essay
show an awareness of the		needed for an academic essay
VB (+ ADJ)[POS]	academic style	
write with an appropriate		
demonstrates a fairly good		
[POS]	the Style Guide	
stipulated in		
adheres to the guidelines in the		
ADJ	writing style	
good, appropriate academic		
pos-DET		ADJ[POS]
your		is fluent
		is clear
ADJ[POS]	style of writing	
an appropriate		for an academic setting
pos-DET		[NEG]
your		can be rather colloquial
		is only just adequate

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
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Discussion

Discussion occurred in 3.4 words per thousand in the EdEng corpus (1.8 words per thousand in Department A and 3.6 words per thousand in Department B). The collocates of

discussion include positive adjectives such as *good* (further discussed in Section 8.1.2.), for instance:

[y]ou provide *some good discussion* of your analysis within the essay itself

or negativity, such as

[t]here is some *irrelevant discussion* in the essay.

Modal verbs given in the form of suggestions were also apparent in *discussion*, further shown in Table 8.9. (Section 8.2.1. will further discuss the use of modal verbs). As with the other nouns found in the EdEng corpus top 50 frequent words, the POS + NEG or NEG + POS patterns were also found with *discussion*, signalled through adjuncts such as *although*, the contrastive conjunction, *but*, or the negation, *not* or *n't* (as shown in Appendix 8.5.).

Table 8.9. Grammatical patterns of *discussion*

Note: The table is not a substitution table. Each row is to be read across. For example: *some good discussion of your analysis*.

ADJ[POS]		discussion		
an interesting				
some good			of your analysis	
MODAL[SUG]	pos-DET			
might have been useful to	your		with the example from...	
have begun				
may/might/would have (extended and) broadened			further	
could have developed			a little here by comparing...	
pos-DET				
your				MODAL[SUG]
			on the connectors,	it might have been useful
			on this	could have also mentioned...
				could have then been slightly reorganised
ADJ[NEG]				
some irrelevant			in the essay	

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

Summary

This section has looked at the nouns in the top 50 frequent words in the EdEng corpus. As discussed, there were some idiosyncratic features such as the use of *style* or *language* which were affected by the criteria template (for the case of *style* which occurred 66 times in Documentation and Presentation (DP)) or by a specific module or essay question (for the

case of *language*) which were not further examined. The noun, *essay*, was the most positive amongst all the other nouns under investigation, where the tutors seemed to be more positive in commenting the overall piece of work rather than on specific aspects of the work. The feedback pattern, [POS, NEG or SUG] was an apparent feature in the contexts of the nouns under investigation. The noun, *essay*, was the most positive amongst all where the tutors seemed to be more positive in commenting the overall piece of work rather than on specific aspects of the work. From the concordances of the nouns discussed in this section, it seems that there is the anticipation of negativity following the positive comments. However, the negativity was rarely explicit, direct criticism, apart from the case of weak essays (as shown in an example in Chapter 6, Section 6.2.1.8. earlier). Negativity was often hedged in order to minimise the criticisms (further explored in Section 8.2.). The clustering of hedges was also evident in each of the nouns discussed in this section. For instance, the use of modals to offer suggestions (such as [t]he *essay could have been better if you had integrated your discussion*, or *it would have been useful to have mentioned the points on 'competency' vs 'fluency'*). The use of modals also indicates a degree of tentativeness (further examined in Section 8.2.1.). An interesting observation from the explicit criticisms shows that tutors are more direct when they are commenting on the mechanical aspects of writing. This is largely because there is a less likelihood of offence because the mechanical aspects are rules or writing conventions which students should be familiar with.

8.1.2. Adjectives in the top 50 frequent words of the EdEng corpus

Good and *well* were amongst the top 50 frequent words in the EdEng corpus, although *well* was used in compound adjectives.

Good

Good is the only adjective which is found in the top 50 most frequent words in the EdEng corpus. The use of *good*, on the whole, is balanced in both Department A and Department B (8.6 and 8.5 words per thousand respectively, result shown in Appendix 8.1.). Table 8.10. shows the grammatical pattern of *good* which is generally positive.

Table 8.10. Grammatical patterns of *good* [POS]

(DET)/ INT[POS]	good	N/ NP
(a/ some) fairly/generally/reasonably/very		analysis
		argument
		essay
		introduction
		point(s)
		understanding of the...

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

An examination of the collocates of *good* show that it is often preceded or followed by negativity, or a suggestion softening an implicit problem through the use of modals (further shown in Figure 8.3., modals are also discussed in Section 8.2.1.); (refer to Appendix 8.6. for longer span of words and other examples).

Figure 8.3. Concordances of *good* + [NEG] or [SUG]

NEG	on is generally good although some sentence wordings are a little awkward.
SUG	This was good although it would have been useful to know why
SUG	conclusions were good although a more sustained comparison might have
NEG	y is written in good English although it is not good for you to begin
NEG	analysis was also good although there were two points that were not very
NEG	your essay shows a good knowledge of academic discourse, it does not show
SUG	y that has some good observations but could have been better supported
SUG	o your essay. A good attempt at answering the question but more could
NEG	raphy. A fairly good essay that makes some interesting points but does
NEG	reflections are good. However, these seem more clearly focused on your
NEG	s essay is very good. However, it appears to be almost disconnected from
NEG	the author is a good one. However, I'm not sure that your examples are

As discussed earlier in nouns (in Section 8.1.1.), the pattern POS + NEG is quite evident. Even though *good* has a positive connotation, there is always a degree of anticipation of negativity following the positive comment, except when *good* is used as the end comment to provide an overall comment on the whole essay.

Well

Apart from *good*, *well* is also used in compound adjectives in the EdEng corpus (56 instances out of 172 occurrences, 20 instances found in Department A and 36 instances found in Department B). In the undifferentiated occurrences of *well*, *well* is found to be more frequently used in Department A than in Department B (a difference of 5.8 words per thousand, as shown in Table 8.2., and very highly statistically significant, log-likelihood score of +24.77, as shown in Appendix 8.1.). This seems to show that the tutors in Department A used *well* to highlight positivity while the tutor in Department B opted for other positive evaluation such as *excellent* (1.3 words per thousand in Department B and

0.8 words per thousand in Department A) although comparisons between the two departments are difficult to make.

Table 8.11. Grammatical patterns of compound adjective, *well*

Note: The table is not a substitution table. Each row is to be read across. For example: *you demonstrate very well-developed close reading skills, or a well-written introduction.*

DET/ ADJ/ ADV/INT		NOUN/NP/ADJ
you demonstrate very	well developed	close reading skills
your essay indicates a		and quite detailed understanding
it is (reasonably/fairly)	well organised	and develops your points on...
		and you provide...
your move structure analysis is	well presented	and accurate
your essay is generally		
these arguments are		
your essay is	well structured	and clearly argued
the essay is (generally)		
your observations are	well supported	
your analysis is		through...
convincing and		by your readings
a	well written	introduction
clear and		paragraph
generally		and...

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

Although *well* has a positive connotation (feedback pattern, POS), the co-texts of *well* showed the occurrences of the other feedback patterns, NEG or SUG. For example:

[g]ood choice of text, *well transcribed*, just turn and line numbers missing. You have analysed the data well, picking out most of the salient features and interpreting them sensibly in the context. <POS + SUG>

or

[t]he essay is *well-structured*. A few points could maybe have been clarified a little more but you generally write in a clear and coherent way. <END>

Summary

This section has looked at the adjective, *good*, including compound adjective, *well*, in the top 50 frequent words in the EdEng corpus. *Well* was found more frequently in Department A than B. It is worth mentioning again, Department A corpus was compiled from 42 feedback reports and *well* occurred 46 times in Department A (20 occurrences as compound adjectives, as discussed earlier in this section, and 26 occurrences as adverb, see Section 8.1.3.). A closer look at the uses of *well* (undifferentiated) in each department shows that the distribution and occurrences of *well* varied in each feedback report (as shown in Figure 8.4.). However, a breakdown of the Department B corpus shows that *well* (undifferentiated) was more frequently used in the criterion, Interpretation, analysis, construction of argument and relevance (IACAR), followed by criteria Overall (OV) and Command of English (CE) (as shown in Figure 8.5.).

Figure 8.4. Frequency distribution of *well* found in Departments A and B dataset

N	File	Hits	per 1,000	Plot
1	Department A corpus.txt	46	10.02	
2	Department B corpus.txt	78	3.35	

*[t]his essay displays a **good** command of English. It is also written in an appropriate style for an academic essay.*

(in criterion, Command of English, CE)

This section has looked at the adjective, *good*, and compound adjective, *well* in the EdEng corpus. The next section looks at the adverb, *well*, in the EdEng corpus.

8.1.3. Adverbs in the top 50 frequent words of the EdEng corpus

Well is the only adverb found in the top 50 frequent words of the EdEng corpus. All the occurrences of *well* were differentiated either into compound adjectives (as discussed in Section 8.1.2.), or adverbs (discussed subsequently). After differentiation, *well* was used as an adverb in 26 instances in Department A (out of 172 occurrences altogether) and 90 instances in Department B. As mentioned earlier, *well* was more frequent in Department A (as shown in Table 8.2., and highly statistically significant, as shown in Appendix 8.1.). Apart from the adverb, *well*, *well* is also found in compound positive evaluation such as *well done*. Table 8.12. shows the grammatical patterns on the occurrences of *well* including the compounds.

Table 8.12. Grammatical patterns of adverb, *well* and *well done*

Note: The table is not a substitution table. Each row is to be read across. For example: *analysed well with...*, or *the analysis is extremely well done*.

VB (+ ADV)		well	
analysed			with...
engage			
write (exceedingly/ fairly/ very)			
organised (quite)			
presented			
reads			
NOUN + VB	ADV	well done	
the analysis is	equally/ extremely/		
this (essay) is	fairly/generally/ very		

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

As with the adjective *good*, and compound adjective of *well* (such as *well supported*, or *well documented*), the adverb *well* is also found to precede or follow negativity or suggestions. *Well* is also found to mitigate negativity. Further examples are shown in Figure 8.6.

Figure 8.6. Concordances of *well* [NEG], [SUG], or [MIT]

NEG	write fairly well although there is occasionally a lack of clarity
NEG	ally, this is well done although some of what you say is more applicab
SUG	sis is fairly well done although it might have been more useful to hav
NEG	mic discourse well and your conclusion provides a good, although brief
SUG	ter precision and analysis. The work flowed well but needed to have a
NEG	ingual approach. Your essay generally reads well. But there are a few
MIT	incorrect. But, other features are analysed well with good examples.
SUG	h critical material well (though a little bit more in-depth analysis w
SUG	secondary material well, though on several occasions I think you coul
NEG	question. You write well, and persuasively, though you are sometimes a
NEG	though at times you do not explain yourself as well as you could.

As Figure 8.6. shows, even though *well* has a positive connotation to it, there is again the anticipation of negativity preceding it. The only exception is when tutors are concluding the whole feedback ²⁹ or are commenting on a specific criterion. For example:

[y]ou write well and show an awareness of the conventions of writing an academic essay. <END>

(in criterion, Command of English, CE)

[t]his is a good essay. It has a solid, core argument and it reads well. You have some good examples and your analysis is well supported through your discussion. Good! <END>

(in criterion, Overall, OV)

From Table 8.12., it seems that *well done* is used as a chunk. There were altogether 57 instances of *well done* in the EdEng corpus. Unlike *well*, where negativity (whether explicit or implicit) is often anticipated, *well done* was found more positively. Almost all occurrences of *well done* (50 instances) were on the whole very positive. *Well done* was

²⁹ The concluding evaluation in Department B was in the criterion, Overall (OV).

either used in the final comments to sum up the whole essay, or to highlight a specific strength in a criterion. For example:

[o]n the whole, a very good essay. Well done. <END>

(Department A)

[t]he essay shows a solid, core argument that presents information that is relevant to the discussion. Your analysis is well done and you provide good examples for illustration.

(in criterion, Interpretation, analysis, construction of argument and relevance, IACAR)

[t]his is well done. You have adhered to the guidelines stipulated in the Style Guide. Your in-text references and bibliography are accurately and neatly presented.

(in criterion, Documentation and Presentation, DP)

[a]n excellent essay that shows a good understanding of the content of the course and constructs a well written and convincing argument. Well done!

(in criterion, Overall, OV)

There were seven exceptions where the co-texts of *well done* were followed with either negativity or suggestions. For instance:

[t]he analysis is well done and shows that you understand how to undertake a good analysis of texts. Perhaps the only suggestion I would make is for you to have illustrated the move analysis diagrammatically rather than through a discussion with line numbers. This might have made the move structure analysis clearer.

(in criterion, Acquisition of Knowledge, AK)

[t]he analysis was fairly well done. The move analysis had only one move which I thought was not clearly explained... <NEG + SUG + POS>

(in criterion, Interpretation, analysis, construction of argument and relevance, IACAR)

[t]he analysis is generally well done. It might have been good for you to have extended the move analysis a little by saying what particular aspects within the sentences relate to the move. Having said that, your move analysis was accurately done. The analysis of linguistic features was equally competently done.

(in criterion, Interpretation, analysis, construction of argument and relevance, IACAR)

These exceptions of *well done* + NEG/SUG were found only in Department B. It was however, not found in the criterion, Command of English (CE). Another interesting observation from these exceptions (*well done* + NEG/SUG) was that *well done* was modified by adverbs such as *fairly* and *generally* (as shown in the latter two examples above) which indicate there was a slight degree of negativity.

Summary

This section has looked at *well*, the only adverb in the top 50 frequent words of the EdEng corpus. As we have seen in this section, *well* has a positive connotation. However, there is often the anticipation of negativity surrounding *well*. The POS + NEG/SUG or NEG + POS/SUG patterns were again apparent in the co-texts of *well*, except for when *well* was used as a final comment which was very rare. In addition to *well*, *well done* was also found and was used almost as a chunk to give positive comments. As seen earlier, the co-texts of *well done* denote positivity on the whole to give an overall positive comment on the essay, except for seven instances where *well done* was modified by adverbs such as *fairly* or *generally* which to some extent indicate an implicit criticism.

This section has looked at the adverb, *well*, which was one of the top 50 frequent words (undifferentiated) in the EdEng corpus. The following section will provide an overall summary of Section 8.1.

8.1.4. Section summary

So far, we have looked at the nouns, adjectives (including compound adjectives), and the only adverb which are in the top 50 frequent words of the EdEng corpus. The nouns under discussion include *essay*, *page*, *analysis*, *points* or *point*, *academic*, *language*, *style* and *discussion*. The adjectives which were found in the top 50 words were *good* and *well* (*well* was used as compound adjective), while the only adverb was *well*. There were clearly some indications that idiosyncrasies occur, particularly with the use of the negation, *not*, with nouns. These have been pointed out earlier. Although the collocates of these nouns were generally positive, such as *a good essay*, or *this is an interesting essay*, negativity was also apparent in the co-texts of the positivity, signalled through adjuncts (such as *although*, or *however*), the contrastive conjunction (*but*), or negations (*not* or *n't*). Similar findings were found with *good* and *well* where there would be an anticipation of negativity. The negativity was always hedged or mitigated with positive comments which would precede or follow the negative comment, with the two exceptions: first, when the comment was on the mechanical aspects of writing the tutor was found to express more explicit criticism, hence the use of *not*. For example: *your essay does not adhere to the guidelines stipulated for in-text referencing in the Style Guide*. Second, when the essay was regarded as a weak essay, there was no hedging. The POS + NEG pattern, while bearing in mind that suggestion refers to an implicit problem, is very evident in the feedback writing practices.

In addition, there was a varying degree of criticism found in the negativity of each noun. The noun could refer either to the general aspect which indicated a degree of vagueness, such as

at times your analysis is not presented very clearly,

or to a specific aspect which would be more direct, such as

your point on culture and sports was not sufficiently explained.

Clusters of hedges were also found within negativity, such as the vague expressions of *at times* (as shown in the example above) or *I think* (discussed further in Section 8.2.2.9.1.) which indicate an even greater sense of tentativeness. Other clustering features included the use of modal verbs, presented as suggestions, such as *this is a relevant point but it could be better integrated and explained* where the implicit problem was the lack of explanation and application of ideas (modals are further discussed in Section 8.2.). The use of clusters is an important aspect of the genre of feedback and will be mentioned when we look into hedging in the subsequent sections and in the discussion chapter (Chapter 9).

This section has looked at the nouns (*essay, analysis, language, points/point, style, discussion*), the one adjective (*good*) including compound adjective (such as *well supported* or *well organised*), and the one adverb (*well*) in the top 50 frequent words of the EdEng corpus. The next section looks at the main focus of this thesis, hedging.

8.2. Hedging

One of the most interesting and noticeable features to emerge while carrying out the genre analysis was the tutor's use of hedging. It is worth noting that the hedging features which are examined in this research are only when they are minimising the negative comment

such as *it is rather a vague beginning to your essay*. Hedging was found to be expressed through the use of core modals (*can, could, may, might, must, shall, should, will, and would*), vague language expression (such as *a few, or some*), stance adverbs (such as *generally, or possibly*), and submodifiers (such as *quite or really*). Other vague expressions also include *I think*. Due to the low occurrences of semi-modals (*need, or ought to*), they will not be discussed under modality. In addition to this, a minimal cut-off point of two occurrences was used to show the frequency of each of the hedging features found under each sub-component. However, only hedging features which have more than five occurrences were examined and discussed further. *WordSmith Tools 5* was used to allocate the concordances and frequencies of occurrences of the hedging features. Each of these will be discussed in the following sub-sections (Sections 8.2.1. to 8.2.5.). As with the previous section, all examples are colour-coded (node word in pink, positivity in blue, negativity in red, suggestions in *italics* and green, clusters of hedging in dark blue, and mitigation in purple).

8.2.1. Modality

The quantitative results demonstrate the frequencies of the use of modals as hedging in feedback, with an average of 3.5 occurrences of core modals per paper, about one every 81 words. Although both departments seemed to use modals equally (12.6 words per thousand in Department A and 12.0 words per thousand in Department B), shown in Table 8.13., the use of modals in Department B (approximately four modals in every feedback report) are higher than in Department A (approximately one modal in every paper). This is mainly due

to the amount of feedback given by the tutor in Department B (an average of 374 words per report, shown in Table 5.1., in Chapter 5, Section 5.3.2.).

Table 8.13. Frequencies of occurrences of the core modals in Departments A and B

	Department A			Department B			Total (Dept. A+B)		
	Raw freq.	Modals per 1000	Modals per paper	Raw freq.	Modals per 1000	Modals per paper	Raw freq.	Modals per 1000	Modals per paper
Core modals	57	12.6	1.4	377	12.0	3.8	434	12.1	3.4

WordSmith Tools 5 was used to extract the concordances and the frequency count for the core modals verbs (*can, could, may, might, must, shall, should, will, and would*). *Could, would, and need* are amongst the top 50 frequent words in the EdEng corpus (4.5. words per thousand, 3.4 words per thousand, and 2.9 words per thousand respectively, shown in Table 8.2. and Appendix 8.1.). As mentioned earlier, the occurrences of semi-modals is minimal, hence there will be no further discussion. Table 8.14. shows the frequencies for each of the modal verbs used as hedging or non-hedging (a detailed summary and examples of these hedging and non-hedging modals are also illustrated in Table 8.24.).

Table 8.14. Core-modal verbs in the EdEng corpus

(Note: all frequency of occurrences are differentiated, non-hedging use are separated)

	Department A		Department B		Total (A + B)	
	Raw freq.	Words per thousand	Raw freq.	Words per thousand	Raw freq.	Words per thousand
Hedging						
Could	19	4.2	134	4.3	153	4.3
Would	17	3.8	77	2.5	94	2.6
Might	3	0.7	64	2.0	67	1.9
May	4	0.9	6	0.2	10	0.3
Can	3	0.7	3	0.1	6	0.2
Shall	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	46	10.2	284	9.0	330	9.2
Non-hedging						
Should	4	0.9	28	0.9	32	0.9
Will	3	0.7	28	0.9	31	0.9
Can	3	0.7	2	0.06	5	0.1
Must	1	0.2	1	0.03	2	0.06
TOTAL	11	2.4	59	1.9	70	1.9

The most frequent core modals in the EdEng corpus in both departments were *could*, and *would* accounting for 75% of all of which were used as hedging (as illustrated in Figure 8.7.). *Could* was used on a more even scale in both departments (4.2 and 4.4 words per thousand respectively, as shown in Table 8.14., or 41% and 47% as shown in Figure 8.8.). *Would*, *can*, and *may* were more prevalent in Department A whereas *might* was more prevalent in Department B (23% as compared with 7% in Department A, also illustrated in Figure 8.8.). The modal, *shall*, was omitted in both departments. The non-hedging modals include *should*, *will*, *can*, and *must*. *Should* was used equally in both departments (0.9 words per thousand). There were instances of *can* where it was also used as non-hedging (discussed in Section 8.2.1.2.). *Must* was used very minimally in the EdEng corpus (0.06

words per thousand). A log-likelihood (LL) test was also carried out to see if there was any statistical significant difference in the use of each modal in each department. The test result showed no significant difference in the usage (results are presented in Appendix 8.7.).

Figure 8.7. Percentage of occurrences of the use of core-modals as hedging in both departments

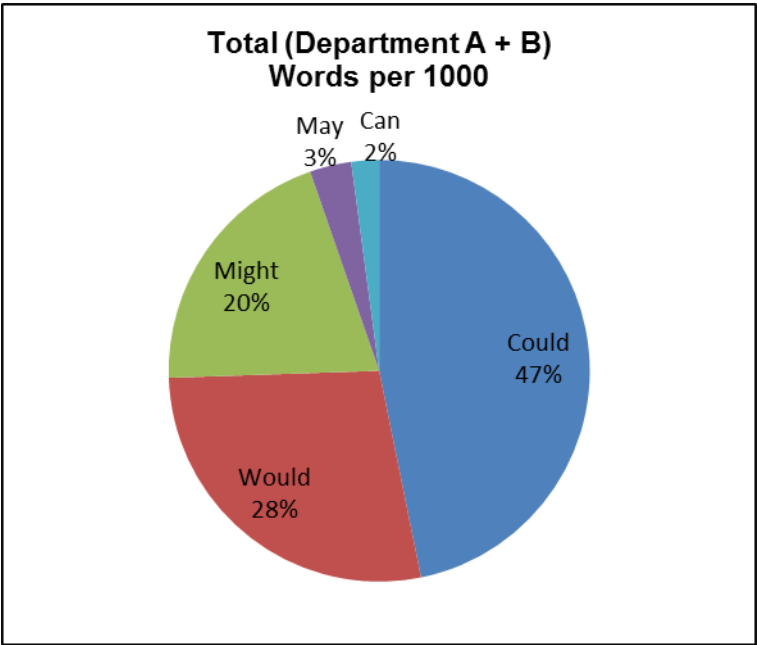
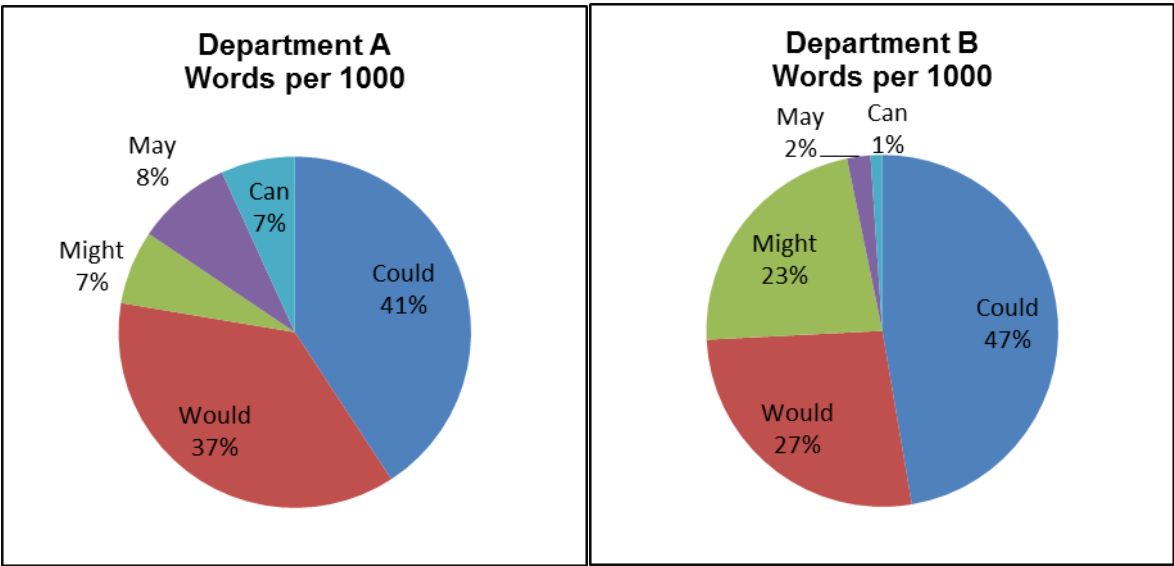


Figure 8.8. Percentages differences of the use of core-modals in both departments



As for the semi-modals, they were very rare. There were occurrences of *need* in the EdEng corpus (124 occurrences, 3.5 words per thousand), however, *need* was not used as a semi-modal in all the occurrences, hence not discussed. *Ought to* was also found in Department B as a semi-modal (2 occurrences, 0.06 words per thousand). Although these two occurrences were found in two separate feedback reports, they were omitted in this research as both occurred in the pattern, *you + ought to be + commended for + NP* (see concordances in Figure 8.9.). They were also found in the same criterion, Documentation and Presentation (DP). Hence, no further discussion is made on *ought to*.

Figure 8.9. Concordances of *ought to*

<p>from your source texts and you ought to be commended for that effort. Just advertisement very well and you ought to be commended for the analysis an</p>
--

8.2.1.1. Functions of modals

Each concordance of the modals was thoroughly examined and identified for its respective functions. Modals which did not function as hedging were removed (as discussed in Chapter 5, Section 5.6.6.). Eight general functions were found to be associated with the modals in this study (outlined in Table 8.15.). Where hedging was found in each of the functions, it will be mentioned as not all the functional category has hedging. For instance, in necessity, there was no hedging in the use of *should* or *must* (further discussed in the respective sub-sections). Categorising these modals into their respective function posed problems in some cases. There was a degree of fuzziness in the categorizations, where one modal might be classified as criticism, though at the same time, it has an implicit suggestion. Hyland (1996b:437-438) also states that the hedging devices can be rather

“polypragmatic”, having various meanings and it is impracticable to define them categorically. There are some categorizations which are open to argument and these will also be mentioned. Justifications will be made for the categorization of each modal to the respective functions.

Table 8.15. Functions of modals

Functions	Modals
Criticism	could, may, might, will, would, can
Suggestion	could, may, might, would
Possibility	may, might, can
Necessity	must, should
Certainty	will
Permission	can
Ability	can
Advice	would

I am aware that in general, tutors do not criticize. Instead, they give critiques. The term, criticism, is used to refer to any negativity in the EdEng corpus such as

[y]ou do not always set clear targets, and strategies for meeting them at the end of the session entries.

However, as the following sections will show, the tutors were on the whole very positive. The negative comments will always be mitigated or softened with a positive comment or phrased as suggestion, with the exception for weak essays where the notion of hedging is lost amidst the negativity (as shown in the sections on *many*, *a lot* and *seem*). The following sub-sections will look at the functions of each of the modals respectively. Hedging will be mentioned under each function, if used.

8.2.1.2. *Can*

There were 11 occurrences of *can* in the EdEng corpus (0.3 words per thousand). *Can* was used in four functions: abilities (two occurrences), criticisms (five occurrences), possibilities (two occurrences), and permissions (two occurrences). Further examples are shown below illustrating each of these functions.

***Can* as ability**

Can or *can't* were found in the EdEng corpus to indicate ability. It was found in two instances in the EdEng corpus (one as hedging and one as non-hedging). *Can* used in the context of ability can be paraphrased as 'able to' or 'not able to'. For example,

*I would like to clarify this point but I **can't** since you have not put in the full bibliographical details for Smith.*

which implies 'I am unable to'. Although *can* is used as an ability here, *can* is not used as a hedge. *Can* is considered hedging the comment when it is minimising the negativity. For instance,

*your introductory paragraph is not very useful although I **can** see that you are trying to provide some background information on individual differences.*

Even though *can* denotes ability in the second example, the co-text of *can* is hedging the criticism (*I can see that...*). The feedback pattern, NEG + POS, is also found in the co-texts of *can* (as shown in the second example).

Can as criticisms

All the uses of *can* as criticisms commented on weakness(es) in the essay. The occurrences of *can* as criticisms do not derive from the modal verb *can* itself, but rather that the function lies within the co-text (or surrounding text) where *can* occurs. *Can* was used as criticism in four instances (as shown in the examples below). Although it is classified as criticism, *can* is still functioning as a hedge, to soften the negativity. Examples are further shown in Figure 8.10.

Figure 8.10. Concordances of *can* as criticisms

class so I know what you mean but it **can** be **a little** difficult to under
of the links between your paragraphs **can** be better. For example, on pag
o, be careful of silly mistakes which **can** be costly- did Samuel Jackson
ts (e.g. moon). Your style of writing **can** be **rather** colloquial (chatty)

There is fuzziness in certain occurrences where the modal verb, *can*, may overlap with other functions. For instance,

*your style of writing **can** be rather colloquial*

can also be classified as possibility implying,

‘your style of writing is sometimes colloquial’.

Can here was classified as a criticism because of the negative connotation in colloquial, but it is hedged by the use of *can be* and *rather*. Other instances of *can* which have overlapping functions are shown in Figure 8.11.

Figure 8.11. Other occurrences of *can* with overlapping functions

Examples:	
<p>(1) On page 3, you make reference to a lesson from Situational English and <i>it would have been useful for you to have either put the example into your essay or to have placed it in the appendix</i>. We discussed it in class so I know what you mean but <i>it can be a little difficult to understand for an outside reader</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HEDGING - Can also be a possibility. However, the co-text indicates an implicit problem where the example was not supplied by the student.
<p>(2) <i>Some of the links between your paragraphs can be better</i>. For example, on page 3, the link between the first paragraph and the second is <i>unclear</i>. You begin the second paragraph with ‘The differences in teaching application...’ – what exactly are you referring to?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HEDGING (paraphrased as: ‘the links between your paragraphs is not good enough’) - Can also be a suggestion. However, the subsequent comment (co-text) is an exemplification indicating a negative (“unclear”), hence <i>can</i> is functioning as a criticism.
<p>(3) At the bottom of page 2, <i>you mention ‘the two types of perfume’</i> – which are they? <i>I can only see one in the advertisement</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NO HEDGE - Can also be an ability. However, it is indicating a piece of missing information, hence <i>can</i> is indicating a criticism here.

Example 3 above shows an instance where *can* was not used as a hedge, although the context was implying negativity. As discussed thus far, it is extremely difficult on a few occasions to assign *can* to a specific function or category as it can be multi-functional. For instance, as a criticism or ability. What is certain, however, is that tutors were trying to remain as tentative as possible in their feedback by hedging or mitigating their feedback constantly (such as with the use of *a little, can be, rather, or I don’t think*) at the same time, bridging the solidarity gap between them and the students.

Can as possibilities

Can was found in two instances as possibilities, paraphrased as ‘it is perhaps/sometimes’ or ‘it is possible’. For example,

*I’m not sure you understand metre fully (talking of Larkin’s use of ‘iambic metre’ is really only half the story – how many stresses are in each line?) but I know that discussion of technical terms **can be** tricky*

can be re-phrased as ‘*I understand that discussion of technical terms is sometimes difficult*’. *Can* is used as a hedge here as it indicates the tutor’s awareness of the difficulties involved in defining technical terms, hence it is hedged with *I know that discussion of technical terms **can be** tricky* instead of saying explicitly ‘*you have not fully understood metre fully*’. The patterning of feedback, NEG + POS, is once again noticeable.

Another occurrence of *can* as a possibility was also found in the EdEng corpus where the tutor highlighted a strength and explaining the challenges involved. *Can* in this instance is not functioning as a hedge. For instance,

*Observation 1 makes a good point about how it **can be** quite a complex issue to select a particular dialect of a language.*

Can as permissions

Can is used as permission in two instances in the EdEng corpus such as

*you **can** omit initials,*

and

*you **can** replace ‘a so’ with ‘an’*

also meaning ‘*you are allowed to omit initials*’, and ‘*you are allowed to replace ‘a so’ with ‘an’*’. *Can* as permissions were only found in Department B and were not considered hedging.

Summary

Can was used in four functions in feedback: abilities, criticisms, permissions and possibilities. As we have seen on separate occasions, it is extremely difficult at times to assign *can* to a specific function or category as it can be multi-functional (for instance, either criticism or ability) depending on which aspect is looked at. The functions of *can* (and other modals) were determined largely by the co-text. For instance, as mentioned throughout, criticisms were established after examining the co-text where *can* occurs. *Can* is used in the literal sense of the function (such as: ability or permission). Apart from the function, *can* is also used to hedge comments (for instance, *silly mistakes which can be costly*, or *it can be a little difficult*). Apart from *can* as permission which is only found in Department B, the other functions of *can* were found in both departments.

Table 8.16. Grammatical patterns of *can*

Note: The table is not a substitution table. Each row is to be read across. For example: *you can omit*.

PPN	can	VB	
you		omit...	
		replace...	
I		only see...	
NP	can		
your paragraphs		BE	better
technical terms			tricky

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

8.2.1.3. *Could*

In the EdEng corpus, *could* is found in 153 instances (4.3 words per thousand). *Could* was found as hedging in two main functions: criticisms (10 occurrences) and suggestions (143 occurrences). Further examples are shown below illustrating each of these functions and the hedging use.

Could as criticisms

Could was found as criticisms in 10 instances in the EdEng corpus. Similarly to the other criticisms found in other modals, the criticism does not occur within *could*, but in the co-text of *could*, such as

*they are **not always explained** as clearly as they **could** be*

where the criticism is in the negation, *not*, but softened or hedged with *not always* and *could*. Another example,

[y]our inclusion of Althusser *could* have been strong but *there's no indication of any detailed understanding or research into his theories*

where the criticism lie in *no indication of...*, was hedged with *could*. Other examples are further illustrated in Figure 8.12. (for a longer span of words and other concordances of *could*, see Appendix 8.8.):

Figure 8.12. Concordances of *could* as criticisms

aching grammar is "practically useless" neither *could* a valid conclusion
hey are *not* always explained as clearly as they *could* be (see points in t
ur use of the theories is *not* as accurate as it *could* be. Proponents of t
not answered the question as successfully as it *could* have although there
y way to define it. Your inclusion of Althusser *could* have been strong *but*
uite compared the advertisements as much as you *could* have. The essay is
he essay *doesn't* quite achieve the potential it *could*. Here are a few poi
imes you *do not* explain yourself as well as you *could*. Here are some spe
be subversive? You *don't* quite achieve all you *could* on the 'critical in
lected your own texts. While I did say that you *could* use texts we have di

Apart from the cluster of hedging in *could* such as *not always* (as shown above), *not quite* is also found in the co-texts of *could* which hedged the criticism further (*quite* is further discussed in Section 8.2.4.1.).

***Could* as suggestions**

143 instances of *could* in the EdEng corpus were used as hedging in expressing suggestions. For instance, *the essay could have achieved more, you could have developed,*

and *your essay could also consider*, all of which were suggestions for improvements and less direct as compared “*you have to develop your discussion*”. Further examples are shown in Figure 8.13. (longer span of words and other examples are also shown in Appendix 8.8.):

Figure 8.13. Concordances of *could* as suggestions

essay. A reasonably good essay that **could** be strengthened with better int
an’ (page 1). • A few examples that **could** be stylistically improved for a
w, minor typographical errors which **could** easily have been avoided if you
better explained interpreted: • You **could** explain the point on the ‘timel
ur essay. • Some of your paragraphs **could** have a better organisation. For
ures of academic writing. The essay **could** have achieved more if the analy
ul observations. These observations **could** have been better supported thro
es its aims to a limited extent and **could** have been better with more sust
the analysis and your explanations **could** have been clearer. This essay d
tful. At times, some of your points **could** have been developed more to hig
green. All of these are points that **could** have made an interesting discus
o suggest ways in which the teacher **could** have progressed to this stage.
re instances in the essay where you **could** have provided more examples or
g them sensibly in the context. You **could** have quantified some of your an
rnatives (prepositional verbs). You **could** have rewritten one or two of yo
ive or strong’. One or two of these **could** have then been examined further

After examining the concordances, there were two noticeable clusters of hedging found with *could* (19 instances), expressed through either *I think*, or *perhaps*, hedging the comments even further. The patterns for these hedging features (*I think*, or *perhaps*) found in the EdEng corpus were: *I (do) think* + DET / NP/ PP + *could* + *have been* + past participle (11 instances), or *perhaps* + PP/ NP + *could* + *have been* + past participle (seven instances). There is also one occurrence where it is heavily hedged in the pattern: *I thought* + *you* + *could* + *perhaps* + past participle. *I think* is also further discussed in Section 8.2.2.9.1. and *perhaps* is further discussed in Section 8.2.3.1. Examples of *I think/perhaps* + *could* are further shown in Figure 8.14.

Figure 8.14. Concordances of *could* with clusters of hedging

ou have labelled as 'easy'. **I think** there **could** have been a further, more
e 6 and **I think** the points you raise here **could** have been more convincing
med a suggestopedia method". **I think** this **could** have benefited from furthe
er development, and **I think** your argument **could** have benefited from a more
sting points for discussion. **Perhaps**, you **could** have considered how the te
iness-like style' (page 4). • **I think** you **could** have developed on the 'sym
ty is accurate (Page 2, top). **I think** you **could** have developed this a litt
ts. • On the point on colour, **I think** you **could** have developed your points
, though on several occasions **I think** you **could** have gone into greater dep
Perhaps, towards the end of the essay you **could** have had a critical discus
om your extract. **Perhaps**, this discussion **could** have just been part of you
class. **Perhaps** one interesting point you **could** have mentioned was the use
nt you make in your essay. **I do think** you **could** have read more widely on t
t the classroom methodology. **Perhaps**, you **could** have recast these suggesti
ting argument to have made. • **I think** you **could** have said a lot more about
ed the audiolingual approach? **I think** you **could** have selected other, more
on on individual differences. **Perhaps** you **could** have summarised it and the
egies that the teacher used - **perhaps** you **could** have used Brown's principl
itations of Propp's model. **I thought** you **could perhaps** have discussed mor

The use of *perhaps* or *I think* to offer suggestions indicate a sense of uncertainty from the tutors. At the same time, it also shows the degree of confidence expressed by the tutors in order to maintain solidarity by not sounding too authoritative.

Summary

Could was used as hedging in two functions: criticisms and suggestions. It is worth noting that the modal, *could*, does not imply criticism. The criticism is found in the co-texts of *could* (a similar case for other modals). Clusters of hedging were also found, often hedging the comment even further, through the use of hedging expressions such as *I (do) think/thought*, or *perhaps*. Other clusters also include the use of other sub-components of hedging such as the use of vague language. For instance, *a few specific issues in your essay that could be improved*. The more evident grammatical patterns of *could* are shown in Table 8.17.

Table 8.17. Grammatical patterns of *could*

Note: The table is not a substitution table. Each row is to be read across. For example: *the essay could be better*.

NP		could		ADJ
the	essay		BE	better
	words in bold			better organised
	analysis of...			revised
your	introduction			(a little) better
	essay			better organised
	analysis on the use of passives			improved by/if
	work			more useful
	(opening) paragraph			
NP				VB
your	essay		have	done
	introduction			explored
	advertisements			mentioned
PPN				VB
you			have	also used
				avoided
				developed
				discussed
				done
				explained
				highlighted
you			VB	
			(also) briefly discuss	
			(also) consider how	
			explain	
			improve	
			make	
			present	
			take	

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

8.2.1.4. *May*

There were 11 instances of *may* in the EdEng corpus (0.3 words per thousand), with three functions namely criticism (one occurrence), possibilities (three occurrences) and suggestions (seven occurrences).

***May* as criticism**

May was found as criticism (one occurrence), such as

[y]ou tend to use a semi-colon when you may not have needed any kind of punctuation.

may and *tend to* were both functioning as hedging instead of saying directly “you do not need any punctuation”. It is open to argument if *may* is functioning as a possibility. In this case, *may* is not a possibility because the tutor is rather certain that a semi-colon is not needed. Hence, *may* is acting as a hedge, to soften the implied criticism.

***May* as possibilities**

May is used in three instances as possibilities, such as

this may be a factor in the tendency to dissociate your experience and reflection from the targets/experience and reflections for subsequent sessions,

or

[a]nother issue which may or may not be significant is whether it would have been useful for you to have considered the differences in clarification/comprehension/confirmation checks when performed by the teacher or when held within student-student interaction,

or

*[y]ou need to be careful of making references to advertisements your reader **may** not be familiar with.*

All three examples above are indicating possibilities (may or may not be true). *May* in these cases was hedging the comment. The third example is analysed as a possibility as opposed to a criticism because *may* is more tentative as compared with *will* which is more direct (further discussed in Section 8.2.1.8.).

May as suggestions

May was found as hedging in suggestions in six instances such as,

*this **may** have extended and broadened your discussion further,*

or

*you **may** need to engage with the question,*

where both were hedging and less direct as compared with

*this **will** extend and broaden your discussion,*

or

*you **have to** engage with the question.*

Further examples of *may* as suggestions are shown in Figure 8.15.

Figure 8.15. Concordances of *may* as suggestions

you to be fairly informal and this **may** be something for you to take note of advertisement 1 (page 5). There **may** be something to be said about the a n and you need to indicate how you **may** develop your response clearly – e.g ease the reader into your argument **may** have helped, for instance, and alth

Some of the examples shown above could also be analysed as possibilities, or criticisms.

Further justifications are provided in Figure 8.16.

Figure 8.16. Justifications to the analysis of *may*

Examples:	
(4) There is occasionally a tendency for you to be fairly informal and this may be something for you to take note of in future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- HEDGING- Although there is a negativity (<i>fairly informal</i>), <i>may</i> is not criticism in this case. The use of <i>may be</i> does not indicate possibility because an action to consider in the future is treated as a suggestion for improvement.
(5) I think you could have developed on the ‘symbolism of the apple’ more in your discussion of advertisement 1 (page 5). There may be something to be said about the apple, the seductive appeal of the perfume and the colour green. All of these are points that could have made an interesting discussion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- HEDGING- <i>May be</i> was not analysed as a possibility because the whole comment was giving suggestions for improvement (developing the concept of the apple).

Summary

May was used as hedging in three functions: criticisms, probabilities, and suggestions. *May* is often used to express possibility or to sound tentative or less direct, although it is not as

indirect as *could* or *might* (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:281). The grammatical patterns of *may* are shown in Table 8.18.

Table 8.18. Grammatical patterns of *may*

Note: The table is not a substitution table. Each row is to be read across. For example: *you may not have needed any kind of punctuation*.

NP	may	NEG'T	VB	ADJP
your reader		not	be	familiar with
PPN		NEG'T	VB/ VP	NP
you		not	have needed	any kind of punctuation
			develop	your response
			need to engage	with the question
gen-DET			VB/ VP	NP
this			be	a factor
			have extended and broadened	

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

8.2.1.5. *Might*

Might is found in 67 instances in the EdEng corpus used as criticisms (two instances), possibilities (two instances), and suggestions (63 instances). It is also worth noting that there are only three occurrences of *might* (0.3 words per thousand) in Department A and 64 occurrences (2.0 words per thousand) in Department B. All occurrences of *might* in the EdEng corpus are hedging.

***Might* as criticism**

Might was found as criticisms in two instances in the EdEng corpus, all located within Department B. For instance,

[t]here is *a concern that you might be overstating some of your points*,

overstating being the criticism, while *might* and *some* softens the impact, being indirect as compared with:

you are overstating your points .

Arguably, the use of *might* in this case can also be classified as a probability that the tutor is being tentative but because *overstating* and *a concern* are both negative, it is classified as a criticism.

Another pattern in which criticism occurred in *might* was through interrogation. For instance, *what might these be?* – where *might* is functioning as a hedge here rather than asking directly “*what are these?*” (as shown in the example below).

You then say how this understanding would ‘enable task-based language learning, feedback and situational, communicative environments to be more appropriately designed to create contexts of interactional processes which aid L2 learning’ – what might these be?

***Might* as possibility**

Might was used as possibility in two instances in the EdEng corpus which were used as hedging. Possibility indicates the tutor's tentativeness and also not committing to the feedback. For instance,

it might have been good to compare the roles with the different stages of the lesson to see if there might be a correlation between teacher roles and the stages of the lesson.

or

[y]our essay indicates a well developed and quite detailed understanding of the progress of education in England and Wales, although, as you also indicate, 'progress' might not be entirely the right word.

***Might* as suggestion**

Might was also used as a suggestion in 63 instances in the EdEng corpus as hedging. For instance,

might be useful to say what 'it' refers to

instead of saying

you have to say what 'it' refers to

which is more explicit, or

[i]t might have been good to have referred to some sources,

a solution which is hedging the implicit problem, paraphrasing as

you have not referred to sources,

which is more direct and explicit. Other examples are shown in Figure 8.17. (for a longer span of words and other examples of *might*, see Appendix 8.9.).

Figure 8.17. Concordances of *might*

presentation of the move analysis **might** have also been better if it was p
have focused on your examples. **It might** have also been more valuable for
- and **there are some errors** which **might** have been avoided through proofre
dence for some of your points, **it might** have been better for you to have
e is **fairly well done although it might** have been more useful to have sh
our introduction to the essay, **it might** have been more worthwhile for you
ile this was **done fairly well, it might** have been useful at the beginning
mic **discourse is good. I think it might** have been useful for you to have
sion on the use of connectors, **it might** have been useful for you to have
ugh **a more comparative discussion might** have broadened your discussion fu
y few criticisms. **To improve, you might** have considered contextual inform
evidence of this and **perhaps you might** have elaborated a little on this
hough **a more sustained comparison might** have enriched your discussed furt
t theories. **Perhaps a better link might** have helped your argument to prog
nces. **I think reading his chapter might** have helped your essay considerab

Apart from showing *might* being used in the context of suggestion, the examples above also shows the pattern of feedback, POS + SUG. For instance,

while this was done fairly well, it might have been useful at the beginning of your essay to have discussed 'communicative language teaching' in greater detail with more references to the literature;

where there is implicit problem in the suggestion, indicating that

there is insufficient discussion on 'communicative language teaching' and references.

The NEG + SUG pattern was also found in the co-text of *might*, for instance:

there are some errors which might have been avoided through proofreading.

The second example shows that tutors were constantly hedging their comment where there are often clusters of hedging, a feature which was very apparent in all the items of hedging. Even though there were criticisms, tutors will hedge their comments using vague language such as *some* (as shown in the second example above, also discussed in Section 8.2.2.2.) or other hedging features, such as vague expression (*I think*) or stance adverb (*perhaps*, as shown in the co-texts of *could* earlier). *I think* and *perhaps* were also found in the co-text of *might*, such as *I think* + *might*, or *perhaps* + *might* (highlighted in dark blue in the concordances). *I think* is further discussed in Section 8.2.2.9.1. and *perhaps* is further discussed in Section 8.2.3.1.

Summary

Might was found as criticisms, possibilities, or suggestions, all of which were hedging. The most frequent and evident pattern found with *might* is in the use of *it might* (36 instances altogether:

it might + past participle + ADJ (33 instances), and

it might + BE + ADJ (three instances).

Other patterns include:

NP + *might* + past participle + ADJ (five instances);

you might + have + VB (five instances); or

you might + BE + VB (one instance); or

this might (four instances).

The most apparent patterns of *might* are further illustrated below:

Table 8.19. Grammatical patterns of *might*

Note: The table is not a substitution table. Each row is to be read across. For example: *it might be useful to....*

	might		ADJ
it		BE	useful (to...)
		+ past participle	ADJ
		(also) have been	better
			good
			(more) valuable
			(more) useful
this		HAVE	VB
			helped
			made
		have been	VB
mentioned			
NP		HAVE	VB
a more sustained comparison (of features)			yielded
			enriched
			highlighted
a more comparative discussion			broadened
a better link			helped
NP		+ past participle	VB
this analysis		have been	more useful
			presented
the analysis			

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

8.2.1.6. *Must*

Must was found in two instances in the EdEng corpus in the form of necessity. *Must* denotes absolute certainty, hence there is no hedging in *must*. For instance,

you must pursue one line of reasoning,

where is very direct as if the tutor is saying

you have to pursue one line of reasoning; or

it is necessary for you to pursue one line of reasoning.

Another occurrence of *must* which was also very certain but was found in a positive context. For instance,

you must be commended for the extensive reading you have done,

Both occurrences of *must* in the EdEng corpus were not used for hedging. *Must* was used in the same meaning as *should*, which is also very direct (further discussed in Section 8.2.1.7.). One noticeable feature in the use of *must* or *should* is that they are used to comment on aspects of writing.

Summary

There is no hedging for the case of *must* as it is very direct. The grammatical patterns of *must* are shown in Table 8.20. There are very few occurrences of *must* in the EdEng corpus (only two occurrences, 0.06 words per thousand). This is due to the strong obligation *must*

is associated with. Apart from *must* and *should* which are both very direct and no hedge, other directness in the EdEng corpus were hedged, although there were rare instances where the sense of hedging is lost in a negative context (as shown in the sections on *many*, *a lot* and *seem*). However, it does seem that tutors are constantly trying to avoid making any strong assertions in giving feedback in order not to be too critical.

Table 8.20. Grammatical patterns of *must*

Note: The table is not a substitution table. Each row is to be read across. For example: *you must be commended*.

PPN		VB/VP	NP
you	must	be commended	
		pursue	one line of reasoning

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

8.2.1.7. *Should*

There were 32 instances of *should* (0.9 words per thousand in Departments A and B). All occurrences of *should* was used as a necessity (32 instances). All instances of *should* in the EdEng corpus was not used for hedging.

Should as necessity

Should was used as necessity in 32 instances in the EdEng corpus (0.9 words per thousand). Arguably, the occurrences of *should* (as shown below in (i) to (iii)) can also be

analysed as suggestions. However, I think *should* is used in a more upfront (or direct) sense as compared with the other modals which have the function of suggestion (for instance: *can*, *could*, *may*, *might*, or *would*). Hence, *should* is classified as necessity. The degree of certainty with *should* is comparable to *must*. For instance, compare the three comments below:

- i. the bibliography *should* be presented in alphabetical order;
- ii. the bibliography *must* be presented in alphabetical order;
- iii. the bibliography *could* be presented in alphabetical order.

Sentence (iii) is more tentative where there is also a degree of possibility (paraphrasing as “*it is possible to present the bibliography in alphabetical order*”) as compared with Sentence (i) and (ii) which are more direct and explicit, equivalent to an obligation, “*it is necessary for the bibliography to be in alphabetical order*” – which is a convention of academic writing. Because it is a convention especially when students are expected to familiarize themselves with the appropriate writing skills, tutors opted for *should* when commenting on mechanical aspects of writing (for instance, referencing), a case also found with *must* (as discussed in Section 8.2.1.6.), but never with *could*. Apart from writing conventions, *should* is also used to comment on the analytical and critical thinking skills. For example: conducting own research, particular aspects of discussion, or avoiding particular forms of language, such as *sexist language*. Further examples are shown in Figure 8.18. (longer span of words and other examples are also shown in Appendix 8.10.).

Figure 8.18. Concordances of *should*

or initials. • *Your bibliography should* be presented without bullet point and prompt copy. *Perhaps* more *should* be said in the Rationale about opening paragraph, *the full stop should* come after (1992) and in your Bibliography specific essay questions. You *should* conduct your own research to support and *this is what your discussion should* focus on. • On page 3, you once are types of analysis! In sum, you *should* get credit for the amount of analysis. *Your reference to Douglas-Brown should* just be 'Brown'. 'Douglas' is his name. *Here are some points that you should* note which could have been better into your sentence. • *Full stops should* occur at the end of sentences after

However, not all uses of *should* in the EdEng corpus were direct. There were two instances where clusters of hedges were found alongside *should* to indicate a degree of uncertainty, such as

perhaps more should be said in the Rationale,

Even though *perhaps* indicates uncertainty and a suggestion, but because *should* in addition to *more* denote very strong directness and negativity, the use of *perhaps* to hedge or function as a suggestion is not as effective as compared with

perhaps more could be said in the Rationale.

In addition, *should* was also used positively which also has no hedging. For instance,

you *should* get credit for the amount of analysis presented in the appendices.

Summary

Should was expressed as a necessity in the EdEng corpus, all of which are not hedging. Both departments used *should* only on the writing conventions, such as the referencing system, aspects which students are expected to know, hence the more direct use of *should*. From the analysis thus far, it seems that the genre of feedback does not encourage directness. The tutors are very direct only in commenting the mechanical aspects of writing because they are not criticising the student directly but on the writing requirements which are facts. Although very rare (one occurrence out of 32, 3.2%), *should* was also used to express positivity (as shown in the example earlier). The grammatical patterns of *should* are shown in Table 8.21.

Table 8.21. Grammatical patterns of *should*

Note: The table is not a substitution table. Each row is to be read across. For example: *you should conduct your own research*.

PPN	should	VB	
you		conduct	your own research
		get	credit for...
		present	your sentence...
		note	
it		avoid	
		be ‘...’	
		be indented	
		then describe	
NP		VB	
full stop(s)		come/occur at	
bibliography		be presented	in...
		appear	earlier on your list

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

8.2.1.8. Will

There were 31 occurrences of *will* in the EdEng corpus (0.9 words per thousand). *Will* is used to express certainties (six occurrences) and criticisms (one occurrence). Other functions of *will* also include intentions (13 occurrences), and future intentions (11 occurrences). All occurrences of *will* in the EdEng corpus are not hedging.

Will as certainties

There were six occurrences of *will* which were used as certainties, only one was used as hedging. *Will* is also very direct and has a closer meaning to ‘is’ as compared with *would* which is more tentative. For instance,

an alphabetical list will be sufficient and an alphabetical list is sufficient
surnames first will be sufficient and surnames first is sufficient

The use of *will* in these cases is more direct or definite. There is no hedging in the use of *will*. Another example,

I think your work will be enhanced by more research

where *I think* is the hedge and not *will*. As mentioned, *will* is not a hedge as it indicate certainty (*your work will be enhanced by more research*). As compared with *would* however, *would* signals tentativeness and is a hedge. For instance,

I think your work would be enhanced by more research,

the use of *will* is more upfront. Further examples of the more directive use of *will* are shown in Figure 8.19.

Figure 8.19. Concordances of *will* as certainties

ise criticisms against this point **will** be more valid. • Bottom of page 7
all the points from lectures you **will** lose focus because lecturers are n
you would have read (e.g. Harmer) **will** show you that Long developed much

As with the cases for *must* and *should* (as discussed earlier), similar observation is found with *will*. Tutors are more direct with reference to the mechanical aspects of writing or referring to evidently supported materials, for instance, the Style Guide in Department B particularly. Hence, the more certain and directive application of *will*.

Will as criticisms

There was only one instance of *will* being used as criticism which is not hedging because of the directness of *will*. For example:

You need to be careful of making references to advertisements your reader may not be familiar with – for e.g. your reference to Cook’s discussion on the ‘P & O ferries’. I know what you mean but any other reader will not. Your essay needs to be written for a general academic audience.

As with the other modals, *will* can also be multi-functional. Although *will* indicates a degree of certainty in the example above, it is a criticism because the student has selected a very specific example which is known only to certain people.

Other instances where *will* was not used as hedging was found in expressing intentions and future intentions. However, these functions of *will* (intentions and future intentions) were found only in Department B which could indicate idiosyncrasy or a feedback writing practice by the particular tutor. Examples are further shown below.

Will as intention

Will was also used to express the student's intentions (13 instances) within the essay such as *what will be achieved*, or *what you will do*. Further examples are shown in Figure 8.20.

Figure 8.20. Concordances of *will* as intentions

that sets out explicitly what you **will** achieve in the essay. • You have s
troduction that sets out what you **will** achieve in the essay. However, the
nd provide an overview of how you **will** approach the analysis of your text
ide a good description of how you **will** approach the essay. The analysis
ntroduction sets out clearly what **will** be achieved in the essay. • Page 3
p of page 2, you mention that you **will** be analysing factors such as 'prof
g more detail of the theories you **will** be discussing in the essay as oppo
ur introduction suggests that you **will** be looking at three aspects in you
oduces the topic, states what you **will** do in the essay and describes the
tion? Your sentence says that you **will** move on to 'another controversial'
to have discussed the issues you **will** raise in the essay as opposed to d
useful guide to the approach you **will** take in your study. You provide ba
f your essay and the approach you **will** take. Generally, the analysis is a

Will as future intentions

Will was also used to express future intentions (11 instances), denoting actions which have yet to take place referring explicitly to the discussion meeting which takes place after the students have receive their essays and feedback. The most common pattern in this function is *we* as the subject, such as *we will discuss*. Further examples are shown in Figure 8.21.

Figure 8.21. Concordances of *will* as future intentions

re to construct your argument. We **will** also discuss what other sources you begin writing it as I think it **will** be helpful for us to meet. The essay not quite reach its potential. We **will** discuss some of the points here in the main issues in the question. We **will** discuss some of these points further and a central argument. We **will** discuss some of these points in further detail better overall organisation. We **will** discuss these points in greater detail. When we meet we **will** discuss these points and consider the main issues in the question. We **will** discuss this essay in further detail with mostly relevant issues. We **will** discuss this further during our academic essay. When we meet, we **will** discuss your essay in further detail. When we meet to discuss your essay, I **will** highlight them to you. This is general

Summary

Will was found in the EdEng corpus performing two functions, criticisms and certainties. There is no hedging in *will* as *will* is more certain and direct. Tutors are more direct when they are commenting on mechanical writing such as references. Because it is the writing conventions, tutors are more critical as they are not criticising the individual student, rather the writing conventions.

There were also other uses of *will* in the feedback such as expressing future intentions, and intentions, both of which were not hedging and were found only in Department B indicating idiosyncrasy. The grammatical patterns of *will* are shown in Table 8.22.

Table 8.22. Grammatical patterns of *will*

Note: The table is not a substitution table. Each row is to be read across. For example: *you will achieve in the essay*.

PPN	will	VB/VP	
you		achieve	in the essay
		approach	the...
		lose focus	
		take	(in your study)
we		discuss	
NP		BE	ADJ
an alphabetical list			sufficient
this point			more valid
your work			enhanced by...

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
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8.2.1.9. *Would*

Would was found in 94 occurrences in the EdEng corpus, used as advice (one occurrence), criticisms (10 occurrences), and suggestions (83 occurrences). Further examples are shown below illustrating each of these functions.

***Would* as advice**

Advice is found only once in the EdEng corpus (in Department B). For example,

*I **would** only check the use of punctuation before a quotation.*

Would as well as *only* are both hedging to soften the criticism in the example above, instead of saying more directly,

check the use of punctuation before a quotation.

***Would* as criticisms**

Would was used as criticisms in 10 instances in the EdEng corpus. Similarly with the criticisms found in other modals, *would* is hedging the negativity. The critical comments lie in the co-text where *would* occurs. For example,

my only criticism would be that you are occasionally overly-reliant on your secondary sources

where *overly-reliant* is the criticism, hedged with *would*, *only* and *occasionally*, instead of:

you are overly-reliant on your secondary sources.

The second statement without *would*, *only* and *occasionally* is more direct and critical. The cluster of hedging such as *occasionally* and *only* also helped to lessen the negativity (see also Section 8.2.3.).

Another form of criticism with *would* or *wouldn't* is also found in interrogations. For instance,

what would this be?

is more indirect than asking directly, *what is this?*.

Similarly with

wouldn't this discussion be more appropriate for the 'learning process'?

which is hedged instead of explicitly saying

this discussion is more appropriate for the 'learning process'.

Although *would* in these cases is classified as criticism, it has the function of hedging. In other words, it softens the critical question. Further concordances of *would* are shown in Figure 8.22. (Appendix 8.11. shows a longer span of words).

Figure 8.22. Concordances of *would* as criticisms

ing and use of personal pronouns **would** be part of the category on linguistic and fluency. My **only** criticism **would** be that you are occasionally overly
With example 1, my **only** comment **would** be whether it is accurate to say that
n. **Perhaps**, my **only** comment here **would** be with regard to your conclusion of
reference to background information **would** count as intertextuality. But, you
your mistake' - what other methods **would** have been open to this teacher? On
accurate. Some of the sources you **would** have read (e.g. Harmer) will show you
as much focus as I thought they **would** have. Generally, your essay is easy
academic style. In particular, I **would** like to highlight your use of punctuation
theories are only satisfactory. I **would** only question your argument that the
ending and awareness. One point I **would** raise concerns the range of theories
ion. What elements of the lesson **would** suggest this? Your essay reads well
tion' - which fundamental tenets **would** these be and how could teachers promote
us-based learning theory' - what **would** this be? • Page 6 - 'Hence motivation
highly memorable in itself' - what **would** this be? Your section on 'use of student
'passive' skills. What exactly **would** this speculation be? - On page 10, I
refer repeatedly to L1 learning - **wouldn't** this discussion be more appropriate
identify ungrammatical sentences. **Wouldn't** this imply that there was some k

As with the other modals (*could*, *may*, or *might*), the clustering of hedges are also found in the co-texts of *would*. For instance, the use of *only* to indicate the one and only negativity and the use of *perhaps* to indicate a level of certainty (also discussed in Section 8.2.3.).

Would as suggestions

Would was used as a suggestion in 80 instances in the EdEng corpus. For instance,

*[t]his **would** also have provided evidence for your analysis;*

*[i]ncluding more quotations **would** also help to consolidate and extend some of your points here;*

*[i]t **would** also help to show how the points are connected with each other.*

These comments were all hedged as compared with *will* which is more direct and more assertive. For instance, if all the comments were rephrased:

*[t]his **will** provide evidence for your analysis;*

*[i]ncluding more quotations **will** help to consolidate and extend some of your points here;*

*[i]t **will** help to show how the points are connected with each other.*

Will is more definite in all three examples above and is not hedging. In addition to *would* as hedging in suggestions, the data also reveals further clustering of hedging such as

***I think** it **would have been** more useful;*

*[w]hat **would have been** a more effective way to present your analysis, **perhaps would have been** to present these sentences individually.*

More is not considered as part of the cluster of hedging because although *more* is a form of vague language, it has a negative connotation associated with it where the tutors are indirectly saying *the essay lacks explanation or discussion* (further discussed in Section

Table 8.23. Grammatical patterns of *would*

Note: The table is not a substitution table. Each row is to be read across. For example: *it would be more accurate*, or *this would have allowed*.

			ADJ
<i>it</i>	would	BE	(more) accurate
			helpful (to...)
			sufficient
		HAVE	helped
			made sense
		+ past participle	ADJ
		(also) have been	better organised
			helpful (to...)
			(more) useful (for you to have.../ to...)
<i>this</i>	would	HAVE	VB
			allowed
			broadened
			given
			yielded
		have been	ADJ/ ADJP
			more useful as a discussion point
			quite an interesting argument
			quite important
NP			
my only comment		BE	
an alphabetical list			on the section...
			sufficient
NP			
your observation		HAVE	VB
your essay			
a learning diary			benefited
this way you			
			introduced...
NP		+ past participle	ADJ
an example...		have been	useful
analysis			clearer if you...

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

8.2.1.10. Summary of modals

This section has looked at modals in two ways. First, to explore the different functions of each of the modals in the EdEng corpus. Second, to differentiate between the hedging and non-hedging. This is to show that not all modals are hedging where some are more certain and direct (for instance, *must*, *should* and *will*) and others are more tentative and express uncertainty (for instance, *can*, *could*, *may*, *might* and *would*). Arguments can be made in relation to the functions of modals but it is also important to bear in mind that modals can be multi-functional.

From this entire section on modals, it is very evident that tutors are constantly hedging their comments, to soften the negativity. The clustering of hedging is a very interesting finding where the tutors do not only use a single element of hedging but often in clusters, either through the use of vague language (*some*, *a few*), vague expression (*I think*), stance adverbs (*perhaps*, *occasionally*) or submodifiers (*quite*). All of these other elements of hedging will be further discussed in the subsequent sections. It is apparent that the genre of feedback in particular does not encourage directness as it is considered face threatening. The only directness found in feedback is when the tutors are giving feedback on the mechanical aspects of writing where they are criticising the writing convention and not the students' writing in particular, hence more directive. Table 8.24. provides a summary of the functions and the hedging and non-hedging use of the modals.

Table 8.24. Summary of the functions of modals

Modals	Functions	Freq.	Examples:
Hedging			
Can (6 in total)	ability	1	Your introductory paragraph is not very useful although I can see that you are trying to provide some background information on individual differences. (Text 62, Department B, in IACAR)
	criticism	4	Your style of writing can be rather colloquial (chatty) and you sometimes mix the present and past tenses. (Text 17, Department A)
	possibility	1	I'm not sure you understand metre fully (talking of Larkin's use of 'iambic metre' is really only half the story – how many stresses are in each line?) but I know that discussion of technical terms can be tricky. (Text 6, Department A)
Could (153 in total)	criticism	10	However, without the interpretation of what your observations and analysis mean for the reader, the essay doesn't quite achieve the potential it could . (Text 84, Department B, in IACAR)
	suggestion	143	You made some good points about poetic form and literary devices like the *, but some of your points could use development and a greater range of secondary material. (* incomprehensible, Text 7, Department A)
May (10 in total)	criticism	1	You tend to use a semi-colon when you may not have needed any kind of punctuation. (Text 82, Department B, in DP)
	possibility	3	You need to be careful of making references to advertisements your reader may not be familiar with. (Text 76, Department B, in IACAR)
	suggestion	6	From the outset you may need to engage with the question and you need to indicate how you may develop your response clearly – e.g. that the texts you've chosen both can * and question dominant ideologies. (* incomprehensible, Text 1, Department A)
Might (67 in total)	criticism	2	There is a concern that you might be overstating some of your points. (Text 58, Department B, in IACAR)

Table 8.24. (continued) Summary of the functions of modals

Might	possibility	2	Your essay indicates a well developed and quite detailed understanding of the progress of education in England and Wales, although, as you also indicate, 'progress' might not be entirely the right word. (Text 33, Department A)
	suggestion	63	To improve, you might have considered contextual information pertaining to the fantasy genre and the construction of childhood. (Text 14, Department A)
Would (94 in total)	advice	1	Your essay is well documented and adheres to the requirements in the Style Guide. I would only check the use of punctuation before a quotation. (Text 82, Department B, in DP)
	criticism	10	I would only question your argument that the interactionist theory doesn't offer a satisfactory view of the learner. (Text 66, Department B, in IACAR)
	suggestion	83	Including more quotations would also help to consolidate and extend some of your points here. (Text 2, Department A)
Non-hedging			
Can (5 in total)	ability	1	I would like to clarify this point but I can't since you have not put in the full bibliographical details for Smith. (Text 109, Department B, in IACAR)
	criticism	1	At the bottom of page 2, you mention 'the two types of perfume' – which are they? I can only see one in the advertisement. (Text 80, Department B, in IACAR)
	permission	2	When you refer to sources, you only need to use their surnames and you can omit initials. (Text 63, Department B, in DP)
	possibility	1	Observation 1 makes a good point about how it can be quite a complex issue to select a particular dialect of a language especially when the dialects are not mutually intelligible. (Text 111, Department B, in IACAR)
Must (2 in total)	necessity	2	You must pursue one line of reasoning, and signpost that throughout. (Text 31, Department A)

Table 8.24. (continued) Summary of the functions of modals

Should (32 in total)	necessity	32	Your reference to Douglas-Brown should just be 'Brown'. 'Douglas' is his first name. (Text 66, Department B, in DP)
			There are a few points you should note: (Text 67, Department B, in IACAR)
will (31 in total)	certainty	6	An alphabetical list will be sufficient. (Text 121, Department B, in DP)
	criticism	1	You need to be careful of making references to advertisements your reader may not be familiar with – for e.g. your reference to Cook's discussion on the 'P & O ferries'. I know what you mean but any other reader will not . (Text 76, Department B, in IACAR)
	future intention	11	We will discuss some of these points in further detail when we meet. (Text 62, Department B, in OV)
	intention	13	A good, solid introduction that sets out explicitly what you will achieve in the essay. (Text 66, Department B, in IACAR)

8.2.2. Vague language

An investigation of vague language³⁰ was carried out on the EdEng corpus. The occurrences or uses of vague language as defined by Carter and McCarthy (2006:202-203) and Farr (2011:115-117) were very rare in the whole corpus. In Department A, vague language was completely avoided, while in Department B vague language was found but was very infrequent. *Something* was the only vague language found in Department B (four occurrences), as shown in Table 8.25.

³⁰ The list of vague language (for example, *thing, stuff, or so, like, or something, or anything, and so on, or whatever, kind of, and sort of*) is extracted from Carter and McCarthy (2006:202-203) and Farr (2011:115-117). This list of vague language was then searched in the EdEng corpus. Only the occurrences of such expressions, if any, were noted.

Table 8.25. Frequency of occurrences of *something* in the EdEng corpus

	Department A		Department B		EdEng corpus	
	Raw freq.	Words per thou.	Raw freq.	Words per thou.	Raw freq.	Words per thou.
<i>something</i>	-	-	5	0.2	5	0.1

Apart from the main examples of vague language defined by Carter and McCarthy (2006:202-203), approximators³¹ are other forms of vague language used by tutors to avoid being too specific (as discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.1.2.). Approximators as vague language are expressed through, *some, more, a little, many, a lot, a couple of, less, around, and about*. However, the term, approximator, is not being used in this section, as not all the approximators (such as *some, more, a little, or many*) were used as approximators where the tutor avoid mentioning the specific numbers. There were cases (for instance, ***some awkward collocations***) which tutors used as approximators, while there were other cases where the intention was to hedge (for instance, *you are sometimes a little too reliant*). Hence, the term vague language is used in general to refer to all occurrences.

In addition, due to the relatively low frequency of occurrences of individual vague items in the EdEng corpus (as shown in Table 8.26.), they were all grouped together under the main heading, vague language, as the sole purpose of using vague language is for tutors to hedge their comments and remain vague. Table 8.26. shows the frequencies of each of these vague items in the EdEng corpus where the hedging and non-hedging use of each vague

³¹ Channell (1994:42) and Farr (2011) both use the term, “approximators”, while Carter and McCarthy (2006:203-204) use the term, “approximations” which is similar.

language items were separated. Each of these vague items, hedging and non-hedging, will be further discussed later.

Table 8.26. Lists of vague language in the EdEng corpus

(Note: All occurrences were undifferentiated: approximators were not separated. However, the hedging and non-hedging use of each vague language is separated.)

	Department A		Department B		Total (A + B)	
	Raw freq.	Words per thou.	Raw freq.	Words per thou.	Raw freq.	Words per thou.
Hedging						
some	11	2.4	97	3.1	108	3.0
few	6	1.3	69	2.2	75	2.1
a little	10	2.2	14	0.4	24	0.7
a couple of	-	-	5	0.2	5	0.1
TOTAL	27	6.0	185	5.9	212	5.9
Non-hedging						
more	23	5.1	133	4.2	156	4.3
some	30	6.6	119	3.8	149	4.1
many	6	1.3	5	0.2	11	0.3
few	-	-	8	0.3	8	0.2
a lot	3	0.7	3	0.1	6	0.2
TOTAL	62	13.7	268	8.5	330	9.2

Note:

- The row shaded in grey is found only in Department B.
- Due to the relatively low frequency of occurrences in the EdEng corpus, a cut-off point of two occurrences was used.

A log-likelihood (LL) test was carried out to see if there was any statistical difference in the use of each vague item in each department (results are presented in Appendix 8.12.). The test result showed no highly statistical difference ($p < 0.0001$) in the usage in Department B. *A little* was used a hedge, predominantly in Department A, and statistically significant (LL: +12.60, $p\text{-value} < 0.001$). The other vague language items which were used as hedging show no statistical difference between the usage. In the non-hedging use

of the vague language items, *many* was also predominantly found in Department A, and highly statistically significant (LL: +17.17, p-value <0.0001). However, these significance tests were carried out to see if the data was skewed, mainly in Department B (as mentioned in Chapter 5). Since the feedback reports from Department A were written by ten tutors (as shown in Table 5.1.), it is unlikely for *many* and *a little* to be idiosyncratic features. What is certain however, is that the tutor from Department B was also using *many*, and *a little*, although not as frequent as the tutors in Department A.

As with modals (discussed earlier in Section 8.2.1.), some of these vague items have multi-functions. For example,

a lot of your points,

and

[t]here is quite *a lot* to say here,

both indicate vagueness where tutors were being imprecise and where tutors were hedging the implicit problem. There were also cases where some approximators (as proposed by Carter and McCarthy (2006:202-203) and Farr (2011:115-117) did not express vagueness in the feedback. For instance, in the cases of *about* and *around* such as

[o]bservation I makes a good point *about* how it can be quite a complex issue to select a particular dialect of a language;

or

[y]ou have done a wide reading *around* the topic.

These were not accounted for in the frequencies of occurrences. Although Channell (1994:42), and Carter and McCarthy (2006:203-204) found examples of these, such as

*we should be there **around** six;*

*he's producing **about** ten pages a week (Channell, 1994:48),*

*I had the goldfish for **about** three years;*

*I'll see you **around** six (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:203-204),*

there were none of these in the EdEng corpus. The functions of each vague item, along with the patterns, for instance,

***some of** + pos-DET;*

***some very** + ADJ;*

***some good** + NOUN*

and

***a lot of** ;*

a lot more

are discussed in the following sub-sections.

The following sections explore the use of vague language (*something, some, more, a little, many, a lot, and a couple of*). *About* and *around* are not used as approximators or vague language in the EdEng corpus and hence will not be discussed further. As there was only one occurrence of *less* (*the essay could have benefited from more argument and **less** description*) in the EdEng corpus (found in Department B), there will be no further discussion on *less* due to its rare usage.

8.2.2.1. *Something*

As compared with a spoken discourse where *something* is frequently use to hedge or express vagueness (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:202), there were only four instances of *something* in the EdEng corpus (found only in Department B). All instances of *something* are hedging the negativity. *Something* is used as an anaphora, referring to something in the preceding text. For instance,

[t]here is *occasionally a tendency for you to be fairly informal and this may be something for you to take note of in future,*

where *something* refers to the student's tendency to write in an informal way. Another example,

[t]his is also *something that is lacking in your essay,*

something refers to the student's weakness in not linking the analysis to the interpretation and discussion. As with modals, the cluster of hedging is also found in the co-text of *something* as shown in the first example above (for instance, *occasionally, fairly, and may be*). Other examples of *something* which were used as hedging are shown in Figure 8.24.

Figure 8.24. Concordances of *something* as hedging device

language learning. For e.g. *something* along the lines of 'the audiolingual
t 1 (page 5). There may be *something* to be said about the apple, the sedu
our introduction as that is *something* you do not analyse later in the essa

8.2.2.2. *Some*

A total of 257 occurrences of *some* were found in the EdEng corpus (7.1 words per thousand, undifferentiated). However, only 108 instances of *some* were hedging (3.0 words per thousand) and 149 instances were non-hedging (4.1 words per thousand, as shown in Table 8.26.). As mentioned earlier (in Section 8.2.), an item is only considered hedging when it is minimising the negative comment. The non-hedging use of *some* was derived from positive contexts which were not hedging or softening the negativity, as shown in the concordances in Figure 8.25.

Figure 8.25. Concordances of *some* (non-hedging)

here [Name omitted], and you show **some** ability in literary analysis. Your mention the source text and give **some** general examples of reporting verbs is a fairly good essay that shows **some** good analysis and discusses various ill be about. You essay does have **some** good analysis: • In particular, you submission. An essay that shows **some** understanding of concepts on the co essay. The introduction provides **some** useful background information and b lysis of colour is good and makes **some** very relevant points. • Your interp audience. • There is evidence of **some** very sound analysis and interpretat rong response. You have conducted **some** very thorough research and hence so resting essay. You have conducted **some** very useful research and you engage

Looking at the occurrences of *some*, tutors in Department A seemed to be using *some* to highlight the positive features of the essay, as compared with the occurrences of *some* in Department B which varied between positive and hedging (as shown in Table 8.26.). Due to the frequent use of *some* in the EdEng corpus (the highest number of occurrences as compared to the other vague items), a two-word cluster and three-word cluster analysis of *some*³² was carried out to see the more evident clusters of *some* (refer to Appendix 8.14.

³² Only clusters of a minimum frequency of five from the whole corpus were extracted.

and Appendix 8.15. for the two-word clusters and three-word clusters of *some*). Interestingly, looking at the two-word clusters of *some*, they were often associated with positive evaluations, in the patterns:

some good + NOUN;

some interesting (+ ADJ) + NOUN; and

some useful (+ ADJ) + NOUN;

These patterns were found across the two departments. In addition to positive evaluations, the pattern,

some relevant (+ ADJ) + NOUN

was also found, but only in Department B. An investigation into *make(s) some/made some* also showed as positive in context, in the pattern,

NP/PPN + (do) *make(s) some* (+ INT) + ADJ + NOUN;

for instance,

you make some extremely interesting points;

you make some insightful observations;

a good essay which makes some interesting points

you make some very relevant points.

Similar findings were found with the three-word clusters of *some*, in the pattern, *some* + positive evaluations, such as

some interesting points,

some good points; and

some very good argumentation (all patterns were also mentioned in the two-word clusters).

Looking at the findings from the cluster analysis of *some*, there was a general pattern to the way *some* occurred in: *some* + ADJ [POS] + NOUN. Table 8.27. further shows this pattern. In addition to the positive connotations of *some*, there were 13 occurrences of *some* following an intensifier, generating the pattern, *some* + INT + ADJ + NOUN (found across the two departments), as shown in Table 8.28. It is worth mentioning again that *some* + positive connotations are not hedging.

Table 8.27. General patterns of *some* + ADJ + NOUN

Note: Table 8.27. is not a substitution table. Each row is an individual example to be read across. For example: *your essay does have some good analysis.*

gen-DET/PPN/NP	V/ VP		ADJ [POS]	NOUN/NP
Your essay	does have	some	good	analysis
You	provide			explanations
You	have			ideas
You	make (use of)		interesting (and insightful)	ideas
Your conclusion	makes			observations
There	are (also)			comments
A (fairly) good essay that/which	makes			points
A competent essay that	make		relevant (and interesting)	material sources
You	make			
	have (also) read		useful	background information
(it /the /your) introduction	provides			examples
You also	deploy			information
The essay also /	presents			observations
You	provide			
A good essay which/that	makes			

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

Table 8.28. General patterns of *some* +INT +ADJ +NOUN

Note: Table 8.28. is not a substitution table. Each row is an individual example to be read across. For example: *evidence of some very sound analysis*.

PPN/NOUN		INT	ADJ [POS]	NOUN
evidence of	some	very	sound	analysis
VB				
You make			good (and interesting)	points
demonstrates				argumentation
You have conducted			thorough	research
			useful	
			insightful	observation
You make			relevant (and interesting)	points
		extremely	interesting	

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

The two-word clusters of *some* revealed that *some of* is the most frequent, 79 occurrences altogether (as shown in Appendix 8.14.). These uses were more widely found in Department B (73 occurrences, 33.9%) than in Department A (six occurrences, 14.3%). The three-word clusters showed that *some of your* was the most frequent cluster in both departments, while *some of the* was more evident in Department B (as shown in Appendix 8.15.). An examination of *some of* showed that it is normally found in the four major patterns stated below in (a) to (d). Examples of these patterns are further illustrated in Table 8.29.

- (a) *some of* +ART +NOUN (*some of the literature*);
 (b) *some of* +gen-DET +NOUN (*some of these points*);
 (c). *some of* +wh-DET +PN/PPN +VB (*some of what you say*);
 (d) *some of* +pos-DET +NOUN (*some of your points*).

Table 8.29. General patterns of *some of*

Note: Table 8.29. is not a substitution table. Each row is an individual example to be read across. For example: *to have connected some of the analysis.*

VB		ART	NOUN
to have connected	some of	the	analysis
understand			basic principles
only			elements
to have explored/ used			information
covers/ could have used			literature
support/ discuss / explain			material
			point(s)
		gen-DET	NOUN
discuss	some of	these	points
original purposes of			studies
		WH-DET	PN/ PPN+ VB
is linked to	some of	what	Cook says
integrated			you have read
although			you say
		pos-DET	NOUN
quantified/support	some of	your	analysis/es
refer to			(earlier) discussion
support/provide evidence for			observations
explain/ extend/ overstating			points
refer to/the use of			sources

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

An investigation into the co-texts of *some of your* showed that only eight occurrences highlighted positivity (non-hedging), in the pattern, [POS +] *some of your* [+ POS] [+ SUG] (shown in examples 1 and 2 in Figure 8.26., positivity in **blue**, suggestions in **green** and *italics*). The remaining 24 occurrences had the function of hedging in the patterns:

(a) criticism,

[NEG +] *some of your* [+ POS] [+ NEG] (examples 3 and 4, negativity in **red**), or

(b) suggestions

[POS +] [SUG +] *some of your* (examples 5 and 6, suggestions in *green*).

Further examples of the patterns of criticisms and suggestions with some are shown in Figure 8.26.

Figure 8.26. Feedback patterns of *some of your*

[POS +] <i>some of your</i> [+ POS] [+ SUG] – NO HEDGING	
(1)	You write well, and SOME OF YOUR close readings of the chosen poems display insight and critical aptitude. You also integrate your secondary material well, though on several occasions <i>I think you could have gone into greater depth with your own perspective on the poem's meaning.</i> <SUG>
(2)	The essay shows that you have understood the concepts taught this semester on the differences between spoken and written discourse. You have read a few relevant texts and have incorporated this material to support SOME OF YOUR points. <NEXT CRITERIA>
([NEG +]) <i>some of your</i> [+ POS] [+ NEG] - HEDGING	
(3)	There is a concern that you might be overstating SOME OF YOUR points. For e.g. your argument on * is a useful concept to bring up, however it was not intended to explain language acquisition in the second language for adult learners. <i>You need to be mindful of the original purposes of some of these studies before extending them to suit/support your argument.</i> <NEXT COMMENT>
(4)	SOME OF YOUR insights into your chosen texts are interesting, though I'm not sure how much they relate to the reader's expectations of fictionality. I take your point about constricting realities, but promo art is about a great deal more than a realist "mirror" <NEG + POS + NEG>

Figure 8.26. (continued) Feedback patterns of *some of your*

[POS +] [SUG +] <i>some of your</i> - HEDGING	
(5)	You have analysed the data well, picking out most of the salient features and interpreting them sensibly in the context. <i>You could have quantified SOME OF YOUR analyses to add weight - e.g. tracking the use of pronouns through the text might have further illuminated your point about I and we.</i> <SUG>
(6)	The essay constructs a sound argument and the comparisons you make between the advertisements are accurate and insightful. At times, <i>SOME OF YOUR points could have been developed more to highlight the impact the techniques in use have on the audience.</i> <LIST OF COMMENTS>

When the comments were positively connotated (for instance, [*t*]here is evidence of *some good argumentation in your essay*), there were no hedging. Nevertheless, there is still a degree of vagueness in the use of *some*.

A closer examination of the concordances revealed that there were also occurrences of *some* followed by negativity (hedging), or suggestion expressed through *although*, *though*, or *but* (as shown in the concordances in Figure 8.27. Concordances are shortened to fit the window. See Appendix 8.16. for a longer span of words and other examples from the EdEng corpus).

Figure 8.27. Feedback patterns of *some*: [POS]; [NEG]; or [SUG]

<i>some</i> [POS] + <i>but/ however</i> [NEG] - NO HEDGING
essay that makes <i>some</i> interesting points <i>but</i> these points are not sufficient. You do make <i>some</i> comparative points <i>but</i> these are just in passing. Pe hema theory make <i>some</i> interesting points <i>but</i> you don't develop all of them the essay makes <i>some</i> good points. <i>However</i> , there are a few places in the you to draw out <i>some</i> strong points. <i>However</i> , I felt that you never really you've conducted <i>some</i> useful research. <i>However</i> , I don't think you've spent
[POS +] <i>although/ but/ not</i> + <i>some</i> [NEG] [+ POS] - HEDGING
in fairly good English <i>although</i> there are <i>some</i> awkward collocations 'insti sis <i>although</i> at times your analysis lacks <i>some</i> accuracy. The essay demonst on is justified or rationalised. <i>However</i> , <i>some</i> decisions are unworkable (you make in your essay. <i>However</i> , there is <i>some</i> misinterpretation of inform There are <i>some</i> minor issues with expression <i>but</i> these do not impede meanin
[POS +] <i>although/ but</i> [+ SUG] + <i>some</i> - HEDGING
English <i>although</i> you do need to pay attention to <i>some</i> of your phrases: • alysis <i>although</i> it could have been improved with <i>some</i> attention to present poetic form and literary devices like the *, <i>but some</i> of your points could

The concordances in Figure 8.27. show *some* is used to hedge the negativity and also to express vagueness, where the tutors avoid stating the precise quantity. For instance, the tutor opted for

some phrases words *could* be revised. For example,...,

instead of saying,

revised the three phrases. For example, 'positives and negatives of the theories..' (page 1), 'contexts they were born from...' (page 1), 'one negative to such drills...' page 2),

This is possibly to avoid sounding too pedantic to the student, which Carter and McCarthy (2006:203) and Farr (2011:118) have also mentioned. In addition to this, *some* was also used to weaken the negativity. For example,

***some** of your points **could** use development and a greater range of secondary material,*

whereby the implicit meaning indicates the ideas presented were not good enough. Hence, tutors opted for *some* to hedge the negativity. Clusters of hedging were also located in the use of *some*, mostly in giving suggestions. For instance,

***some** + could,*

***some** + need/needs/needed* (also shown in Figure 8.27.);

or with a mitigation statement, often in the pattern, NEG + POS. The mitigation is in the positive comment such as

*[t]here are **some** minor issues with expression but these do not impede meaning*
(NEG in red and mitigation in purple).

Having said that, the clustering of *some* + mitigation, was less frequent as compared with the other clusters (either with modals or *need*). Other examples of *some* + MODALS which are used as hedging are shown in Figure 8.28. (further similar examples from the EdEng corpus are attached in Appendix 8.17.).

Figure 8.28. Concordances of *some* either preceded by or followed by modals [MOD], and *need/ needs/needed*

ate academic style. There are *some* errors which *could* have been easily av
good academic style although *some* phrases words *could* be revised. For
ate and insightful. At times, *some* of your points *could* have been develop
language, you *could* refer to *some* of your earlier discussion on academic
how best you *could* have used *some* of the material here to construct your
essay *could* also benefit from *some* further detail on the effect of advert
over-descriptive and you made *some* points which *would* benefit from furthe
e 'argument' is not accurate. *Some* of the sources you *would* have read (e
would be helpful to refer to *some* of your sources when you explain your
nges - page 5 - and there are *some* errors which *might* have been avoided t
oom materials as evidence for *some* of your points, it *might* have been bee
that you *might* be overstating *some* of your points. For e.g your argument
texts *might* have helped with *some* of the difficulties with interpretatio
r advertisements. • There are *some* claims in your essay that *need* rethink
' better. • Page 2 - you *need* *some* evidence in the form of references (pe
sted a few examples: Here are *some* examples of where you *need* a better ex
oint on proficiency? You *need* *some* explanation at the end of that paragra

Another cluster of hedging of *some* can be found with *perhaps*, also in offering suggestions, in the patterns, *some* (+ ADJ) + NOUN + *perhaps* [SUG] as shown in the concordances in Figure 8.29.

Figure 8.29. Concordances of *some* either preceded by or followed by *perhaps*

begin your essay with *some* background information on the topic. *Perhaps* a
. • Page 2 - you *need* *some* evidence in the form of references (*perhaps* ev
Unless, you observed *some* evidence of this and *perhaps* you might have el
erences (*perhaps* even *some* research studies?) on the debate of the effect

Summary

Some is the most frequent vague item used as hedging in the EdEng corpus (3.0 words per thousand). Although *some* is often found to be positively connotated such as in *some interesting points*, it is also used to tone down the implicit criticism such as *there is some*

misinterpretation of information. The clusters of hedging in the co-texts of *some* were very apparent, especially in giving suggestions to make propositions less assertive. Other clusters include the use of *perhaps* which indicate a degree of uncertainty. As with the case on the use of modals (as discussed in Section 8.2.1.), the feedback patterns [POS], [NEG], or [SUG] were also found with *some*.

8.2.2.3. *A few*

A total of 82 occurrences of *a few* were found in the EdEng corpus (2.3 words per thousand). It is worth noting that *a few* were found in 77 instances (out of 82 instances of *few* in the EdEng corpus), and five of these occurrences of *a few* were found in Department A. After examining the concordances of *a few* particularly in Department B, it is a specific feature of the tutor's feedback writing practice where the tutor provides a meta-statement leading to subsequent comments. For instance:

[h]ere are *a few* examples;

[h]ere are *a few* instances where this could be improved;

[t]here are just *a few* minor slips;

[h]ere are *a few* specific points for you to note;

[h]ere are *a few* suggestions for revision.

Although these examples are indicators of idiosyncrasy, *a few* was used as a form of vagueness to avoid sounding too pedantic if actual figures were given. *A few* also hedged the comments to avoid making assertions. When those instances of *a few* used as meta-statements were extracted (48 instances were omitted), the feedback pattern (POS, NEG, or SUG) was also very apparent in the co-texts of *a few*, although there is a slight inclination

to negative contexts rather than positive (see Figure 8.30. for the concordances of *a few*, mitigation in blue, NEG in red, and SUG in green).

Figure 8.30. Concordances of *a few*

note: *There are a few arguments/claims in your essay that need some reth to take note of a few errors (punctuation and spelling, in particular) w e 1). There are a few errors that could have been easily avoided if you ently, although a few grammatical errors creep in, which perhaps a more tion? There are a few instances of misinterpretation or misunderstanding ay. You do make a few interesting comments which you could have incorpor ssion. You have a few long and unwieldy sentences - page 2 'Chomskian th ting. There are a few minor issues to do with expression but these do no tion? There are a few misconceptions - the Chorus does not enter till af de. You do have a few missing punctuation marks in your Bibliography. uide. There are a few occasions in the essay where you have omitted the ell-structured. A few points could maybe have been clarified a little mo oment, you have a few, rather vague sentences on this point. • It would ssay. There are a few typographical errors which could have been avoided*

It is worth noting that even though *a few* is mainly found in negative contexts (such as *a few misconceptions*, or *a few typographical errors*), there will be mitigation strategies in the co-texts of *a few*, either by a positive comment (as shown in example 7 in Figure 8.31.). Example 8 is similar where the initial positive comment mitigated the subsequent implicit problem (the student should have proofread his/her work to avoid making errors). The POS + NEG/SUG is a consistent strategy applied throughout the feedback where there is an anticipation of negativity following the positive comment (similar findings have been shown for the case of *essay*, *good* and *well*). Apart from the POS + NEG/SUG pattern, the NEG + POS pattern is another frequent pattern used in the feedback (as shown in example 9 below, also discussed in Chapter 7, and in the co-texts of the top 50 frequent nouns earlier).

Figure 8.31. Feedback patterns of *a few*

POS + <i>a few</i> [NEG]
(7) Your essay mostly adheres to the guidelines stipulated in the Style Guide. You do have A FEW missing punctuation marks in your Bibliography. <NEXT COMMENT>
POS + <i>a few</i> [SUG]
(8) Your essay is written in an appropriate academic style and the errors in language do not impede meaning. However, you do need to take note of A FEW errors (punctuation and spelling, in particular) which could have been avoided with careful proofreading before submission. <NEXT COMMENT>
NEG + <i>a few</i> [MIT] + SUG
(9) Your discussion at the end of the essay (the variables of age and proficiency) does not seem altogether relevant to the essay. You do make A FEW interesting comments <i>which you could have incorporated more usefully in the rest of your essay.</i> <SUG>

There is almost no hedging in the use of *a few* in example 9 but it is, nevertheless, a mitigation strategy to soften the preceding negativity.

Table 8.30. shows the more general patterns of *a few* which have been discussed so far (the patterns for the meta-statements were excluded).

Table 8.30. General patterns of *a few*.

Note: Table 8.30. is not a substitution table. Each row is an individual example to be read across. For example: *there are a few argument/claims in your essay that need some rethinking*, or *there are a few errors that could have been easily avoided if you*

gen-DET	VB/VP	a few	(ADJ +) NOUN/NP	
there	are		arguments/claims in your essay that need some rethinking	
			errors in spelling, punctuation, etc,	
			instances of misinterpretation or misunderstanding	
			minor slips in expressions	
			minor issues to do with expression	
			misconceptions	
you	(do) have		missing punctuation marks in your Bibliography	
			long and unwieldy sentences	
			rather vague sentences	
you	do need to take note of		errors	
gen-DET	VB/VP		NOUN	+ MODAL (SUG)
there	are		errors	that could have been easily avoided if you...
			typographical errors	which could have been avoided...
you	do make		interesting comments	which you could have incorporated
			points	could maybe have been clarified
			grammatical errors creep in,	which perhaps a more stringent proofreading process would catch

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

Summary

This particular section has looked at the use of *few*, in particular, *a few* in the EdEng corpus. Although more than half of the uses of *a few* were meta-statements (48 occurrences out of 81), found only in Department B, an idiosyncratic feature, the uses of *a few* were used as hedging in the EdEng corpus. As seen earlier, *a few* is also used in a positive context, mainly as a mitigation strategy in order to soften negativity. However, when the co-text is positive, there is no hedging involved (for instance, *I have very **few** criticisms*).

8.2.2.4. *A little*

A total of 24 occurrences of *a little* was found in the EdEng corpus (0.7 words per thousand). *A little* was more frequent in Department A, with a difference of 7.7% (11.6% in Department A and 3.9% in Department B). A three-word cluster analysis of *a little*³³ showed that *a little more* (seven occurrences, six of which were from Department B) was the most frequent cluster, given in the form of suggestions, in the pattern:

MOD/ VB + **a little more** (+ ADJ/NP) (+ TO-inf).

For example:

[y]our introduction *could have been* **a little more** *specific about the advertisements*;

[y]ou need to develop the point and explain it **a little more** to make your point explicit;

I think you need to explain this **a little more**.

³³ Due to relatively low-frequency, a cut-off point of two occurrences was applied.

There was also the clustering of hedges where *a little more* is found alongside modals in the pattern, MODAL + *a little more* or alongside vague expressions such as *I think* (as shown in the examples above and in Table 8.31., highlighted in blue). Table 8.31. further shows the general patterns of *a little more*.

Table 8.31.General patterns of *a little more*

Note: Table 8.31. is not a substitution table. Each row is an individual example to be read across. For example: *your introduction could have been a little more specific*.

PPN/NP	MODAL	VB	a little more	ADJ	NOUN
Your introduction	could (maybe) have			specific	
A few points	been	clarified			
I feel	would only	lend			weight
you	need to	explain this			
you		need			information

- Note:
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Other clusters of *a little* include *a little bit more* + ADJ + NOUN + MODAL, also in the form of suggestion, and *a little too* + ADJ which is expressing criticism (patterns shown in Table 8.32.).

Table 8.32. General patterns of *a little too* and *a little bit more*

Note: Table 8.32. is not a substitution table. Each row is an individual example to be read across. For example: *you are sometimes a little too reliant*.

PPN/NP	VB	ADV			ADJ	NOUN	MODAL
you	are	sometimes	a little	too	reliant		
your essay	was				general		
		though	a little bit	more	in-depth	analysis	would have

- Note:
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 - The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

Although the two utterances, *a little too reliant*, and *a little too general* were negatively connotated, the criticisms were mitigated by *a little* and the co-texts of *a little* + NEG. For instance, in Figure 8.32., example 10, it is followed by a suggestion, hence the pattern, *a little too* + ADJ[NEG] + SUG. In example 11, it precedes a positive comment, hence the pattern, POS + *a little too* + ADJ[NEG].

Figure 8.32. Feedback patterns of *a little too*

<i>a little too</i> + ADJ[NEG] + SUG
(10) The introduction to your essay was A LITTLE TOO general . <i>I think it would have been more useful for you to have engaged more immediately in the analysis after perhaps a paragraph or two on the main differences between speech and writing.</i> <NEXT COMMENT>
POS + <i>a little too</i> + ADJ[NEG] + POS + NEG
(11) You write well, and persuasively, though you are sometimes A LITTLE TOO reliant on rhetoric and * statements. <i>Some of your insights into your chosen texts are interesting, though I'm not sure how much they relate to the reader's expectations of fictionality.</i> <MIT + NEG + POS + NEG>
*incomprehensible

Another clustering of hedging can be found in example 12 below, which further hedged the negativity (*occasionally a little descriptive*), and also the mitigating act, where, after the negativity, the tutor was trying to remain positive to reduce any loss of face for the student. It is found in the pattern, POS + ADV + *a little* + ADJ[NEG] + MIT (mitigation highlighted in purple).

- (12) You make good use of key figures like Lacan, Nietzsche and Jameson to further your own well-synthesised perspective on the texts. It's occasionally **A LITTLE descriptive or rhetorical rather than analytical** (e.g. the questioning of God on p.11) *but this is a minor weakness...* <SUG + POS>

Apart from the negative connotated adjectives shown above, other negative adjectives were found, such as, *a little unusual*, *a little (over-)descriptive*, *a little overwrought*, *a little difficult*, *a little awkward*, and *a little prone to whimsy and vagueness*. Similar patterns from *a little too* were also found with these negative connotated adjectives. *A little* is mostly found in the patterns:

POS + *a little* + ADJ[NEG] + POS (as shown in Figure 8.33., example 13); or

POS + *a little* + ADJ[NEG] [+ SUG] (as shown in Figure 8.33., examples 14 and 15).

Figure 8.33. Other feedback patterns of *a little*

POS + <i>a little</i> + ADJ[NEG] + POS
(13) you write authoritatively and persuasively, although occasionally your use of language seems A LITTLE overwrought and hard to decode. Your writing style is fluent for the most part,...<NEG + SUG + POS>
POS + <i>a little</i> + ADJ
(14) Written expression is generally good although some sentence wordings are A LITTLE awkward in places. <END>
POS + <i>a little</i> + ADJ[NEG] [+ SUG]
(15) you show some ability in literary analysis. Your structure is A LITTLE unusual – a more traditional introduction to ease the reader into your argument may have helped,... <POS + NEG + SUG + POS + SUG>

Example 13 shows yet another clustering of hedging through the use of *occasionally* (also in example 12 earlier, *occasionally* is further discussed in Section 8.2.3.3.), and *seems* designed to mitigate criticism and to be tentative (further discussed in Section 8.2.2.9.4.).

Summary

The use of *a little* is almost formulaic, such as *a lot more*, *a little bit more*, or *a little too*. It also seems that *a little* is on the whole used to give suggestion (such as: *could have been a little more specific*, or *you need a little more information*), as well as to hedge negativity (such as: *a little unusual*, or *a little too general*). Apart from hedging with *a little*, the criticisms were also mitigated by positive comments which either preceded or followed the negativity.

8.2.2.5. *A couple of*

A couple of was found only in Department B (six instances, 1.7%). All the instances of *a couple of* were used as hedging in the context of giving suggestions, as shown Table 8.33.

Table 8.33. General patterns of *a couple of*

Note: Table 8.33. is not a substitution table. Each row is an individual example to be read across. For example: *is to read beyond a couple of sources for each...*

VB/ VP		a couple of	N/ NP	MODAL
is to read beyond			sources for each	
are			colloquialisms	you could have avoided
MODAL	ADJ	a couple of	N/ NP	
would have been	useful if you had a paragraph or		sentences	
might have been	good to have read		more recent sources	

Note:

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- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

Summary

Modals (*could*, *might*, or *would*) were commonly found in the suggestion pattern. For the case of *a couple of*, it was a feature which was very evident in the co-text.

This section so far has looked at the vague language (*some*, *few*, *a little*, and *a couple of*) as hedging in the EdEng corpus, although there were instances of *some* and *few* which were not hedging. These, however have been pointed out earlier. The following sub-sections

look at the other vague language (*more*, *many*, and *a lot*) found in the EdEng corpus which were not hedging.

8.2.2.6. *More*

A total of 156 occurrences of *more* were found in the EdEng corpus (4.3 words per thousand, 5.1. words per thousand in Department A and 4.2 words per thousand in Department B). The concordances of *more* are shown in Appendix 8.18. The cluster analysis (two-word and three-word) did not reveal any interesting pattern, apart from *a little more* (as discussed in Section 8.2.2.4.), thus there will be no discussion on the clusters of *more*. However, the more noticeable general patterns of *more* found in the EdEng corpus are shown in Table 8.34. Although the occurrences of *more* were relatively low, the suggestion [SUG] pattern, for instance, MODAL[SUG] + VP + *more* (+ ADJ) + NOUN, was apparent.

As shown in Table 8.34., *more* was often found in a cluster of hedges with modals (*could*, *might*, *would*, or *will*) for giving suggestions. It is worth mentioning that the modals were hedging but not in the uses of *more*. *More* has a negative connotation as it denotes insufficient information or explanation. Another form of suggestion found in the clusters of *more* was the use of *need(s) to*. *Need(s) to* has a more directive tone as compared with the use of modals. Nevertheless, it was analysed as a suggestion (as discussed in Chapter 7, Section 7.2.3.). Figure 8.34. further shows the clustering of hedges found in the co-texts of *more* (further concordances from the EdEng corpus are detailed in Appendix 8.19.).

Table 8.34. General pattern of *more*

Note: Table 8.34. is not a substitution table. Each row is an individual example to be read across. For example: *if you had more examples, you could have, or including more quotations would also help.*

NP	MODAL	ADJP	V/VP		ADJ/ADJP	NOUN
if you			had	more		examples, you could have
		Including				quotations would also help
		useful for you to have had				than one example
would have		benefited from			specific	references
would have been a					convincing	argument
		selected other,				evidence
could have		providing				detail of the theories
		provided				examples
		achieved more with			specific	analysis
		better if there was				
could have been		better with			sustained	comparison (might)
		more detailed and a				focus on the part of the
		strengthened by				literature
		supported by				examples
needs to be		substantiated either through				recent sources
might have been		good to have read a couple of				research
will be		enhanced by				sources
do need to		refer to				
could be		improved by a			thorough	understanding

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

Figure 8.34. Concordances of *more* with clustering of hedges

course. The analysis **could** have been **more** specific and linked to the disc
ke. • Your essay **could** have done a **more** comparative analysis of the adv
od argument and **could** have achieved **more** with **more** specific analysis and
could have been **more** detailed and a **more** sustained comparison **might** have
nd **conclusions were good** although a **more** sustained comparison **might** have
ysis **might** have been presented in a **more** reader-friendly fashion- **perhap**

to the reader in terms of providing **more** detail of the theories you **will**
think your work **will** be enhanced by **more** research and advise you to deve
iticisms against this point **will** be **more** valid. • Bottom of page 7 to to
ealing to you, it **would** have been a **more** convincing argument to have use
n-going longing for this. Including **more** quotations **would** also help to c
ur essay **would** have benefitted from **more** specific references to what you
lysis and interpretation **need to** be **more** carefully thought through. I ha
irly **well done**. You do **need to** make **more** explicit reference to the exact
topics but you do **need to** refer to **more** sources than the two you have u

Similarly, with the findings from modals (as discussed in Section 8.2.1.) and on *some*
(discussed in Section 8.2.2.2.), the feedback pattern (POS, NEG, or SUG) is also very
evident in the use of *more*. Figure 8.35. shows the feedback patterns in *more* (see
Appendix 8.20. for a longer span of words and other examples from the EdEng corpus).

Figure 8.35. Feedback patterns of *more*: [POS]; [NEG]; or [SUG]

[POS +] <i>although/ but</i> + <i>more</i> [NEG]
well done although some of what you say is more applicable to general spok es on what's acceptable, but you let these more general points lead your d
[POS +] <i>although/ but/ however</i> + <i>more</i> [SUG]
However , each of your elements needed far more explanation. How did you c ions and conclusions were good although a more sustained comparison might ly well done although it might have been more useful to have shown the an ood attempt at answering the question but more could have been achieved if The work flowed well but needed to have a more obvious central thesis. You

Summary

From the findings on *more*, it seems that tutors always requested more information or explanation rather than asking for less. Apart from the vague uses of *more*, the other uses of *more* were evaluative, generally in the patterns: *more* + ADJ (for instance, *more specific*, *more detailed*, *more explicit*, and *more useful*), or *more* + ADV (for instance, *more clearly*, *more carefully*, or *more explicitly*). This section has discussed *more* on the basis of vagueness, but as we have seen, the comments on *more* were negative and no hedging. In comparison the use of *some* has a balance between positive and negative comments and hedging is very apparent (as discussed earlier in Section 8.2.2.2.).

8.2.2.7. *Many*

Many occurred 11 times in the EdEng corpus (0.4 words per thousand, 9.3% in Department A and 2.0% in Department B). There were four instances of *many* which were used in positive contexts, as shown in Table 8.35.

Table 8.35. Pattern of *many* and *many of* [POS]

Note: Table 8.35. is not a substitution table. Each row is an individual example to be read across. For example: *reveals a sound interpretation of many of the points.*

PPN/gen- DET	VB	NP		N/ NP
	reveals	a sound interpretation of	many of	the points
	demonstrat e	an understanding of the	many	variables
you	provide			examples
there	are so			more to be explored

- Note:
- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
 - The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

All the patterns shown in Table 8.35. were used very positively in the pattern, POS + *many* (+ POS). Further examples are further shown in Figure 8.36. (positivity in blue). It is worth mentioning again that there is no hedging in these examples as they are very positive.

Figure 8.36. Other feedback patterns of *many*: POS + *many* + POS

POS + <i>many</i> + POS	
(16)	Your reading of the different sources reveals a sound interpretation of MANY of the points related to the teaching of grammar in the classroom. You have quoted relevantly and appropriately to substantiate the points you make in your essay. <NEXT CRITERIA>
(17)	You demonstrate an understanding of the MANY variables , in particular age, proficiency and motivation, that matter when it comes to explicit teaching of grammar rules. This is good . <LIST OF COMMENTS>

In contrast to the positivity of *many* as mentioned above, there were six occurrences where *many* were found in a very negative sense. There is no hedging because all comments were

[350]

explicitly expressing criticisms (Figure 8.37., criticisms in **red**, examples 18–20), forming another pattern, NEG + *many* + NEG.

Figure 8.37. Other feedback patterns of *many*: NEG + *many* + NEG

NEG + <i>many</i> + NEG	
(18)	This [presentation] is the area of most concern . MANY references within the essay are not part of your reference list at the end of the essay. You provide an extensive list of works cited and works consulted, however much of your cited references lack full bibliographical details . <NEXT CRITERIA>
(19)	Your research has been ineffective . There are MANY critical works on Harry Potter but you haven't consulted any of them . Furthermore, at no point do you discuss the fantasy genre- particularly the position of these texts within the genre and the techniques they employ. <END>
(20)	You mention that “the quotations in academic texts are supposed to be as formal as the writer’s style.” – I doubt this is possible as MANY writers, like Holloway, refer to non-academic sources. In fact, the evidence you present after this illustrates this point. <LIST OF COMMENTS>

Although criticism (negativity) is mentioned, there is mitigation to the negativity, forming the pattern, NEG + *many* + MIT[POS] (mitigation in *purple*, in examples 21 and 22, Figure 8.38.), or preceded with positivity forming the pattern, POS + *many*[POS] + NEG, where the negativity, *not very clear* (example 23 in Figure 8.38.), is hedged not only by the positive comments (*fairly good analysis* and *provide many examples*) but also through the use of *occasionally* (also discussed in Section 8.2.3.).

Figure 8.38. Other feedback patterns of *many*: NEG + *many* + MIT[POS], and POS + *many* + NEG

<i>many</i> [NEG] + MIT[POS]	
(21)	As it stands, the Rationale offers too MANY * and too general in a way. Overall, the module specific outcomes seem to have been well achieved. <END> *incomprehensible
(22)	I'm not entirely convinced that the writer can imaginatively 'see' how the blocking will work (where are the Chorus?; How does delivery of lines change in a long speech?), and there are far too MANY instances of misplaced apostrophes , but overall, this is indicative that the module-specific learning outcomes have been broadly achieved. <END>
POS + <i>many</i> [POS] + NEG	
(23)	The analysis is fairly good and you provide MANY examples to illustrate your points. Occasionally, for example with your point on nominalisation, it was not very clear how your examples related to your point. <POS + SUG>

There was one feedback report where *many* was found on two separate occasions, as suggestion and criticism. Looking at the co-text of *many* as suggestion (*as many points of your argument still need further development*) (shown in example 24, Figure 8.39.), even though it was found in a cluster of hedging where the tutor hedged with *I don't think*, the whole feedback was still considered very negative. There was also mitigation where the tutor softened the criticism by understanding the difficulty involved (highlighted in purple) which was then followed by more negativity. This was a rare occurrence where, even though there were hedged expressions, the feedback ended in negativity and the whole feedback sounded very negative and critical.

Figure 8.39. Other feedback patterns of *many*: NEG + *many* + POS, and POS + *many* + NEG

NEG + <i>many</i> + POS	
(24)	<p>You have <i>some good ideas</i> and you've <i>conducted some useful research</i>. However, I don't think you've spent quite enough time thinking about these texts and issues <i>as MANY points of your argument still need further development</i>. You don't mention class in your introduction and you never try to state how class is determined. The question of what constitutes class is often debated so there's no easy way to define it. Your inclusion of Althusser could have been strong but there's no indication of any detailed understanding of research into his theories. There are MANY technical inadequacies throughout the essay and you often express yourself poorly. <END></p>

Summary

In a positive context, each of the vague language items (such as *some*, or *more*) including *more* has no hedging because hedging is softening the negativity. Similarly, in a negative context of *many*, there is also no hedging (such as [*m*]*any references within the essay are not part of your reference list at the end of the essay*). Unlike *some* or *a little* which were minimising the negativity (such as *some sentence wordings are a little awkward in places*), the case is very different in the context of *many* and *more* (as discussed in Section 8.2.2.6.) because they are negative connotated.

8.2.2.8. A lot

A lot was found six times in the EdEng corpus (0.2 words per thousand, 0.7 words per thousand in Department A, and 0.1 words per thousand in Department B). Similarly with the other vague items presented above, the feedback pattern, POS, NEG, or *SUG* was found in *a lot*. Table 8.36. shows the patterns for *a lot of*, *a lot to* and *a lot more*.

Table 8.36. General patterns of *a lot of*, *a lot to*, and *a lot more*

Note: Table 8.36. is not a substitution table. Each row is an individual example to be read across. For example: *there is quite a lot of literature on error correction....*

gen- DET/PPN	VB/ VP	SUB-MOD		NOUN/ NP	
There	is	quite	a lot of	literature on error correction...	that you could have discussed.
This	meant that			your points	were under- developed
gen-DET	VB	SUB-MOD		VB	
There	is	quite	a lot to	say here	about the images...
MODAL	VB			NP	
could have	said		a lot more	about the lexis	- what are the...?

Note:

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- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

As shown in Table 8.36., there were also strings of clusters found with *a lot*, such as the use of modals (*could*) and vague expression (*I think*), for instance,

I think you could have said a lot more about the lexis,

or with submodifiers (*quite*), for instance,

[t]here is quite a lot of literature on error correction that you could have discussed;

[t]here is quite a lot to say here about the images of these young people and the target group for the advertisement....

A *lot* is a hedge only when it is found in clusters (as shown in the first example above) or when it is submodified by *quite* (as shown in the two latter examples above). There was an exception (as shown in Figure 8.40.) where apart from the positive comments, *very good* and *impressive*, the co-text surrounding *a lot* mainly expressed criticisms, such as *over-ambitious* or *under-developed* (highlighted in **red** in Figure 8.40.). Although there was a suggestion, and the criticisms were hedged with *somewhat* and *rather* such as *rather disappointing* or *rather disorganized* (*rather* is also discussed in Section 8.2.4.2.), the whole feedback still had a negative tone to it. Such an occurrence, however, was very rare (one occurrence in the EdEng corpus).

Figure 8.40. Rare occurrence of *a lot of* used in negativity

Both texts are presented in the appendices and are annotated using colour-coding with **lots of** detailed grammatical and structural analysis - this is very good and the amount of analysis you've done and the level of detail is impressive. I thought the **essay itself was rather disappointing** in the light of this – it became evident that **you were trying to do too much** with the analysis and that **the analysis was over-ambitious** given the length of the assignment. This means that **A LOT OF your points were under-developed** and the **essay ended up being rather disorganized which interferes with the coherence of your writing**. There is **evidently not enough space for your arguments to be explained, justified or supported particularly well**.

You do draw well on the narrative models of Labov and Toolan. Again, *the section on the application of Toolan's model could have been developed further*. On p.5-6, there **really is no need to introduce** Propp's morphology on top of all of the other types of analysis!

In sum, you should get credit for the amount of analysis presented in the appendices but the discussion of the analysis throughout the essay **let you down** somewhat.

(Department A)

There were two instances where *a lot* was not used as hedging, when highlighting strengths such as

you've put a lot of work into it, and it shows; and

you've obviously put a lot of effort into the writing and research of this essay

Summary

As with the other vague items discussed earlier, the clustering of hedges was also evident in *a lot*, such as *quite* and *could*. Although the occurrence of *a lot* was relatively low in the EdEng corpus, the feedback pattern, POS, NEG, or SUG was also found in the case of *a lot*. *A lot* is synonymous to *many*. However, unlike the context of *many*, which were largely negative and no hedging, *a lot* was different. As we have seen, *a lot* was mostly submodified by *quite* which helped to soften the criticisms. There was also the rare occurrence where even though there were positive comments and clusters of hedging in the feedback report (such as the use of *rather*, and *I thought*), the hedging features were lost in all the negativity, making the whole feedback very negative.

In addition to all the vague items discussed in this section, there are other vague expressions found in the EdEng corpus. The next section looks further into the other vague expressions.

8.2.2.9. Other vague expressions

In addition to the vague items discussed above, other forms of vague expressions were found in the EdEng corpus. This section will look at the vague expression, *I think* (including *I thought*, and *I don't think*) and *I'm not sure*, as well as lexical verbs such as *seem* (including *seems/seemed*) and *appear* (including *appears/appeared*). Table 8.37. shows the frequency of occurrences of the other vague expressions found in the EdEng corpus.

Table 8.37. Lists of other vague expressions in the EdEng corpus

	Department A		Department B		Total (A + B)	
	Raw freq.	Words per thou.	Raw freq.	Words per thou.	Raw freq.	Words per thou.
I think	7	1.5	39	1.2	46	1.3
I'm not sure	2	0.4	18	0.6	20	0.6
appear	-	-	12	0.4	12	0.3
seem	8	1.8	3	0.1	11	0.3
tend to	1	0.2	2	0.1	3	0.1
TOTAL	18	4.0	74	2.4	92	2.6

Note:

- The row shaded in grey is found only in Department B.
- Due to the relatively low frequency of occurrences of the other vague expressions in the EdEng corpus, a cut-off point of two occurrences was used.

A log-likelihood (LL) test was also carried out to see if there was any statistical difference in the use of each of the vague expressions in each department, particularly in Department B (results are shown in Appendix 8.21.). The test result showed that *seem* was highly statistically significant in Department A. This could be due to the choice of expressions by individual tutors, where the tutors in Department A might be opting for *seem*, while the tutor in Department B opted for *appear*, since *appear* was non-existent in Department A.

The other vague expressions (*I think*, *I'm not sure*, *appear*, and *tend to*) showed no major significant difference in the usage.

8.2.2.9.1. *I think, I thought, and I don't think*

The other vague expressions which were apparent while examining the use of modals and vague language in the EdEng corpus were *I think* and *I thought*. The use of these vague expressions, *I think* or *I thought* does not indicate the tutors are uncertain, rather, it is used as a politeness strategy and to remain uncommitted to the propositions. *I think* is also described by Halliday (2004) as an interpersonal metaphor which does not mean the tutor is thinking (or *I am thinking*). It is a form of modality. There were 46 occurrences of *I think* and *I thought* altogether including the expressions, *I do think* or *I don't think*. 33 of these occurrences were used as suggestions where 26 of these suggestions were followed by modal verbs such as *could*, *might*, *will*, and *would*, as well as *need/needs/needed to*. Other examples of *I think* are shown in Figure 8.41. (see Appendix 8.22. for a longer span of words and other examples of *I think*).

Figure 8.41. Concordances of *I think*

t. Primarily, **I think** an important consideration **would** be if they required to Machin. **I think** his parameters **would** have allowed you to provide a course is good. **I think** it **might** have been useful for you to have connected writing it as **I think** it **will** be helpful for us to meet. The essay demonstrated as 'easy'. **I think** there **could** have been a further, more full, exploration of the media method". **I think** this **could** have benefited from further explanation of efficiency but **I think** this **needs to** be made explicit. • There are several sufficiently. **I think** this **would** have been **quite** an interesting argument explanation. **I think** you **needed** some information on the task for us to develop, and **I think** your argument **could** have benefited from a more coherent demonstration. **I think** your work **will** be enhanced by more research and ad

The clusters of hedging, *I think* + MODALS (which has been noted in earlier sections of *could*, *might*, and *would*) express a greater level of tentativeness as compared with the sole use of modals on their own. For instance,

I think you could have developed on the 'symbolism of the apple' more in your discussion of advertisement

and

you could have developed on the 'symbolism of the apple' more in your discussion of advertisement.

Although both examples are hedging the proposition (*you have to develop on the 'symbolism of the apple'*), the first example indicates a weaker degree of commitment to the truth of the proposition because the tutor is being even more uncertain. The general patterns of *I think* are shown in Table 8.38.

Table 8.38. General patterns of *I think*

Note: Table 8.38. is not a substitution table. Each row is an individual example to be read across. For example: *I think the points you raise here could have been more convincing...*

I think	NP/ PNP/ DET	MOD[SUG]	NP/ VP
	the points you raise here there this	could	have been more convincing have been a further have benefited
	you		have developed have gone have said have selected
	it reading his chapter	might	have been useful have helped
	it	will	be helpful
	an important consideration his parameter it this	would	be if... have allowed have been (more) useful have been quite an interesting
	PNP/ DET	VERB[SUG]	+ TO-inf (VB)
	you	need to	distinguish explain rethink
	this	needs to	be made
	PNP	VERB[SUG]	NP
	you	needed	some information

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

There was also one occurrence of *I do think* which is more certain in comparison to *I think*.

For instance,

I do think you could have read more widely on the topic of error correction as you have only referred to Harmer in your discussion;

or

I think you could have read more widely on the topic of error correction as you have only referred to Harmer in your discussion;

In addition to *I think*, there were 11 occurrences of *I don't think*. All instances of *I don't think* were expressing criticisms, yet at the same time, the tutors were hedging the comments, expressing their uncertainties. Further examples of *I don't think* are shown in Figure 8.42. (see Appendix 8.22. for a longer span of words).

Figure 8.42. Concordances of *I don't think*

ave is on page 3 where I don't really think that the students, at this st
'conscious learning'.' I don't think 'conscious learning' only refers to
nasonic advertisement. I don't think a mere reference to background infor
was clearly explained. I don't think Appendix iii did very much in clarif
omplicated spelling' - I don't think asking a question about spelling sho
e English language but I don't think it is one of the features of academi
thing too many times". I don't think that your essay is strengthened in a
ent could be improved. I don't think the advertisers were trying to imply
and significance...' - I don't think you can evoke 'persuasion or signifi
mbolic is fascinating, I don't think you elaborate on this in enough dept
ful research. However, I don't think you've spent quite enough time think

I thought was also used as a vague expression (found in four instances) where three occurrences were expressing negativity and one occurrence was a suggestion. Although *I thought*, or *I don't think* were expressing negativity, it does show the uncertainty expressed by the tutors. The feedback patterns, (POS, NEG, or SUG) are further shown in Figure 8.43.

Figure 8.43. Feedback patterns of *I think*, *I thought*, and *I don't think*

POS + <i>I think</i> [NEG] + <i>SUG</i>	
(25)	Your first section on the 'inductive or deductive approach' used in this classroom is well done. The only comment I have is on page 3 where I DON'T really THINK that the students, at this stage of the lesson, are aware of the grammar points being covered to make a link between 'their previous skills with the elements that will be covered in the current lesson'. Unless, you observed some evidence of this and <i>perhaps you might have elaborated a little on this point.</i>
POS + <i>I do think</i> [SUG]	
(26)	You have read a reasonable number of sources which support some of the points you make in your essay. I DO THINK <i>you could have read more widely on the topic of error correction as you have only referred to Harmer in your discussion.</i> <NEXT CRITERIA>
NEG + <i>I think</i> [SUG]	
(27)	On page 2, your discussion at the end of that page on typography is not quite accurate. I THINK <i>you are referring to punctuation here. Typography has more to do with the actual lettering.</i> <NEXT COMMENT>

Summary

The occurrences of *I think* were predominantly used as suggestions in the EdEng corpus and *I don't think* was used to highlight a problem. Both expressions (*I think* or *I don't think*) were vague in the sense that the tutors used them to express a degree of uncertainty and to avoid committing to the truth of the propositions. There was also one occurrence of *I do think* which is more certain in comparison to *I think*. Nevertheless, it is still considered to be a vague expression.

8.2.2.9.2. *I am not sure*

There were 20 occurrences of *I am not sure* (including contracted form, *I'm not sure*) in the EdEng corpus (0.6 words in thousand in total, two occurrences (0.4 words per thousand) in Department A and 18 occurrences (0.6 words per thousand) in Department B). All occurrences of *I am not sure* were used to hedge, to minimise the negativity, such as:

I'm not sure that your examples actually support the conclusion you draw...

Instead of:

[y]our examples **do not support** the conclusion you are drawing.

The second comment is more direct and negative as compared with the first comment which is hedged with *I'm not sure*. Other examples of *I am not sure* are shown in Figure 8.44.

Figure 8.44. Concordances of *I am not sure*

are interesting, though I'm not sure how much they relate to the reader's needs to be rethought. I am not sure how the Cook quotation links with y to be better explained. I'm not sure how the harvesting of the herb etc not clearly explained - I'm not sure how the lines you have identified a ght is not very clear. I'm not sure how the use of weight targets diffe egatively connotated' - I'm not sure I understand the meaning of your se ement. With this point, I'm not sure if the purpose is to get the reader Halliday's categories. I'm not sure if you analysed the text for the ot ape of the discourse'. I'm not sure that this point was clearly explain versial' difference but I'm not sure that you have said why motivation i is a good one. However, I'm not sure that your examples actually support audience more clearly. I am not sure what exactly the connection is. • Y mmunicative style'. • I am not sure what the relevance is of the role o se as 'however' is. • I am not sure what you mean by 'the neutral repor ction on 'Language'. • I'm not sure what you mean by 'This theory [refe points more clearly: • I'm not sure what you mean when you say that the n page 2 is confusing. I am not sure what your main point is here. You a rom what he proposes. • I'm not sure where you get the view that teachin hing auxiliary verbs so I'm not sure why you have used the word 'quibbli ng process would catch. I'm not sure you understand metre fully (talking

As mentioned, *I'm not sure* is a form of hedging expressing a degree of criticism, as shown in the concordances above. As with the other negativity (for instance, in *many*, discussed earlier in Section 8.2.2.7.), there will be a mitigation strategy found in the co-text of *I'm not sure*, in the feedback pattern, POS + NEG. The positivity will either precede the negativity (as shown in the two examples below) or follow the negativity in order to soften the initial criticism (as shown in the second example below, *I take your point about constricting realities*), although there will be more negativity after the mitigation. Nevertheless, it does show the clusters of hedging features which could occur in a feedback report.

[y]our point about the 'point of view' of the author is a good one. However, *I'm not sure* that your examples actually support the conclusion you draw that 'This noble restraint of the author facilitates a greater cogency of the text and its arguments'.
<NEXT COMMENT>

[s]ome of your insights into your chosen texts are interesting, though *I'm not sure* how much they relate to the reader's expectations of fictionality. *I take your point about constricting realities*, but promo art is about a great deal more than a realist "mirror" <NEG + POS + NEG>

In addition to the POS + NEG feedback pattern, the co-texts of *I'm not sure* also show the SUG + NEG pattern, such as

[y]ou write fluently, although *a few* grammatical errors creep in, which *perhaps* a more stringent proofreading process *would* catch. *I'm not sure* you understand metre fully (talking of Larkin's use of 'iambic metre' is really only half the story – how many stresses are in each line) but I know that discussion of technical terms *can be* tricky. <POS>

As with the earlier example, there is a mitigation strategy following the negativity (such as *I know that discussion of technical terms can be tricky*). In addition to the mitigation, once

again the clusters of hedging were very apparent (for instance: *a few, perhaps, can be, or would*) highlighted in **dark blue** in the example above).

Summary

This particular section has looked at the use of *I'm not sure* in the EdEng corpus. *I'm not sure* is used as a hedging device in giving feedback, to soften negativity. The clusters of hedging are yet again very evident in the EdEng corpus. Hedging is not used as a single element but is used in abundance in clusters (a feature which was very apparent in earlier sections of modals (Section 8.2.1.), and in vague language (Section 8.2.2.)).

8.2.2.9.3. *Appear/appears*

All occurrences of *appear/appears* were found only in Department B (12 occurrences, 0.4 words per thousand in the EdEng corpus). A closer look at the concordances of *appear/appears* shows that they were used as hedging, to minimize negativity, such as,

[t]here **appears** to be a fundamental problem with your understanding of what a 'theory' refers to. <NEG>

[y]our section on 'Language' **appears** to be discussing how children acquire language rather than the structure or nature of language itself. <NEG + POS + SUG>

Appear/appears is used in the same sense as *seem* (discussed in Section 8.2.2.9.4.) to indicate a degree of uncertainty. Other examples of *appear/appears* are shown in Figure 8.45.

Figure 8.45. Concordances of *appear/appears*

ng methods. The essay **appears** more a summary of concepts than an analysis
 l 'crucial' questions **appear** out of place. How do the paragraphs before l
 usion on page 8 which **appears** **rather** too general and sweeping. Example 4
 (quotation from Wong) **appear** to be a different type of drill from what yo
 of language. • There **appears** to be a fundamental problem with your under
 r analytical features **appear** to be a list of features used without any re
 ery good. However, it **appears** to be **almost** disconnected from the analysis
 section on 'Language' **appears** to be discussing how children acquire langu
 stion - there doesn't **appear** to be much distinction between the various c
 ngual approach? There **appear** to be **several** different points here. • Page
 concepts in the essay **appear** to have been understood although they are **no**
 reference to Stevick **appears** to have had a footnote which is not in you

There was one exception where *appear* is found in a positive context but was used by the tutor to avoid making definite assertions to the proposition, in order to mitigate the negativity in the subsequent comment. For instance,

*[m]ost of the basic concepts in the essay **appear** to have been understood although they are **not always** explained as clearly as they **could be** (see points in the next section). <NEXT COMMENT>*

Although *appear/appears* were used to hedge negativity, the co-texts of *appear/appears* are not entirely negative. As with the other forms of vague language and modals (both of which were discussed earlier), there will be positivity or suggestions preceding or following negativity. For instance, the POS + NEG + SUG pattern,

*[t]he discussion which forms the main basis of this essay is very good. However, it **appears** to be **almost** disconnected from the analysis which comes later in the essay. What might have helped the essay achieve more is an integrated discussion which includes your review, analysis of features and interpretation in light of the review.*

Summary

This section has looked at the use of *appear/appears* in the EdEng corpus. All occurrences of *appear/appears* were found only in Department B. After examining the concordances and co-texts of *appear/appears*, all uses of *appear/appears* were found in negative context where *appear/appears* played the role of hedging negativity. Although there was one instance where *appear* was found in a positive context, it was considered as hedging negativity in the subsequent comment.

8.2.2.9.4. *Seem/seems/seemed*

Seem/seems/seemed were also used as hedging in the EdEng corpus, although they were more frequent in Department A than in Department B (1.8 words per thousand in Department A and 0.1 words per thousand in Department B). As with the case of *appear/appears* (discussed earlier), *seem/seems/seemed* were also found in a negative context in order to hedge the criticism, for instance,

*you write authoritatively and persuasively, although **occasionally** your use of language **seems** a little overwrought and hard to decode.* <POS + NEG + SUG + POS>

*your second paragraph **seems** to be **slightly** disorganised. Is the purpose of the paragraph to raise general problems about the audiolingual approach? There **appear** to be several different points here.* <NEXT COMMENT>

Once again, the clusters of hedging are noticeable in the co-texts of *seem/seems/seemed*, as shown in both examples above. For instance, the use of *occasionally* and *slightly* in the first example (*occasionally* is further discussed in Section 8.2.3.3. and *slightly* is further discussed in Section 8.2.4.4.), or *appear* in the second example (as discussed earlier).

Other examples of *seem/seems/seemed* found in the EdEng corpus are shown in Figure 8.46.

Figure 8.46. Concordances of *seem/seems/seemed*

occasionally your use of language seems a little overwrought and hard to of age and proficiency) does not seem altogether relevant to the essay. our point on 'intimidation' which seemed slightly tenuous. The analysis discussion of The H in particular seemed to drift from the question. Gre lections are good. However, these seem more clearly focused on your skill s are in Oedipus King which would seem relevant to a modern audience. Th . • Page 4: your second paragraph seems to be slightly disorganised. Is rall the module specific outcomes seem to have been well achieved. (68%) hort piece of work and you do not seem to have put much effort into it. identify in the reflection section seem to often get lost in the actual t lectures. Later in your essay you seem to run out of ideas and lose focu

There was one exception where the context of *seem* was positive, where there is no hedging (this occurrence was not accounted for in the frequency of occurrences of *seem* shown in Table 8.37.). However, *seem* does indicate a form of vagueness. For instance,

[o]verall, the module specific outcomes seem to have been well achieved. <END>

Although *seem* was used as hedging or a form of vagueness, there was one rare occurrence of *seem* where all the aspects of hedging were lost in the negativity (also mentioned earlier in the sections on *many* and *a lot*). This rare occurrence was found only in a weak essay (as shown in Figure 8.47.).

Figure 8.47. An example where hedging feature is lost in the EdEng corpus

This is a very short piece of work and you do not seem to have put much effort into it. You do not answer the question - this is a very general essay without structure or focus. You do not provide supporting quotations from your chosen novels and much of your essay is spent retelling the narratives rather than analysing them. You speculate a great deal about the responses of child readers, but this is not part of literary criticism. The few critical quotations you include are general and you didn't engage with them. Your research has been ineffective. There are many critical works on Harry Potter but you haven't consulted any of them. Furthermore, at no point do you discuss the fantasy genre - particularly the position of these texts within the genre and the techniques they employ. <END>

Summary

This particular section has looked at the use of *seem/seems/seemed*. Although *seem/seems/seemed* were more frequently found in Department A, the uses of *seem/seems/seemed* were, nevertheless, to minimize what would otherwise be a very negative comment. Having said that, when the entire feedback report is negative (as shown in the example earlier), hedging can be lost in all the criticisms. As with the modals and other vague language which have been discussed earlier, the clusters of hedging in the contexts of *seem/seems/seemed* were evident, such as the use of *occasionally* or *slightly*.

8.2.2.10. Section Summary

This section has looked at the different vague items (*something, some, more, a little, many, a lot, and a couple of*) and the other vague expressions (*I (do) think, I thought, and I don't think; seem/seems/seemed; and appear/appears*) which were found in the EdEng corpus. All these vague items were used as hedging in the EdEng corpus. They were considered to

be hedging only when they were used to soften negativity. When they were used or found in a positive context (such as *some interesting points*), there was very limited hedging. However, I do feel that tutors opted for *some* in this case in order to be vague and that they are trying to avoid committing to the truth of the proposition in case they are asked to justify the grade or mark awarded. The main reason for tutors to use the vague items (especially for *some, more, a little, many, a lot, and a couple of*) was to avoid sounding too pedantic to the students, while the use of the other vague expressions (such as *I (do) think, I thought, and I don't think; seem/seems/seemed; and appear/appears*) was to hedge, to soften the negativity in order to avoid making what would otherwise be a direct criticism.

As has been shown in this entire section on vague language, where negativity was mentioned, the co-texts of each vague item had positivity, negativity, and suggestion within them. All these vague items share the common feedback patterns (POS, NEG, or SUG). There was a rare occurrence in a weak essay where, even though the vague language item was used as hedging (for instance, the case of *seem*, as illustrated in the example on *seem* on page 378), the hedging was lost because the whole feedback report was very critical.

Some of these vague items were found in a more negative context than others and hedging was minimal in these cases. For instance, the use of *many* and *a lot* were very much negative unless they were hedged with *quite*, (such as *quite a lot of*). The use of *a little* or *a few*, on the other hand, is definitely hedging negativity (such as *a little unusual, or a few misconceptions*). Based on the findings, it also seems that tutors generally request for more

information rather than asking for less, except for one occurrence of [t]he essay *could have benefited from more argument and less description*.

In addition to this, the clusters of hedging is a very prominent element found in the co-texts of all the vague items. In particular, in *I (do) think* as suggestions, the clusters of modals were very evident (also discussed earlier in Section 8.2.1.). Other clustering of hedges includes adverbs (*perhaps*, or *really*), and submodifiers (*quite*). These clusters are an indication that hedging was a feature largely used in feedback and that tutors do not simply use a single hedging device, but employ various hedging features. The clusters can be made up of double hedges, such as, *your conclusion appears rather too general; perhaps a better link might have helped*; or *I think you could have*. The maximum number of clusters found in the data is treble hedges, for instance, *I think you could have developed this a little; occasionally, your use of language seems a little overwrought and hard to decode; I thought you could perhaps....* These other components of hedging (*perhaps*, *really*, or *quite*) will be discussed later in this chapter.

The following section looks into the stance adverbs which were found in the EdEng corpus.

8.2.3. Stance adverbs

An investigation was carried out into stance adverbs³⁴ in the EdEng corpus. Table 8.39. shows the frequencies of stance adverbs in the EdEng corpus. A log-likelihood (LL) test was also carried out to see if there was any statistical difference in the use of each of the stance adverbs in each department, particularly in Department B to see if there is any indication of idiosyncrasies. The result showed no highly statistical significant difference in the usage, although *really* and *occasionally* were under-represented in Department B (LL: +7.18 for *really*, p-value <0.01 and LL: +6.56 for *occasionally*, p-value <0.05, results are shown in Appendix 8.23.). As mentioned in Chapter 5 (Section 5.6.4.1.1.), the statistical test was also carried out to see if there was any idiosyncrasy in Department B.

This section will discuss only the use of *perhaps*, *really*, and *occasionally* in the EdEng corpus. Due to the low frequency of occurrences of *usually* and *only*, as well as the tendency to occur in Department B (for the case of *usually*), there will be no further discussions on them in the following sub-sections. There will also be no further discussion on *fully*, *probably* and *maybe* as they were all found minimally (two occurrences respectively in the EdEng corpus, as shown in Table 8.39.). However, I have included several examples of these stance adverbs in this section summary (in Section 8.2.3.7.) to show that the feedback patterns [POS], [NEG], or [SUG] still occur even on occasions where the occurrences were few.

³⁴ The list of stance adverbs (for example: *generally*, *perhaps*, or *occasionally*) were extracted from Biber *et al.* (1999:557-558, 853-859). This list of stance adverbs was then searched for in the EdEng corpus. The stance adverbs which were found in the corpus were noted.

Table 8.39. Lists of stance adverbs in the EdEng corpus

(Note: all frequency of occurrences are differentiated, only adverbs are selected, non-hedging use are excluded)

	Department A		Department B		Total (A + B)	
	Raw freq.	Words per thou.	Raw freq.	Words per thou.	Raw freq.	Words per thou.
perhaps	3	0.7	23	0.7	26	0.7
really	5	1.1	6	0.2	11	0.3
occasionally	4	0.9	4	0.1	8	0.2
usually	-	-	4	0.1	4	0.1
only	1	0.2	2	0.1	3	0.1
fully	1	0.2	1	0.03	2	0.1
probably	1	0.2	1	0.03	2	0.1
maybe	1	0.2	1	0.03	2	0.1
TOTAL	16	3.5	42	1.3	58	1.6

Note:

- The row shaded in grey is found only in Department B
- Due to the relatively low frequency of the occurrences of the stance adverbs in the EdEng corpus, a cut-off point of two occurrences was used.

The following sub-sections examine the more frequently used stance adverbs (*perhaps*, *really*, and *occasionally*) which are used to hedge comments in the EdEng corpus in greater detail.

8.2.3.1. *Perhaps*

Perhaps was found in 26 instances in the EdEng corpus used as hedging (0.7 words per thousand in both departments), and all occurrences of *perhaps* were used as suggestions. Modals (for instance, *could*, *might*, *should*, and *would*) were also found in the co-texts of *perhaps* as suggestions (also mentioned earlier in the section on modals, Section 8.2.1.).

The general patterns of *perhaps* are further shown in Tables 8.40. and 8.41. (see Appendix 8.24. for the concordances of *perhaps*).

Table 8.40. General patterns of *perhaps*: *perhaps* + MODAL

Note: Table 8.40. is not a substitution table. Each row is an individual example to be read across. For example: *perhaps one interesting point you could have mentioned was...*

perhaps	PPN/ NP/ DET	MODAL	VB/ VP	NP/ADJ
	one interesting point you	could have	mentioned was...	
	towards the end of... you		had a...	
	you		considered how...	
			recast these suggestions...	
			summarised it...	
			used Brown's principle	
	this discussion	could have just been	part of your...	
	a better link	might have	helped	
	if you'd organized your... this		elaborated a little...	
	you		more useful	
	this (analysis)	might have been	mentioned earlier	
	a more stringent proofreading process	would	catch	
	the only suggestion I		make (is for you.../in the section)	
	, my only comment here	would be	with regard to your...	
	one concrete example to substantiate your point		beneficial	
	diagrammatically as this	would have	allowed the...	
		, would have been	to present these...	
	more	should be	said	

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

Table 8.41. General patterns of *perhaps*: MODAL + *perhaps*

Note: Table 8.41. is not a substitution table. Each row is an individual example to be read across. For example: *would have been more useful to have engaged more immediately in the analysis after perhaps a paragraph or two.*

MODAL[SUG]	ADJ	perhaps	NP	
would have been	more useful to have ...after		a paragraph or two...	
	VB		VB	NP
should	then describe your... and		state	the aims...
could			have discussed...	

- Note:
- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
 - The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

Although *perhaps* was used as a suggestion in the patterns shown above, it often follows negative comments, forming the feedback pattern, NEG + SUG; or NEG + (POS +) SUG. In offering suggestions, *perhaps* functioned as a hedging device in all cases. The uses of *perhaps* along with modals was not only to hedge the implicit criticism, but also to sound less assertive. Further examples of the feedback patterns of *perhaps* are shown in Figure 8.48.

Figure 8.48. Feedback patterns of *perhaps*

NEG + POS + <i>perhaps</i> [SUG]
(28) I am not certain that your discussion on the differences between speech and writing is all that useful. You make some relevant and interesting points and PERHAPS this might have been mentioned earlier in the essay. <NEXT COMMENT>

Figure 8.48. (continued) Feedback patterns of *perhaps*

SUG + POS + NEG + <i>perhaps</i>[SUG]
(29) <i>Your essay could have done a more comparative analysis of the advertisements. You do make some comparative points but these are just in passing. PERHAPS, towards the end of the essay you could have had a critical discussion on this. <NEXT COMMENT></i>
NEG + POS + <i>perhaps</i>[SUG]
(30) Minor errors of presentation , but overall a carefully worked out production plan and prompt copy. PERHAPS more should be said in the Rationale about precisely what you see as the main still-relevant issues of the play, and how these are to be foregrounded? <NEG + POS>

The clusters of hedging in *perhaps* is also very evident (clustering has also been noted in earlier sections on vague language or modals). For instance, in example 28 above, in pointing out a negativity, the tutor was hedging with the vague expression, *I am not certain* (only two occurrences in the EdEng corpus, hence not explored in the section on vague language) which was then mitigated with a positive comment. The suggestion was then hedged with the use of *perhaps* to make it tentative. In addition to this, there are also further clustering of hedging expressions noticed in the use of *perhaps* (also mentioned earlier), such as *I thought you could perhaps have discussed*, expressing even greater tentativeness from the tutor, as observed in the discussion of *could* earlier (in Section 8.2.1.3.), and with *I thought* (also discussed in Section 8.2.2.9.1.) which suggests a further indirectness (as shown in the example below).

- | |
|---|
| <p>(31) <i>I like the way your analysis enables you to explore and illustrate some of the limitations of Propp's model. <u>I thought</u> you <u>could</u> PERHAPS have discussed more explicitly the narrative effects of the text not strictly following Propp's 31 functions. <POS + SUG + POS + NEG></i></p> |
|---|

Perhaps + modal[SUG] indicates a weak degree of commitment to the truth of the proposition as compared with the sole use of modal. With the treble hedges (such as the example above), the assertion is even weaker and more tentative as compared with *perhaps* + modal[SUG]. For instance, compare the three examples below:

*you **could** have discussed more explicitly the narrative effects of the text;*

*you **could perhaps** have discussed more explicitly the narrative effects of the text;*

***I thought** you **could perhaps** have discussed more explicitly the narrative effects of the text.*

Although all three examples are hedging. The degree of tentativeness increases at each stage. The third example is the most indirect of all three examples.

Summary

Perhaps was used in all cases in the EdEng corpus as a suggestion and hedging to make propositions less assertive. The cluster of hedging such as modals (*could, might, or would*), or the treble hedges (such as: *I thought you could perhaps...*) were also very apparent in the co-texts of *perhaps*. The clustering of hedges shows the tutors' tentativeness where they are constantly trying to make propositions as tentative as possible.

8.2.3.2. Really

Really was used in both departments although it was found more frequently in Department A than in Department B (1.1 and 0.2 words per thousand respectively). Negative (*not*) was found to precede *really* in the EdEng corpus (as shown in Table 8.42.). *Really* in these occurrences softens the negativity. For instance, *I felt that you never really capitalised on this* sounds less critical as compared to *you did not capitalise on this* or *you never capitalised on this*. The use of *really* indicates a lack of assertiveness (see Appendix 8.25. for other concordances of *really*) and *I felt* is another example of interpersonal metaphor, similarly to *I think*, mentioned earlier in vague expressions (Halliday, 2004).

Table 8.42. General patterns of *really*

Note: Table 8.42. is not a substitution table. Each row is an individual example to be read across. For example: *the first advertisement you have selected is not really an advertisement*.

PPN/ NP/ DET	NEG		VB/ VP	NP	ADJ
the first advertisement you have selected	is not			an advertisement	
I felt that you	never		capitalised on this		
your point here	doesn't		come through		clearly
you	haven't		commented		on the image
some reasonable comments, but		really	move beyond		the ideas
you	don't		mention this in...		
you			needed to have given		
I			think that...		
there			is no need to introduce...		

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

It seems that *not really* is used as a chunk in order to hedge, instead of mentioning the criticism explicitly, as shown in the example below:

It was clear how the age of the learners were significant as you don't mention this in any great detail beyond 'younger learners' and 'older learners'.

Even though *really* was found in negative contexts, there was mitigation of statements in the co-texts of *really*, either with positivity [POS], or suggestions [SUG]. In comparison to the use of *perhaps* which is found mainly as suggesting ways of improving, *really* is associated with negative assertions. The examples in Figure 8.49. further show the feedback patters of *really* in the EdEng corpus.

Figure 8.49. Feedback patterns of *really*

<i>really</i>[NEG] + SUG + NEG + POS + NEG	
(32)	The first advertisement you have selected is not REALLY an advertisement in the sense of how we have been discussing them through the course. <i>We were looking primarily at advertisements that persuade and have a product or item to sell</i> and not one that was an informative brochure. Having said that, <i>you do have a fairly good analysis</i> except for your point on 'intimidation' which seemed slightly tenuous. <NEXT COMMENT>
<i>really</i>[NEG] + SUG	
(33)	You haven't REALLY commented on the image of the people in the Blackberry advertisement. <i>There is quite a lot to say here about the images of these young people and the target group for the advertisement.</i> <NEXT CRITERIA>
<i>SUG</i> + <i>really</i>[NEG] + SUG + NEG	
(34)	<i>You make some reasonable comments,</i> but don't REALLY move beyond the ideas discussed (and quotations provided) in lectures. Later in your essay you seem to run out of ideas and lose focus. By working through all the points from lectures you will lose focus because lectures are never designed to answer specific essay questions. <i>You should conduct your own research to support and develop ideas from lectures.</i> <END>

Summary

Really was found in two patterns, in negative form (such as, *you don't really mention this in any great detail*), or as an intensifier (such as: *this essay provides a really good overview of two poets*, also discussed below). However, hedging only occurs in the former when the use of *really* is minimising the negativity (for instance, *[y]our point here doesn't really come through clearly*, as shown in examples 35–37 in Figure 8.50.). As an intensifier in the latter, *really* makes the assertion stronger, hence there is no hedging. Although the comment is regarded as a suggestion (as with other cases of *need*, *needs*, or *needed*), the use of *really* adds more force to the suggestion, implying that the student ought to give examples (example 35), and Propp's morphology should not have been mentioned (example 36). Similarly, in negativity, *really* reinforces the criticism (example 37).

Figure 8.50. Examples of *really* as hedging

Examples:	
(35) Your analysis of the quality of students' interaction is that it was of a 'high quality' but <i>you only make reference to noise levels, humour and make some passing comments on interaction. You REALLY needed to have given some examples here to illustrate your point on 'quality'.</i> <NEXT COMMENT>	NEG + <i>really</i> [SUG]
(36) Again, the section on <i>the application of Toolan's model could have been developed further</i> . On p.5-6, <i>there REALLY is no need to introduce Propp's morphology on top of all of the other types of analysis!</i> <POS>	SUG + <i>really</i> [SUG]
(37) I'm not sure you understand metre fully (talking of Larkin's use of 'iambic metre' is <i>REALLY</i> only half the story – how many stresses are in each line?) but I know that discussion of technical terms can be tricky. <POS>	<i>really</i> [NEG] + MIT

There use of *really* as an intensifier to strengthen the positivity (for example: *a really good overview*, or *full of really interesting and perceptive ideas*) were removed as they were not considered elements of hedging. They were known as “boosters” whose main function is was to praise elements, with the primary intention of acknowledging the students’ work and effort (boosters are not investigated in this research).

8.2.3.5. Occasionally

Occasionally occurred nine times in the EdEng corpus (0.2 words per thousand). As with the use of *really*, *occasionally* was also used more frequently in Department A (0.9 words per thousand in Department A and 0.1 words per thousand in Department B). Looking at the concordances of *occasionally*, it seems that *occasionally* is often followed by negativity (as shown in the examples in Figure 8.51.), thus hedging the criticisms.

Figure 8.51. Concordances of *occasionally*

fairly well although there is	occasionally a lack of clarity in your wri
erspective on the texts. It's	occasionally a little descriptive or rheto
nt of your chosen poems. It's	occasionally a little over-descriptive and
iate academic style. There is	occasionally a tendency for you to be fair
es to illustrate your points.	Occasionally, for example with your point
iticism would be that you are	occasionally overly-reliant on your second
points are relevant. However,	occasionally your essays lack accurate ana
ly and persuasively, although	occasionally your use of language seems a

As with the case of *really* (and other sub-components of hedging), the clustering is again very evident (for instance, *occasionally a little*). In the co-texts of *occasionally* when it is negatively connotated, there were also mitigations of weaknesses, either through positivity [POS], or suggestions [SUG]. Further examples are shown in Figure 8.52.

Figure 8.52. Feedback patterns of *occasionally*

POS + <i>occasionally</i>[NEG] + POS
(38) You write fairly well although there is OCCASIONALLY a lack of clarity in your writing (page 3 second paragraph). You do show an awareness of writing for an academic audience. <NEXT CRITERIA>
POS + <i>occasionally</i>[NEG]
(39) The analysis is fairly good and you provide many examples to illustrate your points. OCCASIONALLY , for example with your point on ‘nominalisation’, it was not very clear how your examples related to your point. <NEXT COMMENT>
POS + <i>occasionally</i>[NEG] + <i>SUG</i>
(40) The essay constructs a fairly good argument. Most of your points are relevant. However, OCCASIONALLY your essays lack accurate analysis and <i>the interpretation needs to refer to the sources you have read</i> . Here are a few points for you to note: <LIST OF COMMENTS>

Summary

Occasionally was often found in a negative context (such as, *occasionally a little descriptive*, or *occasionally overly-reliant*). However, the co-texts of *occasionally* show that it is often preceded or followed by positivity or suggestion. The use of *occasionally* in the EdEng corpus was to hedge criticisms as compared with the use of *always* which is somewhat more critical.

8.2.3.4. Section summary

This section (Section 8.2.3.) has looked at the prominent stance adverbs (*perhaps*, *really*, and *occasionally*) which were used as hedging devices in the EdEng corpus. *Perhaps* was strongly associated with suggestions and clusters of modals were found in the co-texts (for example, *perhaps you could have considered*, or *perhaps this might have been mentioned*

earlier in the essay). *Perhaps* expresses a strong degree of uncertainty and a strong sense of hedging. *Really* was often found with negatives (such as *not really*, *don't/doesn't really*, or *are not really*). In all these cases, *really* softens the criticisms making the comments less definite and sounding more hesitant. It also seems that *not really* is used as a chunk to hedge. Even though, there is the mention of explicit criticism, there are also mitigation statements preceding or following negativity. The cluster of hedging is yet again another apparent feature in the stance adverbs such as, *perhaps* + modals, or triple hedges such as, *I thought you could perhaps*.

The other stance adverbs which were also found in the EdEng corpus include: *usually*, *only*, *fully*, *probably*, and *maybe*. The occurrences of these stance adverbs were relatively low (frequencies of occurrences shown in Table 8.39.). *Usually* was used as giving suggestion but there is no cluster of hedges (such as, [w]hen you do refer to a year, you *usually* place it in brackets after the name), or as a criticism where there is hedging (for example: [y]ou *usually* do not have a full stop in your reference). However, this was very rare (only one occurrence in the EdEng corpus). *Fully* was found as hedging when preceded by *not always* (for instance, *these are not always fully supported through your examples*), or when mitigated by hedged expression such as *I'm not sure you understand metre fully* (as discussed in Section 8.2.2.9.2. earlier). Due to the low frequencies of occurrences, these stance adverbs were not discussed in greater detail in this section.

Probably, and *maybe* were found to be hedging claims, displaying a weaker degree of commitment to the truth of the statement (for example, *quite limited though, probably due to the restrictions of the required word length*, or *[a] few points could maybe have been*

[383]

clarified a little more). Even though there were few occurrences of these stance adverbs (*probably* and *maybe*), they were all functioning as hedging in the EdEng corpus. As we have seen in this section, the feedback pattern [POS], [NEG], or [SUG] is very evident in all the stance adverbs. Examples are further shown in Figure 8.53.

Figure 8.53. Feedback patterns [POS], [NEG], or [SUG] in the stance adverbs

Examples:	
(41) I'm not sure you understand metre fully (talking of Larkin's use of 'iambic metre' is REALLY only half the story – how many stresses are in each line?) but I know that discussion of technical terms can be tricky. <POS>	<i>really</i> [NEG] + MIT
(42) When you do refer to a year, <i>you</i> USUALLY <i>place it in brackets after the name</i> , for e.g. Machin (2007) as opposed to 'Machin in 2007'. <NEXT COMMENT>	<i>usually</i> [SUG]
(43) You USUALLY do not have a full stop in your reference – for e.g. 'Cook.2001). <i>You either have a comma (Cook, 2001) or no punctuation (Cook 2001).</i> <NEXT CRITERIA>	<i>usually</i> [NEG] + <i>SUG</i>
(44) There is a good attempt at some grammatical analysis and how this contributes to the narrative genre. This is quite limited though, PROBABLY due to the restrictions of the required word length. The essay is generally well-structured. <POS>	POS + NEG + <i>probably</i> [MIT] Shows mitigation in the use of <i>probably</i> showing that the tutor understands the word length might be the cause of the limited analysis.
(45) Your essay is written in good English. It also shows that you are aware of the conventions of writing in an academic style. There are some minor slips , for example, '...s/he must trouble over the vocabulary...' when you PROBABLY mean '...s/he must pay careful attention to...'. But none of these minor slips in language impede the meaning in your essay. <NEXT CRITERIA>	POS + NEG + <i>probably</i> [hedge] + [MIT] <i>Probably</i> here expresses some sense of doubt from the tutor, followed by positive comment which mitigates the criticism.

Only was used as an adverb to hedge to indicate there is no other negativity apart from the mentioned. For instance, *I have **only** one point to make*, or *I would **only** question your argument that the interactionist*. *Only*, however, was used as hedging when it is used as an adjective such as, *my **only** comment*, *the **only** point*, or *the **only** suggestion* but these phrases were found only in Department B which could indicate idiosyncrasy.

This section has not looked into stance adverbs which were mainly positive and negative evaluations because hedging was very minimal in these evaluative comments. For instance, in the case of *generally*, it is followed by positive evaluations such as *this is **generally** a good account of...*, or *[g]enerally, this is **fairly** good*. Both occurrences of *generally* in these contexts were highlighting the strengths of the essay or analysis as a whole. As far as the hedging in this research is concerned, an item is only considered hedging when it is minimising the negative comment. There is however, the anticipation of negativity, either explicitly mentioned in the feedback pattern, POS + NEG, or implicitly expressed through suggestions in the feedback pattern, POS + SUG. Similarly, the negative evaluations also have no hedging elements. For instance, in the case of *fully*, it is preceded by negative (*not*), such as,

*an essay that has not **fully** achieved the aims of the assignment*, or

*[y]our final two pages on schema theory make some interesting points but you don't develop all of them **fully***.

The co-texts of *fully* in both these cases were negative. There was very little hedging in the first comment and in the second comment, the comment was entirely negative; there was no hedging at all.

This entire section (Section 8.2.3.) has examined the stance adverbs which were found in the EdEng corpus. The following section will examine the submodifiers in the EdEng corpus.

8.2.4. Submodifiers

This section looks at the submodifiers which were found in the EdEng corpus. The main submodifiers under investigation were extracted from Collins COBUILD English Grammar (1990:94-95, also attached in Appendix 4.1.). The term, submodifier, used in this corpus study on hedging is not strictly restricted to submodifiers which are used to intensify or reduce the effect of adjectives (as mentioned in Chapter 4, Section 4.1.4.). It is used to include all aspects of hedging features found in the EdEng corpus (such as *quite good*). For instance, *you have not quite compared the advertisements*, where *quite* softens the negativity and thus minimises the assertion.

Table 8.43. shows the list of submodifiers which were found in the EdEng corpus and submodifiers which were not found in the EdEng corpus were omitted. A log-likelihood (LL) test was also carried out to see if there was any statistically significant difference in the use of each of the submodifiers in each department. The test result showed no highly significant differences in the usage, although *rather* (LL: +7.47, p-value <0.01) and *quite* (LL: +6.70, p-value <0.01) were more prevalent in Department A (results are presented in Appendix 8.26.). Nevertheless, this shows that the tutor in Department B was not overusing each of the submodifiers (as explained in Chapter 5, Section 5.6.4.1.1. earlier).

Table 8.43. List of submodifiers in the EdEng corpus

(Note: all frequency of occurrences are differentiated, non-hedging use are excluded)

	Department A		Department B		Total (A + B)	
	Raw freq.	Words per thousand	Raw freq.	Words per thousand	Raw freq.	Words per thousand
quite	10	2.2	24	0.8	34	0.9
rather	8	1.8	15	0.5	23	0.6
entirely	2	0.4	5	0.2	7	0.2
slightly	-	-	7	0.2	7	0.2
fairly	-	-	4	0.1	4	0.1
TOTAL	20	4.4	55	1.8	75	2.1

Note:

- Rows shaded in grey are found only in Department B.
- Due to the relatively low frequency of occurrences of the submodifiers in the whole EdEng corpus, a cut-off point of more than two occurrences was used.

Some of the submodifiers in Table 8.43. are considered as adverbs (for instance, *rather*, *reasonably*, or *fairly*). However, in the context they were found in the EdEng corpus, they were submodifying the adjectives, hence the reason they were examined in submodifiers. Only submodifiers which were used as hedging and with more than five occurrences are discussed in this section. The following sub-sections look at each of the submodifiers (except for *fairly*) in greater detail.

8.2.4.1. Quite

Quite was used as a submodifier in the EdEng corpus in 37 occurrences, all of which were used as hedging (2.0 words per thousand, more frequent in Department A than in Department B, as shown in Table 8.43.). *Quite* was found in the clusters of hedging with vague language such as *a lot of*, or *a lot to*. The use of the vague language (*a lot of*, or *a lot*

to), however, is not a hedge (as mentioned earlier in Section 8.2.2.8.). The use of *quite* here softened the negativity. Table 8.44. further illustrates this pattern.

Table 8.44. General patterns of *quite* + *a lot*

Note: The table is not a substitution table. Each row is to be read across. For example: *there is quite an abrupt progression...*, or *it can be quite a complex issue to...*

		VB	quite	VL	NP	VB	MODAL[SUG]
a)	there	is		a lot of	literature on...		you could have discussed
b)	there	is		a lot to		say	

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

Apart from vague language, *quite* was also found to collocate or submodify positive connotated adjectives (such as *insightful*, *innovative*, or *interesting*) or adverb (such as *well*). When *quite* is used in a positive context, there is no hedging, as the main notion of hedging is to minimise the negativity. Even though *quite interesting* indicates some flaws in the essay or analysis, nevertheless, it is still a positive comment. Negative connotated adjectives were also found such as *quite general*, and *quite short*. In these cases, *quite* was used as a hedge to reduce the force of the negativity. Table 8.45. shows the other patterns of *quite*.

Table 8.45. General patterns of *quite*

Note: The table is not a substitution table. Each row is to be read across. For example: *there is quite an abrupt progression...*, or *it can be quite a complex issue to...*

PPN/ NP	MODAL[SUG]/ VB	quite	ADJ	NP
there	is			an abrupt progression....
it	can be			a complex issue to...
	would have been			an interesting argument
this	would have been		important	to the success of...
analysis...	is		general	
it	is		short	
use of questions	was		interesting	
conclusions you draw	were		insightful	
VP		quite	ADV	
is organised			well	

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

In relation to the negative connotated adjectives (for instance, *short* and *general*), the contexts of the modified adjectives were also found to be negative (as shown in the examples in Figure 8.54.).

Figure 8.54. Negative connotated adjectives in the co-texts of *quite*

- | |
|--|
| <p>(46) Some of your insights into your chosen texts are interesting, though I'm not sure how much they relate to the reader's expectations of fictionality. I take your point about constricting realities, but promo art is about a great deal more than a realist "mirror" – do you mention things like metafictionality, self-reflexibility or intertextuality? These are crucial to this question, and although this is a promising effort, its potential is never realised. It's QUITE short, and overly descriptive rather than analytical. <END></p> |
| <p>(47) The lesson as you describe it on page 1 is a reading class but you have not discussed any of the activities that were carried out to aid reading in a systematic fashion. The first part of your analysis on the role of the teacher is QUITE general. <NEXT COMMENT, NEG></p> |

Although *quite* in both examples is functioning as hedging, to soften the negativity, it is slightly derogatory as both occurrences of *quite* occurred towards the end of the comments and there was no mitigations (either positivity or suggestion) to soften the impact of negativity. In particular, example 46, not only is *quite* found at the final comment but it is linked to *short* and also *overly descriptive*, hence making the whole feedback very negative. Example 47 was a rare occurrence where the whole comment in the respective criterion (IACAR) was heavily criticising the student's work. Although *quite* is hedging the negativity (*being too general*), the extent to which *quite* has achieved its full potential of a hedge for this specific case is very hard to infer.

Another interesting pattern which emerged by looking at *quite* is the use of negative (such as, *does not*, *is not*, *are not*, *was not*, *have not*, or in the contracted form, 'n't') (patterns are shown in Table 8.46.). In these cases, the negatives are all mitigated by *quite* which tone down the criticisms considerably.

Table 8.46. General patterns of NEG’N + *quite*

Note: The table is not a substitution table. Each row is to be read across. For example: *you don’t quite achieve all you could...*, or *the essay does not quite achieve the potential it could*.

NP	NEG'N	quite	VB	NP	MOD
you	don't				all you could
the essay	does not doesn't		achieve	the potential	it could
the rationale				its aims	
			explain	just what the issues	
the quotation...			substantiate	the point	
			reach	its potential	
	have not		compared	the advertisements	
	are not		the type of advertisements		
PPN /NOUN	NEG'N	quite	ADJ	NOUN	
model	was not		an appropriate	model	
you	haven't		(defined or) developed		
typography	is not		accurate		

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

The co-texts of these negatives + *quite* were further investigated. The co-texts were not entirely negative as with the case of *quite* + ADJ[NEG]. Positive comments were found in the co-texts of *quite* and mitigation of statements were also found frequently in the co-texts of negative + *quite*. Figure 8.55. further illustrates the feedback patterns of *quite*.

Figure 8.55. Feedback patterns of *quite*

POS + NEG'N + <i>quite</i>[NEG]
(48) An essay that shows some understanding of concepts on the course but does not QUITE reach its potential . We will discuss some of the points here in greater detail when we meet. <NEXT CRITERIA>
POS + NEG'N + <i>quite</i> + MIT
(49) Your essay shows that you have also understood the demands of the question although you have not QUITE compared the advertisements as much as you could have. <NEXT CRITERIA>
POS + NEG'N + <i>quite</i> + MIT + NEG
(50) A good, clear introduction that sets out what you will achieve in the essay. However, the essay does not QUITE achieve its aims. There is evidence that you are attempting to grapple with the central issues but your overall argument remains at a rather simplistic level . <LIST OF COMMENTS>
NEG'N + <i>quite</i> + MIT
(51) On page 2, your discussion at the end of that page on typography is not QUITE accurate. <i>I think you are referring to punctuation here</i> . Typography has more to do with the actual lettering. <NEXT COMMENT>

As compared with the use of negative connotated adjectives (such as *short*, or *general*), *quite* functioning as a hedge is more apparent when preceded by negative (*not*) because *not quite* reduces the implied criticism. It also seems that when *quite* is linked to verbs (for instance, *achieve*, *explain*, or *substantiate*), it is always preceded with negative (*not*).

Apart from the mitigations of statements as shown in Figure 8.55., there were also other clustering of hedges further implying the tutor was expressing doubt or uncertainty through the vague expression, *I don't think* (as discussed earlier in Section 8.2.2.9.1.). Although vague expression was found, the co-text of *I don't think + quite* was so negative that the

extent of *quite* functioning as hedging here diminished (as shown in example 52 in Figure 8.56.).

Figure 8.56. An example where hedging feature is lost in the use of *quite*

(52) You have some good ideas and you've conducted some useful research. However, I don't think you've spent **QUITE** enough time thinking about these texts and issues as *many points of your argument still need further development*. You don't mention class in your introduction and you never try to state how class is determined. The question of what constitutes class is often debated so there's no easy way to define it. Your inclusion of Althusser could have been strong but there's no indication of any detailed understanding or research into his theories. There are many technical inadequacies throughout the essay and you often express yourself poorly. <END>

Summary

Quite is only used as a hedge when it is preceded by negative (*not*). When *quite* is collocating negative connotated adjectives (such as, *short*, or *general*, as discussed earlier), it almost loses its hedging functions as the co-texts of *quite* + ADJ[NEG] were very negative. Although vague expression (such as *I don't think*) was found in the co-texts of *quite*, the whole context was very negative. Hence, *quite* as a hedge in this case is very limited.

The use of *quite* as a hedge is found in negative contexts, although hedging seems to diminish as the contexts becomes more negative. When used in a positive context, hedging is very minimal in *quite*. The examples in Figure 8.57. shows the limitations of hedging in *quite* + ADJ[POS] (these three occurrences were omitted in the frequency count as shown in Table 8.43.).

Figure 8.57. The limitations of hedging in *quite*

(53)	The conclusions you draw were QUITE insightful and you did attempt to compare the texts. <NEXT CRITERIA>
(54)	<i>Your discussion on correction and feedback</i> , as I said earlier, <i>could have been supported by more literature on the topic</i> . The final discussion point on the use of questions was QUITE interesting. You made a good observation using Wajnryb's classification of questions although you might have accounted for the reasons why *display questions' were not used. <LIST OF SUGGESTIONS>
(55)	The essay is a well constructed argument and is organised QUITE well. You make some very good points about academic discourse and illustrate them well using examples from your extract. Here are some points for you to note... <LIST OF SUGGESTIONS>

8.2.4.2. Rather

Rather occurred 23 times in the EdEng corpus (0.6 words per thousand). It is more frequent in Department A than in Department B (1.8 words per thousand, and 0.5 words per thousand respectively). *Rather* has a similar meaning to *quite* indicating to a certain extent. *Rather* is found to be hedging or softening the criticisms in the EdEng corpus where it submodifies negative connotated adjectives such as *confusing*, *simplistic*, *tenuous*, *disorganised*, *disappointing*, or *colloquial*. For instance, in the comment, *a long and rather confusing sentence* is hedged or softer as compared with the assertion, *a long and confusing sentence*. Table 8.47. shows the general patterns of *rather* found in the EdEng corpus.

Table 8.47. General patterns of *rather*

Note: Table 8.47. is not a substitution table. Each row is an individual example to be read across. For example: *a few, rather vague sentences*, or *it is rather a vague beginning...*

NP/ PPN	CONJ	VB/ VP		ADJ[NEG]	NOUN/ NP
a few,			rather		vague sentences
it		is			a vague beginning...
I take the point you make		but this is			an extreme argument
not an obvious sentence					a question of tone
the main concern is in...	but				your essay reads like...
a long	and			confusing	sentence
a				abrupt	end to the discussion
your argument		remains at a		simplistic	level
your argument on...		is		tenuous	
I thought the essay itself		was		disappointing	
the essay		ended up being		disorganised	
your style of writing		can be		colloquial	

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

The co-texts of *rather* + ADJ[NEG] also showed further clustering of hedges, expressed through the suggestions or positivity (as shown in the examples in Figure 8.58.).

Figure 8.58. Feedback patterns of *rather*

POS + <i>rather</i> + ADJ[NEG] + <i>SUG</i>
(56) There is a RATHER abrupt end to the discussion on Krashen before you move into the discussion on the interactionist theories. <i>Perhaps a better link might have helped your argument to progress.</i> <NEW COMMENT>

Figure 8.58. (continued) Feedback patterns of *rather*

POS + <i>rather</i> + ADJ[NEG] + NEG + POS
<p>(57) ...this is very good and the amount of analysis you've done and the level of detail is impressive. I thought the essay itself was RATHER disappointing in light of this – it became evident that you were trying to do too much with the analysis and that the analysis was over-ambitious given the length of the assignment. This meant that a lot of your points were under-developed and the essay ended up being RATHER disorganised which interferes with the coherence of your writing. There is evidently not enough space for your arguments to be explained, justified or supported particularly well. You do draw well on the narrative models of Labov and Toolan. Again, <i>the section on the application of Toolan's model could have been developed further</i>. On p.5-6, there really is no need to introduce Propp's morphology on top of all of the other types of analysis!</p> <p>In sum, you should get credit for the amount of analysis presented in the appendices. But the discussion of the analysis throughout the essay let you down SOMEWHAT.</p> <p><END></p>

In example 57 (also discussed in vague language under *a lot of*, Section 8.2.2.8.), although *rather* was used twice in the same feedback report, both uses of *rather* were hedging the criticisms (*rather disappointing*, and *rather disorganised*). However, they were also linked to other negativity such as, *trying to do too much*, *over-ambitious*, *under-developed*, and *not enough space*, the whole feedback sounded negative, a similar case with the examples from *quite* (discussed earlier). Even though the tutor mitigated all the negativity by giving an overall positive evaluation of the essay, the end comment was a negative comment, mitigated by the use of *somewhat*. The hedging elements which reduced the force of all the negativity at the beginning of the comment seemed to be lost amidst all the negativity.

Apart from *rather*, it was also found in chunks such as, *rather too* + ADJ[NEG], and *rather than*. Table 8.48. further shows the patterns for *rather too* and *rather than*. *Rather*

too was used in one instance only to hedge the negativity. *Rather than* occurred more frequently and was used to criticise an action or to indicate the other action is more preferable. Suggestions were implicitly offered in the cases of *rather than*.

Table 8.48. General patterns of *rather too* and *rather than*

Note: Table 8.48. is not a substitution table. Each row is an individual example to be read across. For example: *your conclusion on... appears rather too general*, or .

NP	VB	rather too	ADJ		
your conclusion on...	appears		general		
VB	ADJ/ ADJP		rather than	ADJ	NP
	a little descriptive or rhetorical			analytical	
	overly descriptive				
place this in	alphabetical order				in groups
VB	NP			VB	PPN
retelling	the narratives			analysing	them
integrated into	the essay			to have had	it in a separate section
NP	VB/ VP				NP
linguistics features you	are referring to				just line numbers
NP				NP	
draw attention to the information presented				the agent of the action	
how children acquire language				the structure or nature of...	
VB	NP	ADV		NP	
shown/ illustrated	the analysis	diagrammatically		through a discussion	

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

Summary

Rather was used to soften the negative connotated adjectives such as *colloquial*, *disappointing*, or *simplistic* on what would have been very negative assertions.

8.2.4.3. *Entirely*

Entirely was found in both departments, slightly more frequent in Department A (0.4 words per thousand, and 0.2 words per thousand in Department B). As hedging, *entirely* was always preceded by negative (*not*), such as, *not entirely appropriate*, *is not accurate*, or *does not conform entirely*. In addition to the negative, the tutors were using personal elements (such as, *I*) to be uncertain or to soften the criticism (for instance, *I'm not entirely clear how...*, *I'm not sure what your point is here*, or *I'm not convinced that the writer can...*). The general patterns of *entirely* is shown in Table 8.49.

Table 8.49. General patterns of *entirely*

Note: Table 8.49. is not a substitution table. Each row is an individual example to be read across. For example: *colloquial and not entirely appropriate for an academic essay*.

ADJ/ NP/ PPN	MOD/ VB + NEG'T	entirely	ADJ	NP
colloquial and	not		appropriate	for an academic essay
I'm			clear	how Advertisements
			convinced	that the writer can...
			sure	what your point is here
'...'	might not be		the right	word
interpretation of...	is not		inaccurate	
your essay	does not conform			to the guidelines

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

The feedback pattern [POS, NEG, or SUG] is also very apparent in the co-texts of *entirely*.

The examples in Figure 8.59. further illustrate the feedback pattern of *entirely*.

Figure 8.59. Feedback patterns of *entirely*

POS + NEG + <i>entirely</i>[NEG]
(58) Your essay shows a sound grasp of English and the ability to write with an appropriate academic style. One minor point 'attempt to tackle' is colloquial and not ENTIRELY appropriate for an academic essay. <NEXT CRITERIA>
<i>entirely</i>[NEG] + SUG
(59) I'm not ENTIRELY clear how Advertisement 1 has a 'business-like style' (page 4). <i>I think you could have developed on the 'symbolism of the apple' more in your discussion of advertisement 1</i> (page 5) <SUG>

There was also one occurrence where mitigation [MIT] was also found in the co-text of *entirely* (as shown in the example in Figure 8.60.).

Figure 8.60. Mitigation in the co-text of *entirely*

POS + <i>entirely</i> [MIT] + POS
(60) Your essay indicates a well developed and quite detailed understanding of the progress of education in England and Wales, although, as you also indicate, 'progress' might not be ENTIRELY the right word. Your work is usefully referenced and it is clear that you have done significant research in the way of further reading to develop your understanding of key issues . <SUG+POS>

Summary

Although the occurrences of *entirely* were relatively few in the EdEng corpus, *entirely* was used to hedge comments. It is always preceded by negative (*not*). The tutors were also using *I* to express their uncertainty rather than being explicit.

8.2.4.4. *Slightly*

Slightly was found only in Department B (0.2 words per thousand). *Slightly* was used to modify negative connotated adjectives such as *tenuous*, *difficult*, *confusing*, *worrying*, or *disorganised*. *Slightly* hedge the negativity, softening them instead of being too direct, such as *this is confusing*, or *this is worrying*. There are also other clusters of hedging in the co-texts of *slightly* such as the use of modals in giving suggestions (*could have then been slightly reorganised*), or lexical verbs (such as, *seems to be slightly disorganised*, and *seemed tenuous*) which have modal-like meanings expressing likelihood or possibility, hedging the assertion further. Further patterns of *slightly* is illustrated in Table 8.50. Since

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slightly was found only in Department B, it could be an indication of the tutor's personal writing style (as mentioned in Chapter 5, Section 5.6.4.1.1.).

Table 8.50. General patterns for *slightly*

Note: Table 8.50. is not a substitution table. Each row is an individual example to be read across. For example: *which seemed slightly tenuous*, or *a slightly tenuous link*.

NP/ART/DET	wh-DET	VB	slightly	ADJ[NEG]	NOUN TO-INF
'...'	which	seemed		tenuous	
A				tenuous	link
the discussion		was		difficult	to follow
this		is		confusing	
this		is		worrying	
paragraph		seems to be		disorganised	
NOUN	MOD	VB		VB	
discussion	could have then	been		reorganised by discussing	

Note:

- This table is for illustrative purposes only. It is only a selection of the patterns found in the EdEng corpus.
- The blank space does not indicate that there is no other text preceding or following. It is only to show the basic patterns involved.

Summary

Slightly was found only in Department B. Nevertheless, it was used to hedge the negativity such as *slightly disorganised*, or *slightly worrying*. Other clusters of hedging also include the use of modal (*could*) or lexical verb (*seems/ seemed*) which softened the assertion or propositions.

8.2.4.5. Section summary

This entire section (Section 8.2.4.) has looked at the submodifiers in the EdEng corpus which were used as hedging devices. Submodifiers (such as *rather*, and *slightly*) were linked with negative adjectives such as *confusing*, *disorganised* and *tenuous*. They hedged the negativity making it less assertive. Negative (*not*) was found to precede *entirely* and *quite* (for instance, *not entirely appropriate*, or *is not quite accurate*). In *entirely*, the tutors seemed to express their uncertainties more personally such as *I'm not entirely clear*, or *I'm not entirely sure* which further hedged the comments. It is worth noting that for the case of *quite*, it is always preceded by negative (*not*) if it is linked to verb (such as *does not quite achieve*, or *have not quite compared*).

Hedging was also found in the clusters of submodifiers through the use of modal verbs in giving suggestions (for example, *could have then been slightly reorganised*, or *a reasonably good essay that could be strengthened with...*), lexical verb (such as *seemed slightly tenuous*) or adverb (*perhaps*). Mitigations were also found in the co-texts of submodifiers where tutors would show their understanding of what the students were trying to accomplish (*I understand the point you make, but...*). In addition to the submodifiers, the cohesive feedback patterns of positive comments and suggestions always occur alongside the negativity, which functioned as mitigation in order to soften the effect of the implied criticisms, except for some rare occurrences such as the use of *quite* in the final position (as discussed earlier).

Submodifiers which were linked to positive connotated adjectives such as *fairly good* were not considered to be hedging as they were highlighting the positivity, and not minimising the negativity. There were four occurrences of *fairly* which was coded as hedging, such as *fairly colloquial*, *fairly general*, *fairly limited*, and *fairly short*. All these instances of *fairly* can be paraphrased as *to some extent* which was hedging the criticism.

The next sub-section will draw a summary of the main areas of investigation covered in this entire section on corpus study.

8.2.5. Summary

This section has looked at the corpus findings of the EdEng corpus. The corpus study began by examining the top 50 frequent words found in the EdEng corpus. The nouns, adjectives, and adverbs which occur in the top 50 words were further examined. It is not surprising that *good*, and *essay* were amongst the top 50 frequent words in the EdEng corpus as the corpus is on feedback on students' essays. It seemed that following every positive comment following the nouns (*essay*, *analysis*, *point(s)*, or *discussion*) or adjective (*good*), there will be an anticipation of a negative comment either mentioned explicitly (directly) or implicitly (indirectly through suggestion), as shown in the feedback pattern POS + NEG or POS + SUG.

Following this, the corpus study looked at the hedging features which were used in the EdEng corpus. *Could* and *would* were also amongst the top 50 frequent words in the EdEng corpus. Hedging has been the main interest of the corpus study, developed in the

early stages of the genre analysis, in particular, in the use of modals which later developed into the use of vague language, stance adverbs, and submodifiers. Although the frequency of occurrences for each of the sub-components of hedging was relatively low for some (such as *may*, *tend to*, *probably*, *maybe*, or *entirely*), when the whole notion of hedging is combined (modals, vague language including vague expressions, stance adverbs, and submodifiers), hedging is a very prominent feature found in the EdEng corpus which has led to a corpus study on hedging.

With the exception of *shall* which was completely avoided in the EdEng corpus, the other modals were evidently used to hedge propositions. As discussed earlier in this section, the classifications of the modals into respective functions imposed some problems as they are often multi-functional. This research also looked at the co-texts of each of the modals to derive for the functions. For instance, modals functioning as criticisms (*can*, *could*, *may*, *might*, *will*, and *would*). The criticisms are derived from the co-texts of the modals. For example, *it is not very clear in your introduction how you will approach and discuss the issue of....*

Following modals, the section proceeds into examining the vague language used by the tutors in the EdEng corpus which include the use of *some*, *more*, *a little*, or the vague expression, *I think*. These vague language items were sometimes used as a chunk, such as *some of your*, *a lot of*, or *a couple of*, although *a little bit* rarely occurred (one occurrence only). The clustering of hedges was very evident in the co-texts of the vague items such as modals in the form of suggestions (for instance, *might have been good to have read a*

couple of more recent sources), or submodifiers to tone down the negativity (*there is quite a lot to say*).

As shown in this research, tutors used hedging to minimise the negativity or to sound less assertive. Other hedging features were also found in stance adverbs and submodifiers. For instance, *it is rather a vague beginning to your essay*, or *perhaps you could have summarised it*. The positive comments found with stance adverbs and submodifiers were not accounted for. For instance, *you have fully understood the concepts taught on this course*, or *this is largely accurate and conforms to the guidelines*. In addition to this, explicit criticisms linked with the stance adverbs and submodifiers were also not considered as hedging. For example, *your results and discussion do not fully explain your points*. In summary, to relate this section or chapter on corpus study to my second research question as laid out in Chapter 1, the most distinctive feature of language used in written academic feedback, apart from giving positive comments (through positive evaluative lexis such as *good*, *excellent*, or *interesting*), is on the use of hedging, expressed through modals, vague language (including other vague expressions), stance adverbs, and submodifiers. Table 8.51. shows the summary table of the frequencies of occurrences of each of the sub-components of hedging in the EdEng corpus.

Table 8.51. Summary table of frequencies of occurrences of the hedging features in the EdEng corpus

		Department A		Department B		Total (A + B)	
		Raw freq.	Words per thou.	Raw freq.	Words per thou.	Raw freq.	Words per thou.
Core modals	Could	19	4.2	134	4.3	153	4.3
	Would	17	3.8	77	2.5	94	2.6
	Might	3	0.7	64	2.0	67	1.9
	May	4	0.9	6	0.2	10	0.3
	Can	3	0.7	3	0.1	6	0.2
Vague language	some	11	2.4	97	3.1	108	3.0
	few	6	1.3	69	2.2	75	2.1
	a little	10	2.2	14	0.4	24	0.7
	a couple of	-	-	5	0.2	5	0.1
	something	-	-	5	0.2	5	0.1
Other vague expressions	I think	7	1.5	39	1.2	46	1.3
	I'm not sure	2	0.4	18	0.6	20	0.6
	appear	-	-	12	0.4	12	0.3
	seem	8	1.8	3	0.1	11	0.3
	tend to	1	0.2	2	0.1	3	0.1
Stance adverbs	perhaps	3	0.7	23	0.7	26	0.7
	really	5	1.1	6	0.2	11	0.3
	occasionally	4	0.9	4	0.1	8	0.2
	usually	-	-	4	0.1	4	0.1
	only	1	0.2	2	0.1	3	0.1
	fully	1	0.2	1	0.03	2	0.1
	probably	1	0.2	1	0.03	2	0.1
	maybe	1	0.2	1	0.03	2	0.1
Submodifiers	quite	10	2.2	24	0.8	34	0.9
	rather	8	1.8	15	0.5	23	0.6
	entirely	2	0.4	5	0.2	7	0.2
	slightly	-	-	7	0.2	7	0.2
	fairly	-	-	4	0.1	4	0.1
TOTAL		127	28.1	645	20.5	772	21.5

Note:

The rows shaded in grey are found only in Department B

This entire section has examined the features of hedging which were found in the EdEng corpus. Although the main components of hedging discussed here is restricted to modals, vague language, stance adverbs, and submodifiers, it is hope that these respective sections have showed how tutors were hedging their comments.

The following chapter looks at the discussion on the corpus study.

CHAPTER 9: DISCUSSION ON CORPUS STUDY

The previous chapter has looked at the corpus study of this research starting off with the nouns, adjectives, and adverbs in the top 50 frequent words of the EdEng corpus. The chapter then proceeded to look at the main area of investigation, hedging. This chapter discusses the findings from the corpus study, particularly on the hedging features found in the EdEng corpus. Hedging is looked at as an umbrella term in this study, used for any softening features or areas where mitigation is involved in order to avoid making any ‘face-threatening’ acts (Brown & Levinson, 1987:68-69; 1999a:326-327) which incorporates sub-components such as modals (*can, could, may, might, must, should, will* and *would*), vague language (*something, some, few, a little* and *a couple of a*), including other vague expressions (*I think, I’m not sure, appear/appears* or *seem/seems/seemed*), stance adverbs (*perhaps, really* and *occasionally*), and submodifiers (*quite, rather, entirely* and *slightly*), as illustrated in Figure 4.4. (in Chapter 4).

The following sub-sections discuss the main findings from the corpus study, providing a summary on the nouns, the adjectives (including compound adjectives), and the only adverb found in the top 50 frequent words of the EdEng corpus. There will then be a discussion on the hedging aspects (modals, vague language (including other vague expressions), stance adverbs and submodifiers) found in the EdEng corpus.

9.1. Nouns, adjectives, and adverbs in the top 50 frequent words in the EdEng corpus

The findings of the nouns, adjectives, and adverbs in the top 50 frequent words in the EdEng corpus (findings presented in Chapter 8 earlier) were those expected to be found by

this researcher. The frequent nouns which were found in the top 50 frequent words of the EdEng corpus include *essay*, *analysis*, *language*, *points/point*, *style*, *discussion*. It is not unusual for these nouns to appear as frequently as the research data is written academic feedback on students' essay where the students in the English programmes were expected to do analysis and present their discussion. In addition to this, it is also not surprising to find that the tutors were also commenting on the point(s) made by students, explaining the tendency of this noun. What is quite interesting is the use of *language*. The feedback on *language* does not comment on the use of English by the students- rather, on subject matter primarily (as shown in Chapter 8, Section 8.1.1. earlier). Based on the grammatical patterns of each of these nouns (Chapter 8), they are mostly positively connotated which would explain the frequent occurrences of positive evaluative comment such as the adjective, *good*, including the compound adjective (such as *well structured*) and the one adverb, *well*. Since this research is on feedback, it is not surprising to find positive evaluations in the top 50 most frequent words.

9.2. Hedging

The fundamental aspect of this research is to identify the hedging devices used in written academic feedback. As seen from Chapter 8, hedging is a prevalent feature found in the EdEng corpus (21.5 words per thousand) and is one of the most distinctive features of language used in written academic feedback. This research has tried to locate all the hedging devices found in the feedback fitting them into their respective sub-components (modals, vague language items and expressions, stance adverbs, and submodifiers). Myers (1989:13) states that, "hedging can be done with a modal making a conditional statement (*would* or *could*) or with a modifier (*probably*) or with any device suggesting alternatives".

There are, however, overlapping features in the classification of these hedging components. For example, *very* and *really* can be classified as submodifiers as CollinsCOBUILD (1990:94) have indicated but they can also be boosters as Farr (2011:131) and Hyland (1998b:350; 2005a:52-53,222; 2009a:75) have shown in their research. However, Salager-Meyer (2011:36) states that because grammatical forms often have more than one function, it is difficult to allocate individual hedging categories to each linguistic aspect. One thing for certain with regards to this research is that tutors hedged their comments in order to minimise the negativity, made their assertions less assertive and made propositions more tentative.

The corpus study on hedging has shown that, although tutors from Departments A and B used different templates in giving feedback, they were constantly hedging their comments. The following sub-sections will summarise the main findings on the four sub-components of hedging.

9.2.1. Modals

There are two main meanings of modals, first to express certainty, probability and possibility (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:638; Downing & Locke, 2006:385); second, to express obligation, volition and ability (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:639, 910). Based on this same notion, Biber (2006a:100-101, 103-105; 2006b:92-97) has categorised modals (and semi-modals) into three categories of meanings: possibility/permission/ability, necessity/obligation, and prediction/volition. Although there are many meanings to the use of modal verbs, this research, however, has attempted to fit the data and findings at hand

into these categories as clearly as possible in order to show the hedging features in feedback expressed through modals and other means (for instance, vagueness, stance adverbs, and submodifiers). It is also worth pointing out that depending on the context, one modal can often be used to express different meanings (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:639). For instance, as discussed in Chapter 8, *might* can be used to express either a suggestion or to indicate a possibility.

Not all occurrences of the modals were used as hedging features as there were also non-hedging uses of modals. After differentiation, modals were the most apparent hedging feature found in the EdEng corpus (as compared to the other three sub-components of hedging: vague language, stance adverbs and submodifiers). Hedging is found in *can*, *could*, *may*, *might*, and *would*. The corpus analysis shows that *could* and *would* were the two most frequent modals used in giving feedback, although *would* was slightly more apparent in Department A (12.3% more in usage). Similarly to Farr's (2011:119-123) research on teaching practice feedback, it also shows a high frequency of *could* and *would* in her spoken post-observation feedback. This is mainly due to the tentativeness of these modals (both *could* and *would*) as compared to the use of *should* or *must* which is more direct (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:650,652; Farr, 2011:120). This is also one of the reasons why *should* and *must* were used minimally in the EdEng corpus. Figure 9.1. shows the level of certainty and confidence of the modals. The scale of intensity is based largely on the findings of this research (as shown in the examples in the final column).

Figure 9.1. Levels of certainty and confidence

CONFIDENT	must	CERTAIN	which must be avoided
↑	should	↑	which should be avoided
↓	can	↓	which can be avoided
DOUBTFUL	will	UNCERTAIN	which will be beneficial
	may		which may be beneficial
	might		which might be beneficial
	would		which would be beneficial
	could		which could be beneficial

The corpus study reveals that tutors often opted for the use of *could* and *would* to give suggestions making them less assertive and softening criticisms (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:280; Farr, 2011-123). In other words, the tutors were trying to be less direct in order to achieve solidarity as they have to preserve the student's face at the same time. For instance, *the essay could/would have been better, it could have been better/improved/strengthened, it would have been useful* (examples were shown in Chapter 8 earlier, or refer to Appendices 8.8. and 8.11. for more examples). Although *may* is also tentative, it is less frequent in the EdEng corpus (2.7% in the entire corpus). This is possibly due to the extensive use of *could*, *would* and *might* which were all more tentative as compared with *may*.

Might and *will* were more apparent in Department B (12.5% and 4% respectively more). Nevertheless, *might* was the third most frequent modal in the EdEng corpus as it is more tentative than *may* (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:647). Although *might* and *could* both express tentativeness (Leech, 1987:128) or possibility (Gresset, 2003:88), Gresset (2003:96) stresses that *might* and *could* cannot be used interchangeably, as they are in Gresset's words, "not strictly synonymous", since *might* is purely indicating possibility and *could*

depends largely on the contexts. In the EdEng corpus analysis, *might* and *could* seemed to be used synonymously as both *might* and *could* are largely used as suggestions, for instance, *it might/could have been better for you to have organised this section more clearly.*

The non-hedging modals include *can*, *must*, *will*, and *should*. *Will* was found in the EdEng corpus performing two functions, criticism and certainty. These functions were more definite or certain, thus hedging is very limited. The analysis shows that the tutors tend to be more direct when referring to the mechanical aspects of writing as references or presentation style. These aspects can be found within the Style Guide (particularly in Department B) or referencing booklet to which students have access and of which they should be aware. Hence, tutors are more direct in this area as compared in other areas. *Will* is still a rather common modal in contemporary English, both spoken and written (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:650; Gotti, 2003:280-281). In relation to this study however, *will* is not as common as *could*, *would*, or *might*, which is not surprising as these modals express greater uncertainties.

Similarly, *must* and *should* were used to express necessity or obligation. There was no hedging for the cases of *must* and *should* because both modals convey a strong sense of confidence. Tutors seemed to display a higher level of confidence when they were commenting on the mechanical aspects of writing for similar reason with *will*. Arguably, the uses of *should* (as shown in Chapter 8, Section 8.2.1.7.) may be perceived as suggestions as they were suggesting ways of improving. Since *should* is on the higher level end of certainty (see Figure 9.1.), it is therefore an indication of necessity or obligation.

The occurrence of *must* as necessity or obligation was even more limited in the EdEng corpus due to its high level of certainty and confidence (see Figure 9.1.). In fact, tutors seemed to avoid using it unless the proposition had been made very clear, such as the referencing style. While the necessity modals (*must* and *should*) are avoided as much as possible in written academic feedback, Hyland (2005a:165) found that these necessity modals (Hyland has classified them as “engagement markers”) were very apparent in science textbooks which shows autocracy. However, the examples provided by Hyland (2005a:165) shows similarity in the uses of these modals. For instance, *[y]ou should be careful when using fictitious forces to describe physical phenomena*, or, *[y]ou should encourage your local engineering chapters [...] to invite outside lecturers to discuss these topics with you* (Hyland, 2005a:165).

There are other uses of modality, such as *will* in the feedback as expressing future intentions, intentions and meta-statements, none of which were hedging, and therefore were not examined. In addition to this, these non-hedging expressions were all found within Department B’s feedback reports, indicating the tutor’s idiosyncrasy. The categorisation of modals into their respective function can be fuzzy as they are often multi-functional, overlapping with other functions (Hyland, 1996b:437-438). The true intention of using each modal in the respective context is hard to determine unless a follow-up study by means of interviewing tutors is carried out. In comparison to Nkemleke’s (2011) findings on the pre-defence reports of doctoral students, *could* and *might* were completely omitted by the supervisor. *Can* was most opted for by supervisor to avoid ambiguity in the pre-defence reports. This can also be seen from the use of *should* being the second most

frequently used modal. This seemed to show that supervisors tend to be less ambiguous in their pre-defence reports. Tutors on the other hand are more cautious with their feedback.

Shall was completely omitted in giving feedback. The decline in the use of *shall* is highly evident in contemporary English as compared to Old, Middle and Early Modern English times (Gotti, 2003:269). An investigation by Gotti (2003:268-269) on the use of *shall* in contemporary English shows its rarity, with the least occurrences in comparison to the other modals (3.5% per 10 000 words). Earlier discussion by Leech (1987:87) also mentioned the decline of *shall*, with it occurring only in “restricted linguistic contexts”, in prediction, expressing intention and volition. These contexts are found more frequently in spoken and fictional registers (Gotti, 2003:269-271). Carter and McCarthy (2006:650) also support the idea that *shall* is more frequent in spoken rather than written texts, mainly because *shall* is used to “make suggestions or to seek advice”, such as, *shall I/we...?*. *Shall* is considered to be very formal (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:650; CollinsCOBUILD, 1990:230,233; Leech, 1987:87), hence the reason it was avoided in the feedback since tutors are constantly constructive and tentative in their feedback. Other research which has shown the rarity of *shall* includes Coates (1983:25), Biber et. al. (2003:486) and Leech (2003). *Shall*, however, is used more in legal texts for rules and regulations due to its formality (CollinsCOBUILD, 1990:227; Leech, 1987:88).

9.2. Vague language

Vague language, another sub-component of hedging, softens what would be authoritative or directive statements, and is frequently found in spoken form rather than written (Carter

& McCarthy, 2006:202). Carter and McCarthy (2006:202) refer vague language to general terms such as *thing*, *stuff* or *like*. An examination into the EdEng corpus reveals the use of vague language (such as *thing*, *stuff* or *like*) in written academic feedback is limited. This could be due to informality in spoken language as compared with the written academic feedback which is more formal. Farr's research (2011) also shows that in the post observation reports where tutors are giving feedback to student-teachers, the use of vague language is rare.

While some researchers have opted to use approximators in relation to the study of vague language (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:202-205; Channell, 1994; Farr, 2011:118-119), it is avoided in this research in order to include all instances of hedging in the EdEng corpus. For example, *some sentence wordings are a little awkward in places*, where both *some* and *a little* are hedging and expressing vagueness. However, *some* is considered an approximator in vague language to avoid stating the precise quantity (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:203; Farr, 2011:118) while *a little* is purely being vague. Hence, this research has opted to use vague language as a loose term while incorporating the approximators use as well.

The vague language which was found in the EdEng corpus include *some*, *a few*, *a little*, and *a couple of* all of which are hedging although *a couple of* was found only in Department B. Farr (2011:118) states the main reason tutors use vague language (approximators) is largely due to not knowing the exact figures especially if it is immense, but also to save face. Hedging is minimal when vague items (*some*, *a few*, or *a little*) are intensified with boosters such as *you have conducted some very useful research* (as [416]

discussed in Section 8.2.2.2.). Hedging is more obvious when the vague items are used to tone down the negativity such as *some minor issues with expression*. The negativity is often mitigated with positive comments signalled through the use of *but*, such as *but these do not impede meaning*. This mitigation strategy, (or “mitigation of weakness” as proposed by Nkemleke, 2011:115) is found consistently in the feedback where even though tutors mentioned the problems (criticisms or negativity), there were mitigations either with positive comments preceding or following negativity or expressed through suggestions.

The findings from Nkemleke’s research (2011) on the pre-defence reports on students’ dissertations written by their supervisors also shows that only four of the reports (out of 196, 2%) make counter-positive comments on student’s dissertations and these statements are found to be mitigated by “counter arguments”, principally through positive comments. In an earlier study, Johnson (1992), whose study looked into the compliments of peer reviewed texts, mentioned that “in an effort to provide helpful criticism, interpersonal goals in writing become just as important as issues of substantive comment”, thus it is crucial to “balance” the criticisms with compliments in order to produce a commentary which tackles both these objectives.

More was used as to express vagueness in feedback (not hedging) either by asking for additional information (for instance, *more specific analysis*) or is pre-modified with other vague items (such as *a couple of more recent sources*, *explain it a little more*, or *could have said a lot more about...*). *Less*, on the other hand, was used only once as an approximator in the entire EdEng corpus. Based on the findings, it seems the tutors were always asking for more information rather than requiring less from the students. In relation

to *more*, it was also used as evaluations (for examples, *more appropriate*, *more clearly* or *more useful*), mainly in giving suggestions for improvements. *About* and *around* were found not to be used as vagueness in feedback. Similar findings from Farr (2011) also found very few occurrences of *about* and *around* being used as approximators or expressing vagueness.

Vague expressions which were found as hedging include *I think*, *I'm not sure*, *appear/appears*, and *seem/seems/seemed*. The use of the personal pronoun, *I*, to frame the feedback is an indication of politeness (Johnson, 1992:62). All of these vague expressions are mitigation strategies used by tutor in order to sound less assertive, as with the other sub-components of hedging. Other vague language which was also found in the EdEng corpus but was not functioning as hedging include *more*, *many* and *a lot* which were perceived as negativity rather than softening the negativity, the hedging definition undertaken in the corpus study.

All of the vague language items and expressions discussed in this section were often found in the clustering of hedges and either preceding or following modals (*could*, *might*, or *would*). Adverbs such as *occasionally*, *perhaps* or *rather* and expressions such as *I think* were also found in the co-texts of vague language. “Strings of hedges” as proposed by Salager-Meyer (1994:155) are also found in the vague language in “double hedges”, such as, *quite a lot to say*, *can be a little difficult to...* or “treble hedges”, *occasionally your use of language seems a little overwrought* (other examples of the strings of hedges have been discussed earlier). This tends to suggest that tutors constantly use hedging devices to give

feedback in order to remain positive and be un-authoritative in order to avoid making any face-threatening acts.

Summary

This section has shown that vague language was used as hedging in the feedback to soften criticisms. Looking at the co-text of the vague language, it shows that mitigation is a common strategy which is often found in the co-texts of vague language items. The negativity will be mitigated either by suggestions or with positive comments. Unlike the findings from Nkemleke (2011) where counter-positive comments are very limited in the pre-defence reports, mitigation is quite a common strategy in the EdEng corpus. In defence of Nkemleke's study, the lack of negativity is expected in the feedback for dissertations. This is because dissertations are often produced through a series of collaborative meetings with the supervisors and alterations are consistently made. Hence, why there are less counter-positive comments.

9.2.3. Stance adverbs

Tutors are found to be using stance adverbs to hedge their comments. Three distinctive stance adverbs (*perhaps*, *really*, and *occasionally*) were found in the EdEng corpus. The main reason why tutors use stance adverbs (and other hedging devices) to hedge comment is to avoid "sounding too blunt and assertive" (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:112,923). Other stance adverbs which were found minimally include *usually*, *only*, *fully*, *probably*, and *maybe*. *Usually* was found only in Department B. As research looking at stance adverbs in

written academic feedback is limited, this discussion chapter will be restricted to what has been done thus far.

Although each stance adverb conveys different meanings (for instance, generalising, expressing doubts, or committing to the truth of the proposition), there is a scale of strong and weak degree of commitment to the truth of the proposition. Unlike modals (as shown in Figure 9.1. earlier), it is difficult to allocate the degree of commitment for each stance adverb as they are all very tentative. Figure 9.2. shows the level of commitment of each of the stance adverbs found in the EdEng corpus. The scale of commitment is based largely on the findings of this research, as shown in the examples in the final column.

Figure 9.2. Levels of commitment of the stance adverbs

<div> <div>STRONG</div> <div>↑</div> <div>↓</div> <div>WEAK</div> </div>	fully	what you have observed is not always fully accurate.
	usually	You usually do not have a full stop in your reference.
	occasionally	It's occasionally a little descriptive.
	really	Your point here doesn't really come through clearly.
	probably	This is quite limited though, probably due to the restrictions of the required word length.
	maybe	A few points could maybe have been clarified a little more.
	perhaps	Perhaps you could have summarised...

Really was used to “emphasise or question the factuality or truth of what is said” (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:134). This use of *really* was also found in the EdEng corpus as hedging, albeit infrequently. Negatives (such as, *is/are not*, *don't/doesn't*, or *haven't*) co-occur with *really*, presenting as a chunk such as, *not really*. Where a negative was used with *really*, it softened the criticism in order to sound less assertive (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:743). It is

also worth mentioning that apart from the hedging use of *really*, *really* was also used as an intensifier (not hedging) in suggestion when preceded with *need to*, where it strengthened the force of the suggestion almost to the extent of being an obligation. For instance, [y]ou *really needed to have given some examples*.

As for the case of *perhaps*, it was used to give suggestions, often found in clusters of modals (*could*, *would*, or *might*). These clusters formed the pattern, *SUG + MOD*, and were often used by the tutors in giving feedback to sound even more tentative. The intensity of hedging increases for the case of *perhaps + could* expressing greater degree of cautiousness or “downtoning the assertiveness of a segment of discourse” (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:223). The “strings of hedges” as proposed by Salager-Meyer (1994:154-155) were also found in *perhaps* (as mentioned earlier), expressing far greater sense of tentativeness.

Probably was also used in the same sense as *perhaps* indicating uncertainty. Although *probably* was not used as suggestion, it was used as a hedge device to avoid commitment and to mitigate the explicit criticism, showing that the tutor is being understanding (such as, *this is quite limited though, probably due to the restrictions of the required word length*). Unlike the other stance adverbs which express tentativeness in assertions, *in fact* was used to reinforce certainty as Nkemleke (2011:115) found in his research. It was found in very low frequency in the present study – two occurrences, one highlighting the intensity of the work and effort put into writing the essay and one occurrence emphasising the problems incurred from the student’s analysis.

The hedging features in the genre of written academic feedback differ slightly from other genres, particularly in the use of *generally*. Authors often hedge statements to avoid making assertive claims. For instance, in scientific research articles, *generally* is often used by authors to hedge what would otherwise be factual statements (Hyland, 1998b:353-354; 1998c:79, examples 1 and 2 in Figure 9.3.) and to maintain trustworthiness by avoiding commitment to the proposition in order to show “professional *ethos* of honesty and openness” (Hyland, 2005a:81, italics in originals).

Figure 9.3. *Generally* as hedging in scientific research articles

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----------------------------|
| (1) | Although our data generally support these former results, factors other than T-DNA copy number are clearly involved. | (Hyland, 1998b:362) |
| (2) | Staining was generally confined to the vascular tissues
Although variable, the isoelectric point of kunitz seed inhibitor is generally lower...
...at an acidity that generally guarantees a quite stable assembly of the PS II polypeptides | (Hyland, 1998c:136,164,165) |
| (3) | Generally our services businesses made good progress. | (Hyland, 2005a:81) |

With regards to the EdEng corpus, *generally* is not considered as hedging as the co-texts of *generally* are often connotated with positive verbs or adjectives (for instance, *well-written*, *reads well*, or *understood*) which were followed by negativity in the feedback pattern, POS + NEG, or suggestions, in the pattern, POS + SUG. There was the rare occurrence of a negative adjective following *generally* (*generally weak*), however this was also not considered hedging as it is not softening the negativity. Rather, it denotes a very negative remark. Having said that, the subsequent comment is a list of suggestions for improvement which seemed to mitigate the criticism (*weak*). One interesting finding from the corpus

analysis is that there will be mitigations of weaknesses which toned down the negativity, or mitigate with positivity (for example, in the pattern, NEG + *having said that, you generally have a successful argument*), or with suggestions in the subsequent comment (for example, *[t]he argumentation is generally weak. Here are a few instances where this could be improved*).

9.4. Submodifiers

As with the other sub-components of hedging, submodifiers are also used in feedback as hedging in order to minimise the negativity (or criticism). Arguably, the corpus study looking into submodifiers may contain overlapping features (for instance, *fairly* is classified under submodifier which could also be an adverb or booster at the same time). While Farr (2011:132) has classified *fairly* under booster, the present study has found *fairly* is more suitable to be classified as a submodifier taking in the definition of it as “degree adverbs” (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:457).

Occasionally is also found in the co-texts of *fairly*. *Occasionally* could either precede *fairly* when modifying a negative adjective (for example, *occasionally...fairly informal*) or following a positivity (*fairly well occasionally*). There is also the frequent clustering of hedging (Salager-Meyer, 1994-155) in the co-texts of submodifiers such as in giving suggestions through the use of modals and adverbs (*perhaps a better link might have helped*) or vague language (*a little descriptive or rhetorical rather than analytical*).

As we can see, when the submodifiers are modifying negative connotated adjectives or adverbs, the hedging function is more obvious but when submodifiers are used with positive connotated adjectives or adverbs, there is no hedging (mentioned earlier). It is worth mentioning that when the co-texts of the submodifiers are examined, where a criticism is implied, the submodifiers are not only hedging the right collocates but can also be hedging the preceding or subsequent comments. Nkemleke (2011:115-116) referred to this as “mitigation of weaknesses” (also mentioned earlier) which often occurs in the pattern POS + NEG or NEG + POS, where POS mitigates the NEG. Other mitigations are also found in the co-text of the submodifiers mainly involving the tutors being sympathetic with the effort put in by the students or showing they understand what the students are trying to achieve (example, *I take the point you make, but this is rather...*; or *I take your point about...but...*; or *you attempt to...but...*). Other hedging devices or mitigations are also found with lexical verbs such as *seems to be* or *seemed slightly*) or hedging expressions such as *I think* or *I don't think* which do not sound too authoritative (for instance, *I don't think you have spent quite enough time* as compared with *you have not spent enough time*).

Negations (*is/are not*, *do/does not*, *has/have not* or the contracted form “*n't*”) are also found in the co-texts of submodifiers. *Quite* and *entirely* are used as a chunk to hedge (for instance, *not quite* or *not entirely*). In these cases, the submodifiers act as the hedging, for instance, *is not quite accurate*, rather than stating the criticism explicitly, *not accurate*, which is very direct (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:128). Carter and McCarthy (2006:729) also mention negations are used by the speaker or writer to “say that something cannot be the case or is not true or is not happening” but when they are preceding submodifiers, they

“soften the force of the negative and ... sound more polite or tentative” (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:743).

Submodifiers such as *rather* and *slightly* were also found to be reducing the effect of negative adjectives, such as *confusing*, *difficult*, *disappointing*, *disorganised*, *simplistic*, *tenuous* and *worrying*, although *slightly* was found in Department B only. It is however, commenting on different aspects of the essay, either on discussion, analysis or presentation. The findings of *rather* also corresponds to the claim by Carter and McCarthy (2006:130), often expressing negativity.

Carter and McCarthy (2006:457) mention that *fairly* is more frequently used in spoken situation than in formal writing. In terms of feedback, *fairly* is used as an evaluation to assess the quality of work. It often collocates with positive adjectives (for example: *good*, *accurate* or *insightful*) or adverbs (for example: *accurately*, *clearly* or *widely*). There is no hedging in the positive comment although *fairly insightful* has the implicit criticism of something needs to be improved. Taking into account the notion of hedging this study has undertaken, to minimise the negativity, *fairly* + POS, is not considered as an aspect of hedging. *Fairly* is used as hedging in very few instances in the EdEng corpus (four instances, such as *fairly colloquial*, *fairly general*, *fairly limited*, and *fairly short*) which can also be replaced with *quite*. Figure 9.4. shows the level of intensity of the submodifiers found in the EdEng corpus.

Figure 9.4. Levels of intensity of the submodifiers

<div style="text-align: center;"> <p>STRONG</p> <p>↑</p> <p>↓</p> <p>WEAK</p> </div>	entirely	I'm not entirely sure what your point is here
	slightly	This is slightly confusing
	fairly	Most of the interpretations are fairly accurate
	quite	I don't think you've spent quite enough time thinking about these
	rather	Your style of writing can be rather colloquial (chatty)

9.3. Summary

This chapter has looked at the nouns, adjectives and adverbs which were found in the top 50 frequent words of the EdEng corpus. The findings from the corpus study and the genre analysis (Chapter 6) seem to indicate that tutors are often giving positive evaluations (*good* and *well*). The only time when tutors were being critical or direct is when they were commenting on the mechanical aspects of writing. This is because the mechanical writing is considered conventions or rules to which the students should conform, hence the tutors' directness (as been mentioned earlier). On the whole, however, there is very little explicit criticism in the entire EdEng corpus except for the case of weak essays (which have been shown earlier in Figure 8.40., in Chapter 8).

This chapter has also looked at the hedging expressions in written academic feedback through a study of the modal verbs (*can, could, may, might, must, shall, should, will* and *would*), various vague language (*a couple of, a few, a little, some* and *something*) including vague expressions (*I think, I'm not sure, appear* and *seem*), stance adverbs (*occasionally, perhaps* and *really*), and submodifiers (*entirely, quite, rather* and *slightly*). Hedging is used to make propositions more tentative and to indicate a sense of possibility (Salager-Meyer,

2011:35). Although there were several indicators of idiosyncrasies arising from the feedback data from Department B, it is worth noting that every tutor has his/her own feedback writing style and the feedback writing practice could be affected by either departmental practice or the feedback template. The idiosyncrasies were checked in order to prevent problems in the use of the individual lexical item in the EdEng corpus in general.

Based on the analysis and findings, it shows that tutors used hedging devices through modals, vague language, stance adverbs, and submodifiers in giving feedback, not only to sound less assertive but to soften them (Upton & Connor, 2001:319). Although the EdEng corpus is small as compared to other corpora, it does show tutors are, overall, very positive, except for a few occurrences of explicit criticisms of weak essays (which have been consistently pointed out in this thesis). I hope I have been able to show how the uses of modals are used as hedging in giving feedback, thus offering insights into developing effective feedback writing practices for teacher training programmes. It is necessary to create a supportive and conducive learning environment for students in order to promote learning.

The next section briefly looks at the more distinctive patterns of feedback.

9.4. Distinctive patterns of feedback

The feedback patterns have been mentioned throughout this chapter. This section will provide a brief summary on the more distinctive patterns of feedback. Feedback was often given highlighting the positive aspects [POS], indicating problems or negativity [NEG], or offering suggestions for improvements [SUG], where either all three were used alternately, or one or the other was omitted (for instance, POS + SUG; NEG + POS, NEG + SUG, or POS + NEG + SUG), as shown in the examples below (examples 61–64). As discussed earlier on separate occasions, the occurrences of *although*, *but*, *however*, or *though* were other apparent features in the EdEng corpus which generally follow a positive comment (POS + *although*[NEG]), or a negative comment (NEG + *but*[POS]). Either way, they mitigated the negativity which is also an indication of politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987, 1999a).

Figure 9.5. Feedback patterns [POS], [NEG], and [SUG]

POS + SUG	
(61)	The move structure analysis is fairly well done although it might have been more useful to have shown the analysis diagrammatically rather than through a discussion. (Text 114, Department B)
NEG + POS (negativity does not lie in <i>could</i> but the co-text, <i>could</i> is mitigating the negativity)	
(62)	This essay has not answered the question as successfully as it could have although there is evidence of sufficient reading and an attempt at dealing with mostly relevant issues. (Text 80, Department B)
NEG + SUG	
(63)	Your essay does not fully adhere to the guidelines stipulated in the Style Guide for in-text referencing. In terms of presentation, you need to double space your essay and it might have also been better for you to have retyped some aspects of your appendix (for e.g. the models) than to have just put in the seminar handouts. (Text 101, Department B)

Figure 9.5. (continued) Feedback patterns [POS], [NEG], and [SUG]

POS + NEG + SUG
(64) You write fluently, although a few grammatical errors creep in, which <i>perhaps</i> a more stringent proofreading process would catch.<NEG> (Text 6, Department A)

It is apparent in the examples shown above and the findings from this research, tutors were in general very positive. Negativity and suggestions were hedged to make propositions less assertive. The co-texts show further means of mitigation, either through positive comments or by offering consolation, such as showing understanding of the difficulties the students were experiencing (for instance, *I know that discussion of technical terms can be tricky*). The use of adjuncts, *although*, or *however* and the coordinating conjunction, *but*, were also very evident in the feedback patterns. Negative comments are nearly always preceded by positive comments to mitigate the criticisms.

These patterns have also been noted in the genre analysis hierarchical structures discussed earlier in this thesis (Chapters 6 and 7). In particular, the NEG and SUG patterns are found in the Problem and Solution moves, or in the acts, Embedded Problem (**EP**) and Embedded Solution (**ES**). The POS pattern mainly derives from the Initiation and Conclusion moves from the act, Positive Judgement (**PJ**).

CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSION

This thesis explores the notion of written academic feedback as a genre in order to shed light on the moves, steps, and acts structures of feedback and identify any key linguistic strategy used by markers which could be used for teacher-training purposes and reflective purposes within this field. This concluding chapter begins by summarising the main findings of this thesis, followed by a discussion on the limitations of this research. The thesis concludes with suggestions for further research.

10.1. Summary of the main findings of this thesis

The main aims of this thesis, as discussed in Chapter 1, are to investigate the genre of written academic feedback and to develop a framework of written academic feedback to assist student-teachers or present educators towards the genre of feedback. The common-sense notion of feedback as a genre is proven in this research. This research has shown that written academic feedback is a genre, made up of characteristic moves, steps, and acts extending both Mirador's (2000) and Yelland's (2011) research. Although two feedback datasets were used in this research, the genre of feedback perseveres (in terms of the hierarchical structure, moves, steps, and acts).

As compared to other written discourse, feedback does not provide the space for creativity for tutors, which could possibly explain why patterns (or structure) exist in the feedback. Unlike Mirador's (2000) research where she identifies three distinctive patterns to organise feedback (for instance, the Clinching Pattern, Sectional Pattern or Alternating Pattern, also mentioned in Chapter 3, Section 3.6.), this research was not able to arrive at some definite

patterns due to the different feedback templates, the tutors' personal feedback writing styles, or departmental practice (factors which have been mentioned earlier).

A strength of this thesis lies in the hierarchical structures of the genre which have not been studied in great depth in previous research, as most previous research projects (as discussed in Chapter 2) have investigated the attitudes of tutors and students towards feedback. This research has devised a framework for the written academic feedback (as explained in Chapter 5, Section 5.6.3., or see Appendix 6.1. for the full explanation of the feedback framework) which can be used to train teacher trainees who have limited experience in giving feedback. The framework could also serve as a foundation for institutions or practitioners that wish to implement a specialised feedback system.

With feedback, tutors are often restricted by how much they can provide and they must make sure the overall message is clear to the students. If the current feedback system is solid and comprehensible to the students, then the system is ideal. The findings of this research can be used for personal tutor development, for reflective purposes. For instance, enabling tutors to be more constructive in their current feedback writing style. It shows the possibilities of raising awareness about how to give feedback.

Another strength of this thesis is the use of corpus analysis to explore further the notion of hedging, a prominent feature which was revealed initially in the process of genre analysis. The corpus analysis allows further insight into the discourse and context of each of the items in the sub-components (modality, vague language, stance adverbs, and submodifiers)

of hedging. Due to the impact of negative feedback, causing demotivation in students (as mentioned in Chapter 2), it is important for tutors not to be too critical, which is achievable by the use of hedging. This research has shown how tutors generally hedged their comments in various ways, by applying various hedging devices, in order to soften the criticisms.

In addition to this, the clustering of hedging in the written academic feedback is an interesting find. It shows that the tutors were not only using a single hedging feature but various hedging devices (for instance, *you could perhaps have...*) in giving feedback. This also shows that they were constantly mitigating or softening their comments in order to address the students' face, at the same time, maintaining solidarity. The other interesting finding of this research is the grammatical patterns of each of the lexical items under investigation. In order to show the language patterning of feedback in the EdEng corpus, I have mentioned that the tables for the grammatical patterns are not substitution tables (where each row is to be read across). However, the patterns can in fact be substituted to fit one's needs. From the analysis and discussion thus far, there are six evident grammatical patterns on the use of modals in the EdEng corpus (as shown in Table 10.1.) and four other similar patterns on the use of vague language, stance adverbs, and submodifiers, in the EdEng corpus (as shown in Table 10.2.).

Table 10.1. The six distinctive grammatical patterns in the EdEng corpus

<p>1) <i>it</i> + MODAL + BE/HAVE BEEN + ADJ or <i>it</i> + MODAL + VERB;</p>	<p><i>it can</i> be a little difficult to understand... <i>it could</i> be better integrated and explained. <i>It could</i> have been better organised... <i>It could</i> include details of... <i>It might</i> be useful for you to... <i>it might</i> have been good to compare... <i>it should</i> be 'London:Routledge' and not... <i>It should</i> avoid sexist language. <i>it would</i> be sufficient for you to list your references... <i>It would</i> have been useful for you to have mentioned...</p>
<p>2) <i>you</i> + MODAL + (HAVE) + VERB;</p>	<p>You can replace 'a so' with 'an'... You could explain the point on... but you could have analysed it further Again, you could have developed your discussion further... From the outset, you may need to engage with the question is a concern that you might be overstating some of your points and perhaps you might have elaborated a little on this point... You should conduct your own research... from lectures, you will lose focus... This way you would have introduced the topic first... Some of the sources you would have read...</p>
<p>3) <i>your</i> + N/NP + MODAL + BE + ADJ/VERB;</p>	<p>links between your paragraphs can be better Your style of writing can be rather colloquial... your advertisements could have mentioned how the... your explanations could have been clearer... your reader may not be familiar with... Your essay would have also benefited from a... /illustrate your point would be beneficial...</p>
<p>4) <i>the</i> + NP + MODAL + (BE/HAVE BEEN) + VB/ADJ;</p>	<p>The move structure analysis could have been improved if... The words in bold could be revised as... The analysis of conjunctions could be better... The move structure analysis might have been better presented diagrammatically... Also, the analysis might have been presented in a more... note that the bibliography should be presented in alphabetical order... - the full stop should come at the end of the sentence... Also, the move analysis would have been clearer if you...</p>

Table 10.1. (continued) The six distinctive grammatical patterns in the EdEng corpus

5) <i>this</i> (NOUN) + MODAL + BE/HAVE + VERB;	<p>this discussion could have just been part of your general discussion...</p> <p>This point could be explained...</p> <p>this analysis might have been more useful if...</p> <p>This could have been better if...</p> <p>this could have benefited from further explanation...</p> <p>this may be a factor in the tendency to disassociate your...</p> <p>This may have extended and broadened your discussion...</p> <p>This would have been more useful as a discussion...</p> <p>this would have broadened your discussion...</p>
6) <i>wh</i> -DET + MODAL + BE/HAVE BEEN + VERB	<p>careful of silly mistakes which can be costly...</p> <p>some errors in your essay which could have been avoided...</p> <p>What you could have done is to have...</p> <p>some features where you could have explained them further...</p> <p>What might have helped the essay achieve more is...</p> <p>there are some errors which might have been avoided...</p> <p>to use a semi-colon when you may not have needed any kind of punctuation...</p> <p>you need to indicate how you may develop your response clearly...</p> <p>So, this is how you should present your sentence beginning...</p> <p>Instead, what would be more useful is to develop the question...</p> <p>What would have been a more effective way to present...</p> <p>you made some points which would benefit from further development...</p>

Table 10.2. The four distinctive grammatical patterns in the use of vague language, stance adverbs, and submodifiers in the EdEng corpus

<p>1) <i>your/ the</i> + N/NP + (other hedging +) BE + HEDGE + ADJ/VERB;</p>	<p><i>Your</i> structure is a little unusual...</p> <p><i>Your</i> introduction could have been a little more specific about...</p> <p><i>your</i> second paragraph seems to be slightly disorganised...</p> <p><i>Your</i> discussion could have then been slightly reorganised by...</p> <p><i>your</i> point on 'intimidation' which seemed slightly tenuous...</p> <p><i>Your</i> style of writing can be rather colloquial (chatty)...</p> <p><i>The</i> introduction to your essay was a little too general...</p>
<p>2) <i>it's/ this is/ there is</i> + HEDGE + (other hedging +) ADJ</p>	<p><i>It's</i> quite short, and overly descriptive...</p> <p><i>It's</i> occasionally a little over-descriptive...</p> <p><i>It's</i> occasionally a little descriptive...</p> <p><i>This is</i> slightly confusing as it is not very clear what your points...</p> <p><i>this is</i> slightly worrying...</p> <p><i>this is</i> rather an extreme argument and one that you could make...</p> <p><i>This is</i> quite limited though, probably due to the...</p> <p><i>There is</i> occasionally a tendency for you to be fairly informal...</p> <p><i>There is</i> occasionally a lack of clarity in your writing...</p>
<p>3) Negation ('<i>not</i>') + HEDGE</p> <p>For instance:</p> <p><i>the/ your</i> + NP + BE + NOT + HEDGE + VERB</p> <p><i>you</i> + BE + NOT + HEDGE + VERB</p> <p><i>I'm not</i> + HEDGE + ADJ</p>	<p>'progress' might not be entirely the right word...</p> <p>attempt to tackle' is colloquial and not entirely appropriate for...</p> <p><i>the</i> essay does not quite achieve its aims...</p> <p><i>the</i> Swales model was not quite an appropriate model anyway...</p> <p>rationale does not quite explain just what the issues are...</p> <p><i>you have not</i> quite compared the advertisements as...</p> <p><i>you haven't</i> quite defined or developed your...</p> <p><i>You haven't</i> really commented on the...</p> <p><i>you don't</i> really mention this in any great detail</p> <p><i>Your</i> point here doesn't really come through clearly</p> <p><i>Your</i> essay does not conform entirely to the guidelines in the Style</p> <p><i>I'm not</i> entirely clear how Advertisement 1 has...</p> <p><i>I'm not</i> entirely convinced that the writer can...</p> <p><i>I'm not</i> entirely sure what your point is here</p>

Table 10.2. (continued) The four distinctive grammatical patterns in the use of vague language, stance adverbs, and submodifiers in the EdEng corpus

<p>4) HEDGE + <i>you</i> + other hedge + VERB or Other hedge + <i>you</i> or <i>your/the</i> + N/NP + BE + HEDGE + ADJ/VERB</p>	<p><i>perhaps you might</i> have elaborated <i>a little</i>...</p> <p><i>Perhaps you could</i> have summarised it</p> <p><i>I thought you could</i> <i>perhaps</i> have discussed more explicitly...</p> <p><i>I don't think you've</i> spent <i>quite</i> enough time thinking about...</p> <p><i>I thought the</i> essay itself was <i>rather</i> disappointing in light of this...</p> <p><i>I felt</i> that <i>you</i> never <i>really</i> capitalised on this...</p> <p><i>occasionally your</i> use of language <i>seems a little</i> over-wrought...</p> <p><i>at times, the</i> discussion was <i>slightly</i> difficult to follow...</p> <p><i>I think you</i> need to explain this <i>a little</i> more...</p> <p><i>I think you could</i> have developed this <i>a little</i> as it is...</p>
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In relation to the use of hedging in academic discourse (lectures, seminars, or articles), there will be more hedging features in feedback and seminars, and lesser in lectures because there will be threats to the students' face in feedback and seminars where the tutor needs to establish and maintain solidarity, although the choice of hedging devices differ in accordance to the contexts. Hedging features are also very prevalent in scientific research articles because authors have the need to present their claims with cautiousness in case readers may disapprove of their arguments (as shown in the case for *generally* in Section 9.2.3., Figure 9.3. earlier).

The hedging devices found in this research may be context specific, restricted to written academic feedback. They are not representative of hedging in general use. For instance, there may be less hedging in everyday conversation between close acquaintances and more hedging found in conversation between a tutor and student as there is a threat to the other person's negative face (as discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.1.). Hedging or the degree of politeness will vary depending on the context. Brown and Levinson (1987:74-78) highlight three "social dimensions" or "social variables" that will influence how speakers formulate their speech to address their hearer's face. These dimensions or variables are: the social distance, power, and the ranking of the speakers in their respective culture. For instance, in a workplace, the employee might feel the need to be more polite to the employer due to the social distance as well as the power difference.

In addition, hedging or the degree of politeness might differ between male and female, as shown in much of the sociolinguistic research (for instance, Brown, 1998; Holmes, 1988, 1990, 1993; Pilkington, 1998; Tannen, 1994). The findings from the research indicate that

women are more likely to use politeness strategies than men. Women were found to compliment, soften criticisms, and apologise for their behaviour as compared to men. However, these studies have not examined the politeness strategies used by the speaker in the contextual situation involved. Taking into account of the relationship between situation and language use, Hobbs's (2003) research on the politeness strategies used by men's and women's voice mail messages based in a legal setting shows that the politeness strategies, particularly the positive politeness strategies, in between men and women are more or less equal, regardless of status. Undoubtedly, hedging features vary according to the context and situation.

The findings from this research have shown that the tutors (based in the UK) used various hedging features to express their opinions, at the same time, promoting solidarity, bridging the gap of authoritativeness, power, and status. It is worth pointing out that these findings could also be culture specific. As mentioned earlier, hedging varies depending on the contexts. The use of hedging features differs across cultures too. In comparison to the hedging or politeness in Chinese culture, one's action is determined by the "social expectation" (Zhu & Bao, 2010:850). It is acceptable to use directive expressions without having to pay attention to the other's face. This is particularly common between the elderly and young, employers and employees, or, tutors and students. The sense of authoritativeness, or 'power', is very dominant in Chinese culture, hence, the lack of hedging (Zhu & Bao, 2010:850). Hedging probably occurs in all cultures but is expressed differently and in different proportions according to contexts. I hope the findings from this research can be used in other teaching contexts, predominantly in non-native speakers of

English contexts. Tutors, as well as students can be made aware of the various patterning of hedging and use them effectively in their educational contexts.

The aim of this research is to raise awareness of hedging and the feedback framework can be adapted to fit local contexts. The implication of this research for implementing a feedback system, to reflect on current feedback practices, and the role of hedging in feedback should benefit current and future tutors, as well as institutions, helping to raise awareness in order to achieve greater success in the area of feedback, thus greatly improving their student's work via their more linguistically informed feedback.

10.2. Research limitations of the present study

There are a number of limitations to the present study. The size and representation of EdEng corpus must be addressed. As this research is examining feedback as a genre, the use of EdEng corpus is sufficient and representative since it is of a specialised corpus-written academic feedback. However, the conclusions made on the present study, based on 35,941 words from 126 feedback reports, either on the genre patterns or hedging expressions, cannot be used to make further generalisations about written academic feedback in general or English. It is certain, however, that there is a genre of feedback, as shown in this research and in earlier research (Mirador, 2000; Yelland, 2011). Corpus analysis revealed also the extensive use of hedging and the use of clusters of mitigation indicating the importance in such research of examining phrases rather than individual lexical items. It is also worth noting that the hedging devices found in this research may be

context specific, restricted to written academic feedback. They are not representative to hedging in general use.

Although the issue of one tutor from the Department of English is potentially skewing the data to some extent, any likelihood of idiosyncrasy was pointed out throughout the entire corpus study, although there were other factors to consider regarding the frequencies of occurrences of the lexical items under investigation (as mentioned earlier on personal style) and the feedback reports for this study were gathered from two departments of one university.

10.3. Suggestions for future research

This research has concentrated on the genre of feedback and the language used in feedback based on one discipline, Arts and Humanities. The feedback data is, therefore, representative (as mentioned in Chapter 5, Section 5.5.). Although the data might be restricted to the humanities discipline, the data from both departments do show the distinctive patterning of feedback in the moves, steps, and acts level, and the linguistic features from both departments also reveal similar hedging features. It will be very interesting to build a larger corpus in future research, collecting feedback from other disciplines (such as law, engineering, or medicine) to be able to understand and examine the genre of feedback, as well as the language used in feedback more profoundly. Salager-Meyer's (2011:37) research on academic articles found that hedging is used more frequently in the humanities and social sciences disciplines as compared to the hard and natural sciences. It will be interesting to explore the range of hedging devices used by

tutors in different disciplinary areas. To expand the research even further, the feedback corpus compiled for the present study was all written by native English tutors. There is a possibility that non-native tutors may produce different feedback as compared with the present study and they may have different choices of language. It is also possible for tutors to be more direct as different cultures have their own means of giving feedback.

The findings from this research can be a starting point to expand into other areas of investigation. According to Salager-Meyer (2011:37), other factors which might affect the use of hedging devices include the writer's status, age, and sex. It would be interesting to explore these concepts to see if there are any differences in the feedback writing process. In Peterson and Kennedy's research based in the United States (2006), they found gender differences in giving feedback.

It will be interesting to follow-up on students, investigating to what extent the feedback has been useful to them, if they implement the current feedback into subsequent essays and if the feedback has actually accomplished its purpose. It is also interesting to follow-up on the tutors to find out if they share similar opinions as the students. Another interesting area of investigation would be to carry out a longitudinal study to explore if there are any differences between the feedback given to first year students and final year students and if students' and tutors' perceptions of feedback have changed across the years.

10.4. Concluding remarks

Although the notion of written academic feedback as a genre is not recent, this in-depth investigation on the patterning of feedback and the language used in the feedback is ground-breaking. I hope that the genre analysis of written academic feedback and the findings on the corpus study (on hedging or grammatical patterns) can be used as pedagogical tools to promote awareness, where tutors, novice tutors in particular (or teacher trainees), as well as students, can, not only master the genre but can also understand the use of each of the lexical items more effectively.

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Appendix 4.1. List of submodifiers

(a) List of submodifiers to intensify the meaning of adjectives

(Adapted from Collins COBUILD English Grammar, 1990:93).

amazingly	exceedingly	incredibly	suspiciously
awfully	extraordinarily	infinitely	terribly
bitterly	extremely	notably	unbelievably
critically	fantastically	particularly	very
dangerously	greatly	radically	violently
deeply	heavily	really	vitaly
delightfully	highly	remarkably	wildly
disturbingly	hopelessly	seriously	wonderfully
dreadfully	horribly	strikingly	
eminently	hugely	supremely	
especially	impossibly	surprisingly	

(b) List of submodifiers only used to intensify adjectives

(Adapted from Collins COBUILD, 1990:94)

awfully	extremely	horribly	terribly
dreadfully	greatly	really	very
especially	highly	so	

(c) List of submodifiers used to reduce the effect of an adjective

(Adapted from Collins COBUILD, 1990:94)

faintly	moderately	rather	somewhat
fairly	pretty	reasonably	
mildly	quite	slightly	

(d) List of submodifiers used to indicate the extent of a quality

(Adapted from Collins COBUILD, 1990:95)

almost	nearly	absolutely	quite
exclusively	partly	altogether	simply
fully	predominantly	completely	totally
largely	primarily	entirely	utterly
mainly	roughly	perfectly	
mostly		purely	

Appendix 5.1. Department A's feedback template

ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET

		STUDENT ID No.	
Received in Undergraduate Office:		By:	
Section one: To be completed in full by student.			
FULL NAME OF STUDENT: (CAPITALS) (if a group assignment, all names should be listed)		Surname:	Forename:
PROGRAMME:		YEAR:	
BANNER CODE:		MODULE TITLE:	
Module level:	Credit value:	Weighting of assignment:	Required word length:
ASSIGNMENT TUTOR:			
Date assignment due:	Date submitted:	Submission / Resubmission	
ASSIGNMENT TITLE:			
Section two: To be completed by tutor.			
<p>COMMENTS AND ADVICE: Comments should refer to generic undergraduate assessment criteria and to assignment specific criteria.</p>			
<p>Marks will be deducted for technical inadequacies, i.e. word length, grammar, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure and paragraphing, referencing and bibliography. Marks may be deducted for late submission.</p>			
First Marker's Signature:		Date:	
Second Marker's Comments:			
Assignment Mark:	Days Late:	Penalty:	

NOTE: All marks awarded are provisional and subject to confirmation at the next Examination Board. Confirmed marks are communicated to students in their end of year results letter.

Appendix 5.2. Department B's feedback template

DEPARTMENT B FORMATIVE AND ASSESSED WORK COMMENT SHEET

Please note: any mark given on this sheet is provisional and may be changed by the Department Examinations Committee on the advice of the External Examiner(s). You should interpret marks and comments given here in the context of the School marking criteria, which can be seen at:

¶ You should now approach either the marker(s) or your academic support tutor for further explanation of these comments or feedback on your assessed work.

Module Name:	Convenor:
Banner Code:	Marker 1:
Semester:	Moderator:
Student No:	Marker 2:
MARKER 1:	
Acquisition of knowledge:	
Interpretation, analysis, construction of argument and relevance:	
Command of English:	
Documentation and presentation:	
Overall:	
MODERATOR/MARKER 2 (please circle as appropriate):	Provisional Mark:

Appendix 5.3. Letter of consent

THE LANGUAGE OF ESSAY FEEDBACK

Dear Student,

I am a PhD student in the University of Birmingham. I need your help! I am doing research on the type of language used in Undergraduate essay feedback and hope you can help me in my research. I am not interested in student assessment or performance, just the language used by markers.

I need your permission to look at the feedback/comment sheets you've received in your essays. I am hoping that you will let me look at your present academic year comments. The whole process will be anonymous. I will not use your name or any means of identifying any information about you in any of my records or writing. No findings will be published which could identify any individual participant. And, as I say, I am interested in the language used by markers, not in your performance.

If you have any questions about my research, please contact me at kyl738@bham.ac.uk and I will respond to your queries immediately.

If you are willing to help me, please read the following and add your name and ID below.

I give permission to access my essay comments. I:

- *have read this "Letter of Consent"*
- *understand that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time.*

Name: _____ Student ID: _____

(This is to allow accessibility to your comments sheets from the office. Your names will be erased.)

³⁵Now please email this back to me.

[If you prefer, you can collect a copy of this letter from [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and return it to [REDACTED] OR print out this letter and return it to [REDACTED]]

Thank you so much for your help!

Yours sincerely,

Lee Kok Yueh, PhD student, University of Birmingham

³⁵ This section is omitted for the students in Department B as feedback reports are collected from individual tutor.

Appendix 5.4. Listing of comments

DEPARTMENT B
FORMATIVE AND ASSESSED WORK COMMENT SHEET

Please note: any mark given on this sheet is provisional and may be changed by the Department Examinations Committee on the advice of the External Examiner(s). You should interpret marks and comments given here in the context of the School marking criteria, which can be seen at:

You should now approach either the marker(s) or your academic support tutor for further explanation of these comments or feedback on your assessed work.

Module Name:	Convenor:
Banner Code:	Marker 1:
Semester: 1	Moderator:
Student No:	Marker 2:
<p>MARKER 1: 72</p> <p>Acquisition of knowledge: This essay demonstrates an outstanding knowledge of the concepts taught on the course. You have read widely and have understood the nature of academic discourse. Your essay effectively refers to your readings to substantiate your claims.</p> <p>Interpretation, analysis, construction of argument and relevance: The essay shows a solid, core argument that presents information that is relevant to the discussion. Your analysis is well done and you provide good examples for illustration. Your interpretation of the features is well presented. Here are some specific points I wish to commend you for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have a good introduction that states your aims and purposes clearly. It also displays your knowledge of academic writing and refers to sources to support your point of view. • Your selection of material from a textbook and your subsequent argumentation about the nature of pedagogic discourse and the way in which it represents academic writing is insightful and interesting. • Your choice of the features to analyse (nominalisation, the use of personal pronouns 'I' and 'we' and cohesive links) highlight the points you wish to make clearly. Your rewritten versions help to demonstrate your understanding and further confirm your interpretations of the nature of academic discourse. • You have a sound conclusion which summarises your points and provides an evaluative end to the argument in your essay. <p>Command of English: Your essay is written in good English. It is accurate and there are no errors which impede the meanings you intend to convey in your essay. Your essay also demonstrates that you are aware of the conventions of writing in an academic style.</p> <p>Documentation and presentation: This is well done. You have adhered to the guidelines stipulated in the Style Guide. Your in-text references and bibliography are accurately and neatly presented.</p> <p>Overall: This is an outstanding piece of work. It is excellent on a number of different points and meets, in fact it exceeds, the demands of the question. Well done!</p>	
MODERATOR/MARKER 2 (please circle as appropriate):	Provisional Mark: 72

Appendix 6.1. Summary of feedback framework

Moves	Description	Linguistic features
Initiation (I)	<p>This is an introduction of basic thought with regard to the quality of the essay.</p> <p>The tutor makes general statement(s) and/or general evaluation of the essay (mostly positive).</p>	<p>Demonstrative pronoun (this) or use of personal pronouns (you) or (your) plus noun (examples: analysis, essay, work). Proper nouns (student's names) were also used in some cases.</p> <p>Lexical verbs denoting actions are used in this function (examples: researched, write, show).</p> <p>Positive connotated adjectives are also used in this function (examples: clear, good).</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>[Positive evaluations]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>You've researched</u> this topic well and use some apt quotations from critics to help support your points. (Text 1) • [Name omitted], <u>this</u> is excellent work, well-structured, persuasively written and comprehensively researched. (Text 4) • <u>You have demonstrated</u> a good knowledge of the process of analysing discourse in its social context. (Text 38) <p>[General statement + positive evaluation]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>This assignment focuses</u> on a narrative analysis of two versions of 'The Boy Who Cried Wolf'. <u>The text</u> is <i>presented</i> clearly in the appendix. (Text 21)

Appendix 6.1. (continued) Summary of feedback framework

<p>Problem (P)</p>	<p>The tutor points out the problem(s) or weakness(es) in the essay.</p>	<p>Use of vague language (or approximators) to avoid giving precise quantity or sounding too pedantic (examples: some, a few) plus noun (examples: ideas, points). Modal auxiliary verbs (core and semi-core) are used to soften the criticisms. (examples: could, would, need) plus (a) lexical verbs (examples: answer, say); or (b) plus submodifier (example: rather) plus adjective. Hedged expression/verb to sound less assertive and preserving of ‘face’ (examples: I think, seem). Signalled through adjuncts (examples: although, however), either preceding or following a positive comment. Use of negations (not, or contracted form, n’t) to indicate area(s) of concern. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are also <u>a few errors</u> in spelling, punctuation etc, and you need to integrate your secondary materials more smoothly. (Text 3) • However, I don’t think you’ve spent quite enough time <u>thinking</u> about these texts and issues as many points of your argument still need further development. <u>You don’t mention class</u> in your introduction and <u>you never try to state how class is determined</u>. (Text 15) • Your style of writing can be rather <u>colloquial (chatty)</u> and <u>you sometimes mix the present and past tenses</u>. (Text 16) • This is a <u>very short piece of work</u> and you do not seem to have put much effort into it. You <u>do not answer the question</u> - this is <u>a very general essay without structure or focus</u>. (Text 37)
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Appendix 6.1. (continued) Summary of feedback framework

<p>Solution (S)</p>	<p>The tutor suggests ways of improving. This move can either be presented following the Problem move or on its own.</p> <p>1) <u>Either</u> - Suggesting solution(s) to the problem(s) to produce better writing;</p> <p>2) <u>Or</u> - Things that could have been done to make the essay better.</p>	<p>Modal auxiliary verbs (core and semi-core) are used to be more tentative (examples: could, would, need) plus lexical verbs (examples: develop, say).</p> <p>Use of approximators to avoid giving precise quantity or sounding too pedantic (examples: some, more) plus nouns (examples: ideas, points).</p> <p>Hedged expression (example: I think) or adverb (example: perhaps) to sound less assertive and preserving of ‘face’.</p> <p>Exemplifications are also given to further illustrate or support comment(s) to give students clearer suggestions for improvements.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some points need developing – could you say more about Ltol, use of blank verse, for instance? Also, greater use of secondary theoretical material (<u>e.g. Jameson and Woods</u>) would strengthen your arguments. (Text 5) • Perhaps more should be said in the Rationale about precisely what you see as the main still-relevant issues of the play, and how these are to be foregrounded? (Text 32) • You could have quantified some of your analyses to add weight - <u>e.g. tracking the use of pronouns through the text</u> might have further <i>illuminated</i> your point about I and we. This would also have provided evidence for your analysis - <u>e.g. how many questions are asked - who asks them - what does this show - and how does Ferguson use questions</u> - again, you touch on this, but it could have been developed. Both of these would have not only added evidence, but also increased the linguistic analysis input to the assignment. (Text 38) • I think your work will be enhanced by more research and advise you to develop this dimension of essay construction, especially given the positive qualities you display in other aspects of your writing. (Text 40)
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Appendix 6.1. (continued) Summary of feedback framework

Conclusion (C)	The tutor makes an overall evaluation of the whole essay.	<p>Signalled by the use of adverbs or adverbial phrases (examples: overall, all in all) following previous moves.</p> <p>Signalled by the use of positive evaluations (examples: good, well done).</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solid. (Text 7) • Well done. Keep it up! (Text 8) • You've clearly worked very hard on this, and this shows – I'm very pleased with this effort – well done. (Text 10) • <u>Overall</u>, style of writing and presentation are of a good standard. (Text 16) • <u>All in all</u> this creates the sense of a sophisticated understanding of educational issues raised by the chapter. (Text 41)
Steps	Description	Linguistic features
Focus (FO)	The tutor makes a general statement either regarding the essay or a leading statement to the subsequent comment(s).	<p>General statement:</p> <p>Realised through the use of demonstrative pronoun (this) and determiner (the) plus nouns (examples: assignment, essay, focus, work) referring to the essay in general – have no general evaluation of the essay.</p> <p>Verb indicating scope (example: focus) is also used.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>This assignment</u> <i>focuses</i> upon a Proppian narrative analysis of 'Hansel and Gretel'. (Text 20) • Propp's 'Morphology of the Folk Tale' is the model used to account for the structural features of the text. (Text 21) • <u>This assignment</u> <i>focuses</i> on a narrative analysis of two versions of 'The Boy Who Cried Wolf'. (Text 22)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>This assignment</u> <i>focuses</i> on a structural narrative analysis of ‘Cinderella’. (Text 23) • <u>This assignment</u> <i>focuses</i> upon an analysis of a television advertisement. (Text 24) <p>NOTE: Examples from Text 20–24 were all found from the same tutor (in Department A).</p> <p>Leading statement to subsequent comment(s): Locations (examples: here, there). Use of exact quantity (example: one) or use of approximators to avoid giving precise quantity or sounding too pedantic (examples: a few, a couple of, some) plus adjectives (examples: minor, specific) plus nouns (examples: ideas, points). [Pattern= NO./APPROX (+ADJ) +NOUN]. Highlighting the role of the lecturer (I) acting (comment, highlight), or student (you) or both (we) for future events. Phrasal/clausal meta-textual linking adjuncts (example: for example).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are just <u>a few</u> minor slips (Text 46) • Here are <u>some</u> specific points <i>I</i> wish to commend you for: (Text 51) • There are <u>a couple of</u> points <i>I</i> would like to highlight: (Text 58) • <u>Other</u> notable points: (Text 66) • <i>I</i> have only <u>one</u> point to make and that is with regard to in-text citation. (Text 57) • <u>One</u> minor point: (Text 59) • <i>I</i> look forward to discussing it with <i>you</i> when <i>we</i> meet. (Text 57) • For example: (Text 48)
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Appendix 6.1. (continued) Summary of feedback framework

General Impression (GI)	The tutor gives feedback on the general issues of essay (for instance, presentation, structure, references) without reference to the student in particular.	<p>Use of demonstrative pronoun (this) or determiner (a) referring to the essay in general.</p> <p>Evaluation adjectives, generally positive (examples: good, interesting).</p> <p>Lexical verbs denoting actions are also used (examples: demonstrates, shows).</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>This</i> is an interesting response to the questions and you <u>engage</u> well with your chosen texts as well as with broader concepts of modernist and postmodernist *. (Text 2)• <i>This</i> is a thoughtful comparison of 2 form versions of the play which <u>shows</u> understanding of secondary source materials and very careful viewing of the 2 films. (Text 25)• <i>This</i> essay <u>demonstrates</u> a full and complete understanding of the concepts taught on the course. (Text 54)• A good essay which <u>shows</u> an understanding of the fundamental concepts taught on the course. (Text 57)
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Appendix 6.1. (continued) Summary of feedback framework

<p>Highlighting Strength (HS)</p>	<p>The tutor praises students' abilities in specific aspects (for instance, application of ideas, knowledge or understanding of ideas).</p> <p>A difference between HS and GI is the reference to a student in particular.</p>	<p>Use of personal pronouns (you, your) referring to individual student.</p> <p>Evaluation adjectives or adverbs, generally positive (examples: accurately, appropriately, excellent, good, interesting).</p> <p>Lexical verbs denoting actions are also used (examples: make, provide, write).</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>You <u>provide</u> an excellent, detailed transcription of this text in the appendix, along with the URL for the text itself.</i> (Text 24) • <i>You <u>make</u> some good comparisons between Nanda and Jeanette. <i>Your</i> essay is well-structured and clearly argued. You <u>write</u> confidently and persuasively and <u>provide</u> carefully selected quotations to support your observations. <i>Your</i> conclusion is very strong.</i> (Text 27) • <i>Your</i> command of English is good. (Text 56) • <i>Your</i> reading of the different sources reveals a sound interpretation of many of the points related to the teaching of grammar in the classroom. You have <u>quoted</u> relevantly and appropriately to substantiate the points you <u>make</u> in your essay. (Text 57)
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Appendix 6.1. (continued) Summary of feedback framework

<p>Indicating Problem (IP)</p>	<p>The tutor indicates the main issue(s) of the essay.</p>	<p>Negative evaluations signalled through:</p> <p>Adjuncts (examples: although, however), either preceding or following a positive comment.</p> <p>The use of negations (not, or contracted form, n't) to indicate area(s) of concern.</p> <p>Negatively connotations (examples: errors, failed, never)</p> <p>Although negative, comments are mostly hedged to sound less assertive and preserving of 'face' (examples: I feel, slight, seem); or use of approximators (example: a few); or embedded with solution(s)(see act, ES)</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your discussion of 'The *' in particular <u>seemed to</u> drift from the question. (Text 1) • There are also <i>a few</i> errors in spelling, punctuation etc, and you <u>need to</u> integrate your secondary materials more smoothly. (Text 3) • You do not always set clear targets, and strategies for meeting them, at the end of the session entries. You briefly reflect on keeping a learning journal with reference to Moon. Your style of writing is only just adequate. (Text 18) • There was a <u>slight tendency</u> in some places for your comments to move away from a strictly linguistic analysis. (Text 24) • However, <u>I felt</u> that you never really capitalised on this. You failed to push your ideas far enough or to engage responsively enough with the novel itself. (Text 31) • However, a <u>substantial amount</u> of it is simply descriptive - retelling the plots and offering only generalised points. You struggle to engage with the question and mistake postmodernisms for realisms' aims. (Text 36)
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Appendix 6.1. (continued) Summary of feedback framework

Suggesting Ways of Improving (SWI)	The tutor proposes idea(s) either to improve present work or for use in subsequent writing.	<p>Modal auxiliary verbs (core and semi-core) are used to be more tentative (examples: could, would, need) plus lexical verbs (examples: consider, include, say).</p> <p>Use of approximators to avoid giving precise quantity (examples: some, more) plus nouns (examples: ideas, points).</p> <p>Hedged expression (example: at times) or adverb (example: perhaps) to sound less assertive and preserving of ‘face’.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • However, you could also consider how the different historical locations of Grahame and Orwell influenced their representations of the British class system. (Text 12) • <u>At times</u>, your writing needs to be checked for accuracy. (Text 33) • Your opening few paragraphs could have also included a paragraph which highlights the aims of your essay. It could include details of what you are going to analyse in the extract. (Text 54) • You need <i>some</i> evidence in the form of references (<u>perhaps</u> even <i>some</i> research studies?) on the debate of the effect of explicit grammar teaching on speech competence. (Text 57)
Overall Judgement (OJ)	The tutor makes an overall evaluation of the essay.	<p>Signalled by the use of adverbs (examples: overall, all in all).</p> <p>Signalled the use of positive evaluations (examples: good, well done).</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great potential! (Text 1) • This essay shows great potential and was very pleasing to read. Well done! (Text 11) • <u>Overall</u>, style of writing and presentation are of a good standard. (Text 16)

Appendix 6.1. (continued) Summary of feedback framework

Acts	Description	Linguistic features
Calling Attention to Weakness (CAW)	<p>The tutor lists the main problem(s) of the essay.</p> <p>This act only occurs in Step IP (Indicating Problem) in the Problem (P) move.</p> <p>CAW is highlighted in dark red.</p>	<p>Negative evaluations signalled through:</p> <p>Adjuncts (examples: although, however), either preceding or following a positive comment.</p> <p>The use of negations (not, or contracted form, n't) to indicate area(s) of concern.</p> <p>Negative connotations (examples: incorrect, misinterpretations, missing).</p> <p>Use of approximators to be as tentative as possible or avoiding any mention of exact quantity.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAW [However, these <u>seem</u> more clearly focused on your skills and strategies in the entries where you observe others and not so focused on your improvement/ maintaining of skills in others.] (Text 19) • CAW [What is missing from this essay is any analysis of the more detailed linguistic and grammatical features of the text.] (Text 21) • CAW [There are <i>a few</i> instances of misinterpretation or misunderstanding of concepts in your essay.] (Text 69) • CAW [Your reference to 'Pasty et al' is incorrect.] (Text 73)

Appendix 6.1. (continued) Summary of feedback framework

<p>Embedded Problem (EP)</p>	<p>While highlighting a positive aspect or giving suggestion, the tutor is also raising an issue.</p> <p>This act is different from CAW. An act is considered EP only if it occurs outside the Problem (P) move as well as Step IP (refer to example for clarification, EP highlighted in red).</p>	<p>Signalled through coordinating conjunction (example: but) or adjuncts (example: although) normally following a positive comment or in some cases embedded in Solution (S) move.</p> <p>Also realised by the same features in act, CAW, such as:</p> <p>The use of negations (not, or contracted form, n't) to indicate problematic area(s).</p> <p>Negative connotations (examples: falters, too general).</p> <p>Use of approximators to be tentative or avoiding any mention of exact quantity.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PJ [You show a good understanding of the ways in which the two texts raise concerns with gender and push the boundaries or what's acceptable,] EP [but you let these more general points lead your discussion.] (Text 1) • PJ [Written expression is generally good] EP [although some sentence wordings are a little awkward in places.] (Text 21) • PJ [You have read reasonably widely] EP [although you do not always make reference to your reading to support your analysis and interpretation of your chosen text.] (Text 45) • PJ [Your analysis is fairly good] EP [although at certain places it falters.] (Text 48) • RE [Perhaps more should be said in the Rationale about precisely what you see as the main still-relevant issues of the play, and how these are to be grounded?] EP [As it stands the Rationale offers too many and too general in a way.] (Text 32)
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Appendix 6.1. (continued) Summary of feedback framework

<p>Embedded Solution (ES)</p>	<p>A suggestion which was “embedded” among other comments such as indicating a problem or highlighting strength.</p> <p>This act is different from step RE. An act is considered ES only if it occurs outside the Solution (S) move as well as Step SWI (refer to example for clarification, ES highlighted in green).</p>	<p>Similar features with Solution (S) move, signalled by:</p> <p>Modal auxiliary verbs (core and semi-core) – to be more tentative (examples: could, would, need) and action verbs (examples: elaborate, show).</p> <p>Use of approximators to avoid giving precise quantity (examples: some, more) plus nouns (examples: ideas, points).</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAW [There’s some slight lack of clarity (confusion) over the concept] ES [that it would have been useful to elaborate on/explain further.] (Text 2) • PJ [This is solid work,] ES [but could use <i>a little</i> development.] (Text 3) • PJ [Your analysis on reporting verbs is interesting] ES [but you do need to remember that sometimes the reporting verb does not refer to any ideas]. (Text 44) • CAW [Your introduction, the first page in particular, is a listing of points.] ES [You need to show how one point leads into the other and develop what you say here into a coherent paragraph describing academic discourse.] (Text 45)
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Appendix 6.1. (continued) Summary of feedback framework

<p>Exemplification (EX)</p>	<p>The tutor gives example(s) of something mentioned previously (refer to example for clarification, EX highlighted in dark blue).</p>	<p>Signalled through phrasal/causal meta-textual linking adjuncts (examples: for example, or contracted form, e.g.).</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RE [From the outset you may need to engage with the question] RE [and you need to indicate how you may develop your response clearly] EX [– e.g. that the texts you’ve chosen both can * and do question dominant ideologies.] (Text 1) • RE [Your reflection on the use of a learning diary would have benefited from reference to academic texts] EX [(e.g. Moon).] (Text 17) • CAW [There are some minor slips,] EX [for example, ‘...s/he must trouble over the vocabulary...’] ES [when you probably mean ‘s/he must pay careful attention to...’.] (Text 47) <p>Also realised by subsequent comment, normally an elaboration on previous comment.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAW [You don’t adhere to the prescribed structure for each entry] EX [– with targets coming at the <u>end</u> of each entry] CAW [– and this may be a factor in the tendency to dissociate your experience and reflection from the targets/ experience and reflections for subsequent sessions.] (Text 19) • CAW [Make sure you proofread your work carefully,] EX [you mix there/their/they’re] (Text 21) • MS [Here are a few suggestions for revision:] EX [– ‘spoken discursive elements’] MS [(page 1)] RE [– it should be ‘discursive’.] (Text 53)
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Appendix 6.1. (continued) Summary of feedback framework

<p>Follow-up Reinforcement (FR)</p>	<p>The tutor makes a positive comment following a positive comment – generally short positive evaluations (refer to example for clarification, FR highlighted in brown).</p> <p>Occurs after act, PJ (Positive Judgement), by making further positive judgements.</p>	<p>Realised by a positive comment following a positive comment – an extension of the previous positivity.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PJ [On the whole, a very good essay.] FR [Well done.] (Text 2) • PJ [You are proactive in organising an excellent range of opportunities which allows you to develop in a number of areas] FR [– well done for being ambitious!] (Text 16) • PJ [You also provide a good analysis of clause types attributed to the various character roles] FR [– this is interesting.] (Text 20) • PJ [Both texts are presented in the appendices and are annotated using colour-coding with lots of detailed grammatical and structural analysis] FR [– this is very good] PJ [and the amount of analysis you’ve done and the level of detail is impressive.] (Text 22) • PJ [An excellent essay which shows a solid understanding of the concepts, good reading of a range of sources and intelligent argumentation.] FR [Well done!] (Text 51)
<p>Meta-statement (MS)</p>	<p>A general statement regarding the essay. It could be a quote from the student’s essay, or an action the tutor has carried out, or a point of reference (for instance, reference to a page or paragraph). MS highlighted in pink.</p>	<p>There is no means of evaluation in the sentence or clause in this act.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MS [I have corrected grammatical and typographical errors on the text of the assignment.] (Text 18) • MS [You suggest that ‘[t]he word ‘held up’, in this context, is negatively connotated’] CAW [– I’m not sure I understand the meaning of your sentence or of how phrasal verbs can carry a positive or negative connotation.] (Text 45)

Appendix 6.1. (continued) Summary of feedback framework

<p>Mitigation (MI)</p>	<p>An act, normally positive, which follows after a negative comment has been said – to soften or tone down the previous comment (refer to example for clarification, MI highlighted in purple).</p>	<p>MI is mainly realised through its co-text which is negative, explicitly mentioned or implicit. It is on the whole positive in order to moderate the criticism and taking the notion of ‘face’ into account.</p> <p>Signalled through coordinating conjunction (example: but) or adjuncts (examples: although, however) normally following a negative comment. Also signalled by hedged expression (example: having said that).</p> <p>MI is often positive, realised by evaluative adjectives (example: fascinating) or adverbs (example: successfully) or lexical action verbs (example: show).</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAW [Your structure is a little unusual] ES [– a more traditional introduction to ease the reader into your argument may have helped, for instance,] MI [and although the introduction of ideas of the semiotic versus the symbolic is <i>fascinating</i>,] CAW [I don’t think you elaborate on this in enough depth.](Text 3) • CAW [It’s occasionally a little descriptive or rhetorical rather than analytical] EX{(e.g.. the questioning of God on p.11)} MI [but this is <i>a minor weakness</i>.] (Text 4) • CAW [The essay does not construct a convincing argument] MI [although you <i>do show</i> some indication of having understood some of the material.] (Text 21) • CAW [You mention that your third feature for discussion is reporting verbs, but you provide no examples of these.] CAW [I am also not certain what you mean by your sentence, ‘This is not an obvious sentence but rather a question of tone.’] MI [Your essay does <i>however</i> very <i>successfully</i> show a sound and impressive analysis of the first person pronoun.] (Text 45)
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Appendix 6.1. (continued) Summary of feedback framework

Positive Judgement (PJ)	<p>The tutor makes positive evaluations of the essay – could be a sentence/phrase or a clause.</p> <p>This act can be found in Initiation (I), Solution (S), and Conclusion (C) moves, or in Steps GI (General Impression), HS (Highlighting Strength), OJ (Overall Judgement), or SWI (Suggesting Ways of Improving)</p>	<p>Positive evaluation adjectives are commonly used (examples: good, strong). Lexical verbs denoting ability are also found (examples: understand, written). Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PJ [This is a challenging question] PJ [and a strong response.] (Text 14) • PJ [This is a very honest account of your placement in a secondary school.] (Text 17) • PJ [Your essay is <i>written</i> generally in fairly good English.] (Text 45) • PJ [This essay demonstrates that you <i>understand</i> the basic concepts taught on the course about the nature of academic discourse.] (Text 46)
Recommendation (RE)	<p>An act of giving suggestion or proposing alternative ways to improve the essay/work.</p> <p>This act mainly found in the Solution (S) move, in Step SWI (Suggesting Ways of Improving).</p>	<p>Similar features with act, Embedded Solution (ES), signalled by:</p> <p>Modal auxiliary verbs (core and semi-core) – to be tentative (examples: could, would, need) and action verbs (examples: elaborate, show).</p> <p>Use of approximators to avoid giving precise quantity (examples: some, more) plus nouns (examples: ideas, points).</p> <p>Hedged expression (example: at times) or adverb (example: perhaps) to sound less assertive and preserving of ‘face’.</p> <p>Polite feature (example: please) is also used.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RE [Your skills need to be a <i>more</i> explicit focus!] (Text 19) • RE [I thought you could <u>perhaps</u> have discussed <i>more</i> explicitly the narrative effects of the text not strictly following Propp’s 31 functions.] (Text 20) • RE [Please do put in page numbers.] (Text 57)

Appendix 6.2. Detailed moves patterns in Department B in the respective criteria (N=42)

Note: Raw frequency in brackets.

I* = Instances where the Initiation move recurs, or instead of being at the beginning of feedback, it is used at the end of feedback under each criterion.

Criteria Moves Patterns	Acquisition of knowledge (AK)		Interpretation, analysis, construction of argument and relevance (IACAR)		Command of English (CE)		Documentation and presentation (DP)		Overall (OV)	
I	85.7%	(36)	2.4%	(1)	26.2%	(11)	14.3%	(6)	85.7%	(36)
I + P	4.8%	(2)	11.9%	(5)	33.3%	(14)	11.9%	(5)	–	
I + P + P	–		7.1%	(3)	2.4%	(1)	–		–	
I + P + P + P	–		2.4%	(1)	–		–		–	
I + P + I*	–		14.3%	(6)	–		–		–	
I + P + I + S	–		2.4%	(1)	–		–		–	
I + P + S	–		2.4%	(1)	2.4%	(1)	–		–	
I + P + S + P	–		2.4%	(1)	–		–		–	
I + S	4.8%	(2)	16.7%	(7)	16.7%	(7)	42.9%	(18)	4.8%	(2)
I + S + I*	2.4%	(1)	14.3%	(6)	–		–		–	
I + S + P	–		2.4%	(1)	2.4%	(1)	–		–	
I + S + P + I*	–		2.4%	(1)	–		–		–	
I + S + P + S	–		2.4%	(1)	–		–		–	
I + S + I* + C	–		2.4%	(1)	–		–		–	
I + C	–		2.4%	(1)	–		–		–	
P	2.4%	(1)	–		11.9%	(5)	9.5%	(4)	7.1%	(3)
P + I*	–		2.4%	(1)	–		–		–	

P + P	–	2.4%	(1)	–	–	–
P + S	–	–		–	7.1%	(3)
P + S + I*	–	2.4%	(1)	–	–	–
P + P + P + P	–	2.4%	(1)	–	–	–
S	–	–		2.4%	(1)	11.9%
S + I*	–	–		–	2.4%	(1)
S + P	–	2.4%	(1)	–	–	–
S + C	–	–		2.4%	(1)	–

Note:

Raw frequency in brackets.

I* = Instances where the Initiation move recurs, or instead of being at the beginning of feedback, it is used at the end of feedback under each criterion.

Appendix 6.3. Comparison of the moves patterns in Department A and Department B

Note:

Raw frequency in brackets.

I* = Instances where the Initiation move recurs, or instead of being at the beginning of feedback, it is used at the end.

Patterns in bold	Found in both departments
Highlighted in green	Found only in Department A
Highlighted in blue	Found only in Department B

Departments (Criteria) <div>Moves Patterns</div>	Department A (N = 42)		Department B (N = 42)									
			Acquisition of knowledge (AK)		Interpretation, analysis, construction of argument and relevance (IACAR)		Command of English (CE)		Documentation and presentation (DP)		Overall (OV)	
I	9.5%	(4)	85.7%	(36)	2.4%	(1)	26.2%	(11)	14.3%	(6)	85.7%	(36)
I + P	14.3%	(6)	4.8%	(2)	11.9%	(5)	33.3%	(14)	11.9%	(5)	—	
I + P + P	—		—		7.1%	(3)	2.4%	(1)	—		—	
I + P + P + P	—		—		2.4%	(1)	—		—		—	
I + P + I*	—		—		14.3%	(6)	—		—		—	
I + P + I + S	—		—		2.4%	(1)	—		—		—	
I + P + I* + C	2.4%	(1)	—		—		—		—		—	
I + P + S	2.4%	(1)	—		2.4%	(1)	2.4%	(1)	—		—	
I + P + S + P	2.4%	(1)	—		2.4%	(1)	—		—		—	
I + P + S + I*	2.4%	(1)	—		—		—		—		—	
I + P + S + C	11.9%	(5)	—		—		—		—		—	
I + P + C	9.5%	(4)	—		—		—		—		—	

I + S	7.1%	(3)	4.8%	(2)	16.7%	(7)	16.7%	(7)	42.9%	(18)	4.8%	(2)
I + S + I*	–		2.4%	(1)	14.3%	(6)	–		–		–	
I + S + C	11.9%	(5)			–		–		–			
I + S + P	2.4%	(1)	–		2.4%	(1)	2.4%	(1)	–		–	
I + S + P + C	2.4%	(1)	–		–		–		–		–	
I + S + I* + C	2.4%	(1)	–		2.4%	(1)	–		–		–	
I + S + P + I*	–		–		2.4%	(1)	–		–		–	
I + S + P + S	–		–		2.4%	(1)	–		–		–	
I + C	14.3%	(6)	–		2.4%	(1)	–		–		–	
P	2.4%	(1)	2.4%	(1)	–		11.9%	(5)	9.5%	(4)	7.1%	(3)
P + I*	–		–		2.4%	(1)	–		–		–	
P + P	–		–		2.4%	(1)	–		–		–	
P + S	–		–		–		–		7.1%	(3)	–	
P + S + I*	–		–		2.4%	(1)	–		–		–	
P + P + P + P	–		–		2.4%	(1)	–		–		–	
S	–		–		–		2.4%	(1)	11.9%	(5)	2.4%	(1)
S + I*	–		–		–		–		2.4%	(1)	–	
S + P	–		–		2.4%	(1)	–		–		–	
S + C*	–		–		–		2.4%	(1)	–		–	
C + I*	2.4%	(1)	–		–		–		–		–	

Note:

Raw frequency in brackets.

I* = Instances where the Initiation move recurs, or instead of being at the beginning of feedback, it is used at the end.

Patterns in bold Found in both departments

Highlighted in green Found only in Department A

Highlighted in blue Found only in Department B

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Appendix 6.4. A sample of the genre analysis of feedback in Department A

DEPARTMENT A'S FEEDBACK ANALYSIS

	MOVE	STEP	ACT		Text
0001	Initiation	Step 1 Highlighting Strength	Act 1 (a) Positive Judgement Act 1 (b) Positive Judgement	1a[You've researched this topic well] 1b[and use some apt quotations from critics to help support your points.]	T1
0002			Act 2 (a) Positive Judgement Act 2 (b) Embedded Problem	2a[Your essay is also full of really interesting and perceptive ideas] 2b[BUT you don't use these effectively enough to answer the specific questions.]	
0003			Act 3 (a) Positive Judgement Act 3 (b) Embedded Problem	3a[You show a good understanding of the ways in which the two texts raise concerns with gender and push the boundaries or what's acceptable,] 3b[but you let these more general points lead your discussion.]	
0004	Solution	Step 1 Suggesting Ways of Improving	Act 1 (a) Recommendation Act 1 (b) Recommendation Act 1 (c) Exemplification	1a[From the outset you may need to engage with the question] 1b[and you need to indicate how you may develop your response clearly] 1c[– e.g. that the texts you've chosen both can * and do question dominant ideologies.]	
0005			Act 2 Recommendation	2[To help you to structure your essay more clearly, you could take each text and say how it does this.]	
0006	Problem	Step 1 Indicating Problem	Act 1 Calling Attention to Weakness	1[Your discussion of 'The *' in particular seemed to drift from the question.]	
0007	Conclusion	Step 1 Overall Judgement	Act 1 Positive Judgement	1[Great potential!] (58%)	

Appendix 6.5. Moves patterns in relation to marks (Department A)

Marks Patterns	First			Upper Second (2:1)		Lower Second (2:2)		Third		Unknown
	80 – 100%	75 – 79%	70 – 74%	65 – 69 %	60 – 64%	55 – 59%	50 – 54%	45 – 49%	40 – 44%	
I			2	1			1			
I + C		1	1	1	1	1				1
I + P			1			2	1			2
I + P + S						1				
I + P + C				2	1		1			
I + P + I* + C			1							
I + P + S + C				2	1	1				1
I + P + S + I*										1
I + P + S + P						1				
I + S			1	2						
I + S + P						1				
I + S + C			1	2		1				1
I + S + P + C						1				
I + S + I* + C					1					
P									1	
C + I*										1

Note:

All figures are raw frequencies of occurrences.

I* = Instances where the Initiation move recurs, or instead of being at the beginning of feedback, it is used at the end of feedback under each criterion.

Appendix 6.6. A sample of the genre analysis of feedback in Department B

	MOVE	STEP	ACT		Text
[Acquisition of knowledge:]					T43
1498	Initiation	Step 1 General Impression	Act 1 Positive Judgement	1[This essay demonstrates that you have understood the main concepts taught on the course.]	
1499		Step 2 Highlighting Strength	Act 1 Positive Judgement	1[You have read the required readings and applied your knowledge accurately to the analysis of your advertisements.]	
[Interpretation, analysis, construction of argument and relevance:]					
1500	Initiation	Step 1 General Impression	Act 1 (a) Positive Judgement Act 1 (b) Positive Judgement	1a[The essay constructs a sound argument] 1b[and the comparisons you make between the advertisements are accurate and insightful.]	
1501	Solution	Step 1 Suggesting Ways of Improving	Act 1 Recommendation	1[At times, some of your points could have been developed more to highlight the impact the techniques in use have on the audience.]	
1502	Problem	Step 1 Focus	Act 1 Meta-statement	1[Here are a few points for you to note:]	
1503		Step 2 Indicating Problem	Act 1 Meta-statement	• 1[On page 2, you mention that the Sure advertisement is daring your readers to ‘do something’.]	
1504			Act 2 Calling Attention to Weakness	2[Isn’t it the case that the advertisers are daring the readers to buy the product?]	
1505			Act 3 Meta-statement	3[This is a point worth making.]	
1506		Step 3 Indicating Problem	Act 1 (a) Meta-statement Act 1 (b) Calling Attention to Weakness	• 1a[On page 3, you mention how in the Skinny Cow advertisement there is a reference to Facebook whereas in the Sure advertisement there is no further information available] 1b[– what does this say about the different audiences the advertisers are targeting?]	
1507		Step 4 Indicating Problem	Act 1 (a) Positive Judgement Act 1 (b) Embedded Solution	• 1a[On page 4, you make an interesting point about the woman in the black dress leaning against a white pillar] 1b[– here is an opportunity for you to develop your discussion along the lines of how the colours black and white are used in the image and repeated in the lexis in the advertisement.]	

1508			Act 2 Embedded Solution	2[There is an element of reinforcement at play here.]
1509	Initiation*	Step 1 Highlighting Strength	Act 1 Positive Judgement	1[Your essay is extremely good in terms of the following:]
1510		Step 2 Highlighting Strength	Act 1 Positive Judgement	• 1[It has attempted a sustained comparison of the different elements of your analysis.]
1511			Act 2 Positive Judgement	2[This is definitely a strength in your essay.]
1512		Step 3 Highlighting Strength	Act 1 Positive Judgement	• 1[Your interpretations are also convincing and well supported by your readings.]
1513			Act 2 Positive Judgement	2[You make some extremely interesting points with regard to the purposes of the advertisers.]
[Command of English:]				
1514	Initiation	Step 1 General Impression	Act 1 Positive Judgement	1[The essay is written in good English and shows an awareness of the conventions of writing in an academic style.]
[Documentation and presentation:]				
1515	Initiation	Step 1 Highlighting Strength	Act 1 Positive Judgement	1[Your essay adheres to the style stipulated in the Style Guide for in-text referencing.]
1516	Solution	Step 1 Suggesting Ways of Improving	Act 1 Recommendation	1[For your Bibliography, there is no need for you to mention a page reference for the Cook book.]
[Overall:]				
1517	Initiation	Step 1 General Impression	Act 1 Positive Judgement	1[This is an excellent essay that shows good analytical skills.]
1518			Act 2 Positive Judgement	2[It also displays your ability to interpret your observations, substantiate them with what you have read and synthesise these into a convincing argument.]
1519			Act 3 Follow-up Reinforcement	3[Well done.] (68%)

Appendix 6.7. Moves patterns in relation to marks (Department B)

Note:

I* = Instances where the Initiation move recurs, or instead of being at the beginning of feedback, it is used at the end of feedback under each criterion

Text	Marks	Acquisition of knowledge (AK)	Interpretation, analysis, construction of argument and relevance (IACAR)	Command of English (CE)	Documentation and presentation (DP)	Overall (OV)
43	68%	I	I + S + P + I*	I	I + S	I
44	60%	I	I + S	I	I + S	I
45	52%	I	I + P + I*	I + P	I + S	I
46	58%	I	I + S	I + P	I	I + S
47	58%	I	I + P + I*	I + P	I + P	I
48	58%	I	I + P + I*	I + P	I + S	I
49	58%	I	I + P + I*	I	I + S	I
50	72%	I	I	I	I	I
51	65%	I	I + S + I*	I	I + S	I
52	62%	I	I + S + I*	I	I	I
53	68%	I	I + C	I + S	I + S	I
54	60%	I	I + P + S	I	I + S	I + S
55	60%	I	P + I*	I + P	I + S	I
56	58%	I	I + S	I + P	I + S	I
57	72%	I	I + S	S + C	P + S	I
58	70%	I	I + P	I + P	I + P	I
58	68%	I	I + S + P	I + S	I	I
60	45%	P	I + P + P	P	S	P

61	56%	I + P	I + P + P	P	P + S	P
62	59%	I	I + P + S + P	P	P + S	I
63	48%	I + S	P + P + P + P	S	P	S
64	65%	I + S	I + S	I	P	I
65	59%	I + S + I*	I + P	I + P	S	I
66	78%	I	I + P	I + P	S	I
67	65%	I	I + S	I + S	I + S	I
68	58%	I	S + P	I + P + S	P	I
69	58%	I	I + P + P + P	P	I + P	I
70	78%	I	I + P + I*	I	I	I
71	62%	I	I + P	I + S	S + I*	I
72	58%	I + P	P + P	P	I + S	P
73	65%	I	I + P + P	I + S	I + P	I
74	58%	I	I + P + I* + S	I + P	S	I
75	68%	I	I + S + I* + C	I + P	I	I
76	62%	I	I + S + I*	I + P	I + S	I
77	62%	I	I + S + I*	I + S	I + S	I
78	68%	I	I + S + I*	I + P	I + S	I
79	58%	I	I + S + P + S	I + P + P	I + P	I
80	62%	I	I + S + I*	I + P	I + S	I
81	60%	I	I + P + I*	I + S + P	I + S	I
82	60%	I	P + S + I*	I	I + S	I
83	72%	I	I + S	I	P	I
84	58%	I	I + P	I + S	S	I

Note:

I* = Instances where the Initiation move recurs, or instead of being at the beginning of feedback, it is used at the end of feedback under each criterion.

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Appendix 8.1. The log-likelihood test of the top 50 words in the EdEng corpus
(Calculated using the log-likelihood calculator developed by Rayson (2004))

Note:

Words highlighted in **red** are statistically significant.

+ indicates over-representation in Department A relative to Department B

– indicates under-representation in Department A relative to Department B

	Department A		Department B		EdEng corpus		+/-	LL
	Raw freq.	Words per thou.	Raw freq.	Words per thou.	Raw freq.	Words per thou.		
WELL	46	10.2	126	4.0	172	4.8	+	24.77****
THIS	84	18.6	334	10.6	418	11.6	+	18.55****
AND	180	39.8	878	27.9	1058	29.4	+	17.16****
BUT	22	4.9	77	2.5	99	2.8	+	7.01**
I	27	6.0	113	3.6	140	3.9	+	5.01*
ANALYSIS	38	8.4	192	6.1	230	6.4	+	2.97
OF	191	42.2	1171	37.2	1362	37.9	+	2.45
WITH	29	6.4	145	4.6	174	4.8	+	2.41
SOME	42	9.3	226	7.2	268	7.5	+	2.16
A	105	23.2	659	21.0	764	21.3	+	0.89
USE	20	4.4	112	3.6	132	3.7	+	0.74
WOULD	16	3.5	89	2.8	105	2.9	+	0.63
IS	87	19.2	560	17.8	647	18.0	+	0.42
HOW	16	3.5	104	3.3	120	3.3	+	0.06
MORE	23	5.1	152	4.8	175	4.9	+	0.05
THERE	21	4.6	138	4.4	159	4.4	+	0.05
YOU	147	32.5	1019	32.4	1170	32.6	+	0.00
GOOD	39	8.6	268	8.5	307	8.5	+	0.00
AS	21	4.6	148	4.7	169	4.7	–	0.00
ALSO	17	3.8	124	3.9	141	3.9	–	0.04
COULD	19	4.2	141	4.5	160	4.5	–	0.08
THESE	12	2.6	97	3.1	109	3.0	–	0.26
ARE	39	8.6	306	9.7	345	9.6	–	0.54
BE	19	4.2	162	5.2	181	5.0	–	0.76
ON	52	11.5	421	13.4	473	13.2	–	1.15
DO	11	2.4	111	3.5	122	3.4	–	1.56
WHICH	11	2.4	111	3.5	122	3.4	–	1.56
POINTS	19	4.2	180	5.7	199	5.5	–	1.81
BEEN	13	2.9	133	4.2	146	4.1	–	1.99
YOUR	114	25.2	931	29.6	1045	29.1	–	2.81

IT	26	5.7	252	8.0	278	7.7	–	2.88
TO	107	23.6	881	28.0	988	27.5	–	2.92
WAS	7	1.5	103	3.3	110	3.1	–	4.63
DISCUSSION	8	1.8	113	3.6	121	3.4	–	4.65
NEED	8	1.8	114	3.6	122	3.4	–	4.79
AN	20	4.4	246	7.8	266	7.4	–	7.14
NOT	18	4.0	235	7.5	253	7.0	–	8.02
STYLE	6	1.3	116	3.7	122	3.4	–	8.25
WHAT	7	1.5	130	4.1	137	3.8	–	8.73
FOR	26	5.7	330	10.5	356	9.9	–	10.46
IN	65	14.4	681	21.7	746	20.8	–	11.29**
READ	4	0.9	110	3.5	114	3.2	–	11.53**
POINT	5	1.1	130	4.1	135	3.8	–	12.95**
LANGUAGE	4	0.9	149	4.7	153	4.3	–	19.65****
THAT	20	4.4	365	11.6	385	10.7	–	23.91****
THE	228	50.4	2192	69.8	2420	67.3	–	23.98****
HAVE	38	8.4	594	18.9	632	17.6	–	30.07****
ACADEMIC	2	0.4	174	5.5	176	4.9	–	33.25****
ESSAY	37	8.2	646	20.6	683	19.0	–	39.54****
PAGE	–	–	260	8.3	260	7.2	–	70.01****

Note:

Words highlighted in **red** are highly statistically significant, $p < 0.0001$, critical value of more than 15.13.

Words highlighted in **purple** are statistically significant, $p < 0.001$, critical value of 10.83

Words highlighted in **green** are statistically significant, $p < 0.01$, critical value of 6.64.

Words highlighted in **blue** are statistically significant, $p < 0.05$, critical value of 3.84

Words not highlighted are not statistically significant

+ indicates over-representation in Department A relative to Department B.

– indicates under-representation in Department A relative to Department B.

Appendix 8.2. Concordances of *essay*

(Concordances extracted using ConcGram© (Greaves, 2005)).

(a) Concordances of *essay* either preceded by or followed by *not*

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node word, *essay*, and co-occurring word, *not*, or contracted form, *n't*)

Note: Concordances of *essay* + *not* which did not have negativity in them were deleted.

(For instance: Your **essay** is **not** a mere retelling of information, but it also discusses these with reference to the literature.)

certain words such as 'know' (page 3). This **essay** has **not** answered the question as successfully a area of most concern. Many references within the **essay** are **not** part of your reference list at the end for an academic **essay**. Although, your **essay** does **not** follow the guidelines stipulated in th page 5 'Bruder group drills...'. You **essay** does **not** conform entirely to the guidelines in of writing for an academic audience. Your **essay** does **not** adhere to the guidelines stipulated fo of writing for an academic audience. Your **essay** does **not** fully adhere to the guidelines what you will achieve in the **essay**. However, the **essay** does **not** quite achieve its aims. There is with you in greater detail when we meet. The **essay** does **not** show a sufficient reading of a range o to be submitted as a single-sided copy. This **essay** does **not** answer the question with relevant are highlighted in the following section. The **essay** does **not** construct a convincing argument althou style. However, you need to proofread your **essay**. It is **not** good to make a mistake with the ? this sentence is one example of claims in your **essay** that are **not** sufficiently explained. - You need seemed to use the 'task-based' approach but your **essay** then does **not** fully explore and develop these extract and your subsequent discussion. Your **essay** is written in good English although it is **not** in the **essay**: - Your discussion at the end of the **essay** (the variables of age and proficiency) does **not** of the Bibliography. A fairly good **essay** that makes some interesting points but does **not** to have had a footnote which is **not** in your **essay**. - In your cited works list - your first refere is ?The Practice...? **not** ?The Practise? - An **essay** that has **not** fully achieved the aims of the is something you do **not** analyse later in the **essay**. - For the presentation of your analysis on references are **not** included at the end of the **essay** (see point on 'Documentation and Presentation')

although it is **not** good for you to begin your **essay** with an error in the first line: - 'Communicati
a go? (page 4) - **not** appropriate for an academic **essay** - 'have its cake and eat it' (page 9) - **not**
that...' - **not** appropriate for an academic **essay** You need to check with the Style Guide on the
language that is **not** appropriate for an academic **essay**: 'evidences' (page 5), - 'By overcoming some
of the time' - **not** appropriate for an academic **essay** - 'I uphold that...' - **not** appropriate for an
your analysis is **not** presented very clearly. The **essay** demonstrates that you have read a few source
meaning - **not** appropriate for an academic **essay** - 'won't be and can't be happy all of the time'
it' (page 9) - **not** appropriate for an academic **essay** 'EFL theory's electivity - meaning?' - **not**
does **not** seem altogether relevant to the **essay**. You do make a few interesting comments which y
but **not** all of them are relevant to your **essay**. It would have been useful to have said which
and **not** entirely appropriate for an academic **essay**. The referencing and bibliography in your ess
o **not**, however, do this consistently through your **essay**. Here are a few points for you to note: - Your
and analysis mean for the reader, the **essay** **doesn't** quite achieve the potential it could.

(b) Concordances of *essay* + *although*

A fairly sound argument is constructed in the **essay** **although** it could have been strengthened by mor
awareness of the style necessary for an academic **essay**. **Although**, your **essay** does not follow the
extract and your subsequent discussion. Your **essay** is written in good English **although** it is not
in your **essay**. Most of the basic concepts in the **essay** appear to have been understood **although** they ar
raising the counterarguments by Nunn. Your **essay** is written in fairly good English **although** ther
are highlighted in the following section. The **essay** does not construct a convincing argument **although**
You have read reasonably widely, **although** your **essay** would have benefitted from more specific
for an academic **essay**. **Although**, your **essay** does not follow the guidelines stipulated in th
provides a good, **although** brief, end to the **essay**. This is written in good English and you show
although it is not good for you to begin your **essay** with an error in the first line: • 'Communicati

(c) Concordances of *essay* + *but*

as it is in the audiolingual approach. Your **essay** generally reads well. **But** there are a few point
referencing and presenting a Bibliography. An **essay** that has some good observations **but** could have
guidelines stipulated in the Style Guide. An **essay** that makes some interesting points **but** these
Overall, there is no clear argument in your **essay**. You do make a few relevant points **but** these ar
of the Bibliography. A fairly good **essay** that makes some interesting points **but** does not
for 1920 when it should be 1960 (page 4). An **essay** that attempts to answer the question **but** needs
need the initials of the forenames. A good **essay** that could have been better organised **but**
forward to discussing it with you further. The **essay** demonstrates a fairly wide range of reading **but**
seemed to use the 'task-based' approach **but** your **essay** then does not fully explore and develop these
'learner' and 'learning process' **but** rather your **essay** reads like a general **essay** on language
your main points **but** there are instances in the **essay** where you could have provided more examples or
you mean **but** any other reader will not. Your **essay** needs to be written for a general academic
sentence **but** rather a question of tone.' Your **essay** does however very successfully show a sound and
but these needed to be discussed in your **essay** with reference to the literature. Your comman
but more could have been achieved if the **essay** interpreted some of the observations from the
but not all of them are relevant to your **essay**. It would have been useful to have said which
but rather your **essay** reads like a general **essay** on language acquisition. Here are a few more
but none of these impede the meaning in your **essay**. For example: • On the first page of your **essay**

(d) Concordances of *essay* + *however*

some examples of the points you make in your sentence but rather a question of tone.' Your discussion which forms the main basis of this have read into the arguments. Generally, the have been better organised. • Throughout your have read to the advertisements. Overall, the rather than analytical. [Name omitted], your sets out your aims fairly clearly however the what you will achieve in the essay. However, the On the whole, however, this is a very good essay. (67%) You have some good ideas and you've style. However, you need to proofread your essay. It is not good to make a mistake with the points. However, there are a few places in the essay where your analysis and interpretation need to not, however, do this consistently through your essay. Here are a few points for you to note: • Your

Appendix 8.3. Concordances of *analysis*

(Concordances extracted using ConcGram© (Greaves, 2005)).

(a) Concordances of *analysis* + *although*

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node word, *analysis*, and co-occurring word, *although*)

CLT or TBL. There was sufficient depth to your **analysis** **although** it could have been improved with some written texts. You also show the ability to do **analysis** **although** at times your **analysis** is not present in written texts. You also show the ability to do **analysis** **although** at times your **analysis** lacks some of the texts you have chosen for **analysis**. The **analysis** is good **although** hedging and use of personal information on your chosen texts. The **analysis** was good **although** a more sustained comparison examples from the texts. The linguistic features **analysis** was also good **although** there were two points argument and your points are all relevant. Your **analysis** is fairly good **although** at certain places it well with good examples. The move structure **analysis** is fairly well done **although** it might have been and aims and organisation of your essay. Your **analysis** was reasonably done **although** some of the hedge it (one of the best ways...). An enjoyable **analysis** to read, thank you. (67%) **Although** informati ability to do **analysis** **although** at times your **analysis** lacks some accuracy. The essay demonstrates a ability to do **analysis** **although** at times your **analysis** is not presented very clearly. The essay **although** using Thompson's move structure **analysis** might have been more illuminating for your sp

(b) Concordances of *analysis* + *but*

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node word, *analysis*, and co-occurring word, *but*)

would've benefited from greater precision and **analysis**. The work flowed well **but** needed to have a more In sum, you should get credit for the amount of **analysis** presented in the appendices. **But** the discussion after this illustrates this point. • Your **analysis** on reporting verbs is interesting **but** you do in the appendices. **But** the discussion of the **analysis** throughout the essay let you down somewhat. evidence, **but** also increased the linguistic **analysis** input to the assignment. Well written, good

(c) Concordances of *analysis* + *however*

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node word, *analysis*, and co-occurring word, *however*)

Overall, the essay displays a strong **analysis** **however** it is lacking in interpretation. Your comments to move away from a strictly linguistic **analysis**. **However**, you do link these features clearly better organised. • Throughout your essay, your **analysis** is sound, **however**, you rarely develop your a good argument and is relevant. **However**, your **analysis** is far too brief. The main purpose of the essay we have been discussing in class. **However**, your **analysis** of them and the ways in which you have drawn work and the use of questions. **However**, your **analysis** of the classroom does not do anything more than **However**, occasionally your essays lack accurate **analysis** and the interpretation needs to refer to the

(d) Concordances of *analysis* + *not*

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node word, *analysis*, and co-occurring word, *not*)

ability to do **analysis** although at times your **analysis** is not presented very clearly. The essay when you have a cold. The meaning from your **analysis** is not the literal meaning in the advertisement work and the use of questions. However, your **analysis** of the classroom does not do anything more than texts. You also present your aims clearly. The **analysis** of linguistic features was not always accurate written texts. You also show the ability to do **analysis** although at times your analysis is not presented. The analysis was fairly well done. The move **analysis** had only one move which I thought was not clear academic discourse, it does not show sufficient **analysis** of your text. You mention the source text and

(d) Concordances of *analysis* + *though*

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node word, *analysis*, and co-occurring word, *though*)

an enjoyable read. You balance your own literary **analysis** with critical material well (**though** a little material well (**though** a little bit more in-depth **analysis** would have been even better), and this essay

Appendix 8.4. Concordances of *point* and *points*

(Concordances extracted using ConcGram© (Greaves, 2005)).

(a) Concordances of *point* and *points* + *although*

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node words, *point* and *points*, and co-occurring word, *although*)

it had as a gadget for business people. • Your **point** on layering and lexical fields (**although I think enough evidence here** for it **although I take your point**. - Page 2, end - you make a **point** about the use fields (**although I think** you need to rethink the **point** on the lexical field of copyright). • Your **point**

analysis was also good **although** there were two **points** that were not very accurate - these were the This is **mostly accurate although** there are a few **points** to note: • Lightbown not Lightbrown. • Use This is **generally good although** there are a few **points** you should note: • You do not need a comma after **although** in your discussions on two of these **points**, you only use one reference for each. Your

(b) Concordances of *point* and *points* + *but*

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node words, *point* and *points*, and co-occurring word, *but*)

the more inhibited learner' (page 4). • A minor **point but** one that needs to be made -there is no such suggests otherwise. I would like to clarify this **point but** I can't since you have not put in the full 'Interaction Hypothesis' - this is a **relevant point but** it could be better integrated and explained. And how are they effective? You do have a **point** here **but** you haven't quite developed it photos suggest, "for an eternity". I take the **point** you make, **but** this is rather an extreme argument is or isn't taught in a lesson. There is a **point** there somewhere **but** you need to make that link expectations of fictionality. I take your **point** about constricting realities, **but** promo art is as intertextuality. **But**, you are making a good **point** here about energy conservation - you just need to draw are reasonable **but** are fairly general. A **point** I do wish to make is that you could have made an

You use your sources to substantiate your main points but there are instances in the essay where you two pages on schema theory make some interesting points but you don't develop all of them fully. You A fairly good essay that makes some interesting points but does not fully exploit the observation. in your essay. You do make a few relevant points but these are not organised in a clear manner the advertisements. You do make some comparative points but these are just in passing. Perhaps, towards Guide. An essay that makes some interesting points but these points are not sufficiently illustrat appropriate for the 'learning process'? Your points at the top of page 4 are relevant but these sufficiently in your assignment. You make a few points about the practice of language teaching but the that makes some interesting points but these points are not sufficiently illustrated through exampl literary devices like the *, but some of your points could use development and a greater range of essay generally reads well. But there are a few points you need to note: • A general point is that acceptable, but you let these more general points lead your discussion. From the outset you may

(c) Concordances of point and points + however

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node words, point and points, and co-occurring word, however)

need a little more information to explain your point. • Page 3 - 'CAH, however, assumes fully fluent features. This is, however, only a minor point. The examples you have provided to support your

all of which allow you to draw out some strong points. However, I felt that you never really Generally, the essay makes some good points. However, there are a few places in the essay constructs a fairly good argument. Most of your points are relevant. However, occasionally your essays the topic and you provide some examples of the points you make in your essay. However, there is some referencing conventions. However there are a few points you should note: • Page 1: You need to provide

(d) Concordances of *point* and *points* + *not*

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node words, *point* and *points*, and co-occurring word, *not*)

of hues in the JL advertisement. With this **point**, I'm **not** sure if the purpose is to get the them with a meal (reinforcement). Your **point** and your example do **not** match. You need an lesson but what about specific strategies? Your **point** on culture and sports was **not** sufficiently suggests otherwise. I would like to clarify this **point** but I can't since you have **not** put in the full your points. Occasionally, for example with your **point** on 'nominalisation', it was **not** very clear how a description of how grammar is taught. Your **point** and subsequent discussion do **not** follow through. stipulated in the Style Guide. The only **point** I'd like to make is that you do **not** need to section. Here are some examples where your **point** or the argument you are making is **not** clear or with an appropriate academic style. One minor **point** - 'attempt to tackle' is colloquial and **not** the presentation of the Bibliography. The only **point** I wish to make is that your Bibliography does **not** shape of the discourse'. I'm **not** sure that this **point** was clearly explained. I don't think Appendix ii 2 is confusing. I am **not** sure what your main **point** is here. You are equating Machin's term confusing as it is **not** very clear what your **point** is. • Page 4, second paragraph: how do you know into question'. I'm **not** entirely sure what your **point** is here. Why is the application of the CAH being **not** sure how the Cook quotation links with your **point**. • You need to be careful of making references **not** very clear how your examples related to your **point**. Your interpretations and conclusions were good might make the readers envious of the man. Your **point** here **doesn't** really come through clearly. o Page from Brown **doesn't** quite substantiate the **point** you are making. His **point** was a more general one that makes some interesting **points** but these **points** are **not** sufficiently illustrated through exampl A fairly good essay that makes some interesting **points** but does **not** fully exploit the observation. analysis was also good although there were two **points** that were **not** very accurate - these were the in your essay. You do make a few relevant **points** but these are **not** organised in a clear manner discussion. • You need to explain some of your **points** more clearly: o I'm **not** sure what you mean when Guide. An essay that makes some interesting **points** but these **points** are **not** sufficiently illustrat theory. • Your summary of Krashen's **points** on page 3 need to be reviewed. Krashen does **not** Overall, your English does **not** affect the **points** you are putting across in your essay. All you results and discussion do **not** fully explain your **points**. There is some confusion on page four regarding

Appendix 8.5. Concordances of *discussion*

(Concordances extracted using ConcGram© (Greaves, 2005)).

(a) Concordances of *discussion* + *although*

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node words, *discussion*, and co-occurring word, *although*)

nd supported with literature, **although** in your **discussion** on two of these points, you only use one fairly insightful **although** a more comparative **discussion** might have broadened your discussion further **although** it is not always made relevant to the **discussion** at hand (see points below). Your discussion

(b) Concordances of *discussion* + *but*

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node words, *discussion*, and co-occurring word, *but*)

* You mention that your third feature for **discussion** is reporting verbs **but** you provide no example of analysis presented in the appendices. **But** the **discussion** of the analysis throughout the essay let you any stresses are in each line.) **but** I know that **discussion** of technical terms can be tricky. This is, mention the use of hedges **but** then move on to a **discussion** on connectives. What is the link between the **but** you let these more general points lead your **discussion**. From the outset you may need to engage with

(c) Concordances of *discussion* + *not*

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node words, *discussion*, and co-occurring word, *not*)

how grammar is taught. Your point and subsequent **discussion** **do not** follow through. * Page 7: Therefor
At the moment, you **do not** have any general **discussion** prior to saying what your essay will be ab
of your essay. * I **am not** certain that your **discussion** on the differences between speech and writ
although it **is not** always made relevant to the **discussion** at hand (see points below). Your discussio
one? I am **not** certain of the usefulness of your **discussion** on hedges as you **do not** present any exampl
page 5 but **not** discussed in detail. Most of your **discussion** focused on the drawbacks of using drills i
have not referred to these. Your results and **discussion** **do not** fully explain your points. There is
are not mutually intelligible. In Observation **Discussion** 2, it might have been useful to say if the
u refer repeatedly to L1 learning? **wouldn't** this **discussion** be more appropriate for the 'learning proc

Appendix 8.6. Concordances of *good*

(Concordances extracted using ConcGram© (Greaves, 2005)).

(a) Concordances of *good* + *although*

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node words, *good*, and co-occurring word, *although*)

points are all relevant. Your analysis is fairly good although at certain places it falters. Here are
you have chosen for analysis. The analysis is good although hedging and use of personal pronouns
to the stages of the lesson. This was good although it would have been useful to know why
texts. The linguistic features analysis was also good although there were two points that were not ver
structured. Written expression is generally good although some sentence wordings are a little
on your chosen texts. The analysis was good although a more sustained comparison of features
Your interpretations and conclusions were good although a more sustained comparison might have
Page 9 - 'big impacts'. Your English is fairly good although there is a tendency of using vocabulary
are designed....? (page 5). This is generally good although there are a few points you should note:
discourse well and your conclusion provides a good, although brief, end to the essay. Your essay
a complete sentence. Your essay is written in good English although it is not good for you to begin
- page 7. Your essay is written in fairly good English although there are some awkward
example.? The essay demonstrates a fairly good academic style although some phrases words could
academic essay. Your essay is written in fairly good academic English although there is a tendency
your essay before submission. You have a good command of English although you need to be aware
of both types of texts. The analysis was fairly good. You undertook a move structure analysis although
is written in good English although it is not good for you to begin your essay with an error in the

(b) Concordances of *good* + *but*

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node words, *good*, and co-occurring word, *but*)

done. A good essay. An essay that has some good observations but could have been better supported audience. Your command of English is fairly good. There are a few slips but none that impede the and interpretive skills. Well done! A good attempt at answering the question but more could on the work of Mills here. There is some good discussion about the reinforcing, but also the points on teaching practice. A fairly good essay that makes some interesting points but does more specific analysis and interpretation. A good essay that could have been better organised but count as intertextuality. But, you are making a good point here about energy conservation - you just But, other features are analysed well with good examples. The move structure analysis is fairly but does not fully exploit the observation. A good essay which makes a number of valuable points on

(c) Concordances of *good* + *however*

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node words, *good*, and co-occurring word, *however*)

which forms the main basis of this essay is very good. However, it appears to be almost disconnected focused and, on the whole, your reflections are good. However, these seem more clearly focused on you about the 'point of view' of the author is a good one. However, I'm not sure that your examples discourse. Generally, the essay makes some good points. However, there are a few places in the analytical. [Name omitted], your essay shows a good knowledge of the texts. However, a substantial them well. The essay generally constructs a good argument and is relevant. However, your analysis childhood. On the whole, however, this is a very good essay. (67%) You have some good ideas and you've

(d) Concordances of *good* + *not*

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node words, *good*, and co-occurring word, *not*)

material as part of your evidence and this is good. The essay does not show a sufficient reading of about the 'point of view' of the author is a good one. However, I'm not sure that your examples a complete sentence. Your essay is written in good English although it is not good for you to begin in your essay. While your essay shows a good knowledge of academic discourse, it does not show texts. The linguistic features analysis was also good although there were two points that were not very in the essay. - You have shown initiative and good research skills by using examples that were not is written in good English although it is not good for you to begin your essay with an error in the you need to proofread your essay. It is not good to make a mistake with the spelling of the their native language to clarify issues is not a good example of 'adjusting their input to each other' of the use of this is not clear. - You had a good point about the use of definition. This could but does not fully exploit the observation. A good essay which makes a number of valuable points on were not used as examples in class. This shows good research skills and initiative. The essay

Appendix 8.7. The log-likelihood test on the use of modal verbs in the EdEng corpus

(Calculated using the log-likelihood calculator developed by Rayson (2004))

Note: Modals which were found in quotations were not tallied. For instance: “one implication of this method would be...” where the tutor was quoting the student’s work.

	Department A		Department B		Total (A + B)		+/-	LL
	Raw freq.	Words per thousand	Raw freq.	Words per thousand	Raw freq.	Words per thousand		
Hedging								
Could	19	4.2	134	4.3	153	4.4	–	0.00
Would	17	3.8	77	2.5	94	2.6	+	2.31
Might	3	0.7	64	2.0	67	1.9	–	5.16
May	4	0.9	6	0.2	10	0.3	+	4.73
Can	3	0.7	3	0.1	6	0.2	+	4.92
Shall	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	46	10.2	284	9.0	330	9.2	+	0.53
Non-hedging								
Should	4	0.9	28	0.9	32	0.9	–	0.00
Will	3	0.7	28	0.9	31	0.9	–	0.26
Can	3	0.7	2	0.06	5	0.1	+	6.24
Must	1	0.2	1	0.03	2	0.06	+	1.64
TOTAL	11	2.4	59	1.9	70	1.9	+	0.58

Note:

+ indicates over-representation in Department A relative to Department B

– indicates under-representation in Department A relative to Department B

Appendix 8.8. Concordances of *could*

***Could* as criticism**

teaching grammar is “practically useless” neither **could** a valid conclusion like this be drawn from what he they are not always explained as clearly as they **could** be (see points in the next section). Your essay Your use of the theories is not as accurate as it **could** be. Proponents of the Behaviourist theory did not s not answered the question as successfully as it **could** have although there is evidence of sufficient read asy way to define it. Your inclusion of Althusser **could** have been strong but there’s no indication of any quite compared the advertisements as much as you **could** have. The essay is generally a good argument an the essay doesn’t quite achieve the potential it **could**. Here are a few points you should note: • There a times you do not explain yourself as well as you **could**. Here are some specific points for you to note: to be subversive? You don’t quite achieve all you **could** on the ‘critical interpretation’ aspect of the que selected your own texts. While I did say that you **could** use texts we have discussed in class, I did also s

***Could* as suggestion**

focus your point. The introduction of your essay **could** also benefit from some further detail on the effec il on the effect of advertisements on people. You **could** also briefly discuss the impact of the discourse o your suggestions for further study. However, you **could** also consider how the different historical locatio a few points you should note: • Your introduction **could** be a little better with a more explicit link betwe cademic discourse. • The analysis of conjunctions **could** be better as you only have one example of Halliday ctice). • Generally, the argument in your essay **could** be better by providing some balance. For example, of major features of academic writing is good. It **could** be better if some of the features you analyse in t essay that **could** be improved: • Your introduction **could** be better if you avoided repeating the question in t ion Hypothesis’ – this is a relevant point but it **could** be better integrated and explained. Clarify what a her points to note: • The beginning of your essay **could** be better organised. The essay needs an introducti eader’. What are ‘effective emotions’? The essay **could** be better organised. You are dealing with the same terms of analysis and interpretation, your essay **could** be better. Here are a few points for you to note: u to note: • Your analysis of the use of passives **could** be better. Your first example needed to highlight s well. There are some points in your essay which **could** be better: • Your introduction **could** have been a l es your own, very promising, critical voice, this **could** be even stronger. You’ve worked very hard on this, d cultural association with divinity’. This point **could** be explained. • There are several good points and is from your reading of the literature. Your work **could** be improved by a more thorough understanding lingu

our essay. The overall organisation of your essay is generally weak. Here are a few instances where this highlights a few specific issues in your essay that I suggest you consider:

- The analysis of the 'Eternity' advertisement points for you to note:
- Your opening paragraph "edge creation" (Hyland 2009:1). The words in bold on page 2: 'This essay is constructed to analyse...' could be improved if you signal more explicitly when you use good academic style although some phrases words e.g. the words in bold in the following sentence are in your essay. A reasonably good essay that is straightforward
- A few examples that there are a few, minor typographical errors which could have been better explained/interpreted:
- You are lacking in your essay.
- Some of your paragraphs are out of place and features of academic writing. The essay is presented in alphabetical order. A good essay that clearly explains which constructs a reasonably good argument and how it helped to promote interaction in the class? You could have also analysed the similarities between advertisements and the impact it has on people. You should also note:
- Your opening few paragraphs are not suitable for academic discourse? Your discussion on this together to make the advertisement effective. You could have taught quite extensively in their books. You could have also used your sources more extensively in your analysis.
- Page 3: you provide a useful example but you could have analysed it further. What you could have done is to have avoided:
- Page 3 - 'It packs a lot more information into an essay which could be better:
- Your introduction is a good attempt at answering the question but more could have been achieved if the essay interpreted some of the data more fully.
- Page 8) and minor errors that could have been avoided if you had proofread your essay more carefully.
- There are some errors in your essay which could have been avoided through careful proofreading of your essay.
- There are a few typographical errors which could have been avoided with careful proofreading before you submitted your essay.
- Some of the points you made were drawn from the analysis and once again these were drawn from the analysis and once again these were not a good point about the use of definition. This could have been better if you had used Jones' points more fully.
- The essay could have been better if you had integrated your discussion more fully.

sented in alphabetical order. A good essay that analysis. The analysis of the linguistic features sexist language. • Your analysis of single verbs and some of the basic principles of the course. It e initials of the forename s. A good essay that . An essay that has some good observations but akes some useful observations. These observations ay that achieves its aims to a limited extent and you draw from the analysis and your explanations ate and insightful. At times, some of your points the section on the application of Toolan's model use questions - again, you touch on this, but it ot 'Lexlis' (page 1). There are a few errors that riate academic style. There are some errors which cal errors (for e.g. top of page 2, page 3) which have some typographical errors in the essay which ere are several errors throughout the essay which h your own argumentation. One of the points that linguistic features. The move structure analysis was sufficient depth to your analysis although it ich the natural approach is used in the classroom analysis. The analysis of the linguistic features clearly. The analysis of the linguistic features point on 'Documentation and Presentation'). There appropriate for an academic audience. The essay lid points about academic discourse. The analysis argument is constructed in the essay although it nitial discussion of behaviourism and cognitivism on on correction and feedback, as I said earlier, associated practice (CLT) is adequate. The essay e 2 was a good example of delayed correction. You fificant binary oppositions in the text. Again, you ne example of this. If you had more examples, you a lot of literature on error correction that you e advertisers were looking to make. • Your essay but you **could** have analysed it further. What you s a very interesting selection of verbs. What you **could** have been better if there was more specific analys **could** have been better if you had pointed out more expli **could** have been better if you presented the alternatives **could** have been better organised and some of your points **could** have been better organised but nonetheless shows a **could** have been better supported with the literature. **could** have been better supported through a wider reading **could** have been better with more sustained argumentation **could** have been clearer. This essay demonstrates that **could** have been developed more to highlight the impact t **could** have been developed further. On p.5-6, there reall **could** have been developed. Both of these would have not **could** have been easily avoided if you had proofread your **could** have been easily avoided if you had proofread your **could** have been easily avoided if you had proofread your **could** have been easily avoided through careful proofread **could** have been easily avoided if you had proofread your **could** have been highlighted and drawn into the forefront **could** have been improved if you had actually accounted f **could** have been improved with some attention to presenti **could** have been more critical. What are the drawbacks of **could** have been more detailed and a more sustained compa **could** have been more detailed and your discussion on the **could** have been more explicit description of the audioli **could** have been more neatly presented. There are instanc **could** have been more specific and linked to the discussi **could** have been strengthened by more focus on the part o **could** have been strengthened by showing the link with la **could** have been supported by more literature on the topi **could** have benefited from more argument and less descrip **could** have developed your discussion a little here by co **could** have developed your discussion further by consider **could** have discussed the different ways in which the tea **could** have discussed. You write well and show an aware **could** have done a more comparative analysis of the adver **could** have done is linked some of what Cook says (summar **could** have done is to have analysed these verbs in terms

ween the texts. There are some features where you could have explained them further or provided a better e

cific points for you to note: • Your introduction could have explored the discourse of advertisements and

o-lingual method. Your account is simplistic. You could have explored the drawbacks of the methods and con

ng a tradition'. Also, with the move analysis you could have gone beyond just identifying the moves to tel

tences are constructed in academic discourse. You could have highlighted the more common use of complex se

we will discuss these points and consider how you could have improved the argument in your essay. Your

You do make a few interesting comments which you could have incorporated more usefully in the rest of you

y general. A point I do wish to make is that you could have made an effort to have selected your own text

nd the colour green. All of these are points that could have made an interesting discussion. • There is so

the overall effectiveness of your advertisements could have mentioned how the different aspects you discu

y it is better to learn language at a younger age could have more reasons besides the one that you mention

ts but there are instances in the essay where you could have provided more examples or suggested an explan

nd interpreting them sensibly in the context. You could have quantified some of your analyses to add weigh

ented the alternatives (prepositional verbs). You could have rewritten one or two of your examples to illu

utral, tentative or strong'. One or two of these could have then been examined further for why the writer

oach was the audiolingual method. Your discussion could have then been slightly reorganised by discussing

essay in further detail and work out how best you could have used some of the material here to construct y

ical. What are the drawbacks of the approach? You could have used the example you provided of the 'Pub' le

etter by providing some balance. For example, you could improve your discussion on the audiolingual method

fer to specific instances in your essay where you could improve your explanation or expression. • Page 1,

graph which highlights the aims of your essay. It could include details of what you are going to analyse i

overly-reliant on your secondary sources - if you could integrate these more smoothly, while privileges yo

is is rather an extreme argument and one that you could make after making the point that the advertisers w

ding. The essay is well-structured. A few points could maybe have been clarified a little more but you ge

n. In other words, when you discuss 'layout', you could present the definition and explanation of the cate

here is evidence of lexically dense language, you could refer to some of your earlier discussion on academ

elp you to structure your essay more clearly, you could take each text and say how it does this. Your disc

erline' the points you are about to analyse. You could then link your analysis to your interpretation and

y material more smoothly. This is solid work, but could use a little development. (52%) [Name omitted], t

erary devices like the *, but some of your points could use development and a greater range of secondary m

er-generalisations. Some points need developing - could you say more about Ltol, use of blank verse, for i

Appendix 8.9. Concordances of *might*

Might as criticism

d have been useful. • There is a concern that you **might** be overstating some of your points. For e.g your a
rational processes which aid L2 learning' - what **might** these be? Perhaps one concrete example to substant

Might as suggestion

it provided additional support for your point. It **might** also have been useful to have seen an example usin
are some additional points for you to note: • It **might** be useful for you to begin your essay with some ba
ater cogency of the text and its arguments'. • It **might** be useful to point out that one of the main functi
he opinion..." and "'As it is not concerned..." - **might** be useful to say what 'it' refers to more explicit
on Cook saying that there has been a 'revolt, it **might** be useful to state what the 'popular methods of te
l did not fit your text and what alternative move **might** have accounted for what was happening in your text
ation, you need to double space your essay and it **might** have also been better for you to have retyped some
s the move. The presentation of the move analysis **might** have also been better if it was presented diagramm
en and then to have focussed on your examples. It **might** have also been more valuable for your discussion t
hanges - page 5 - and there are some errors which **might** have been avoided through proofreading. The in-text
materials as evidence for some of your points, it **might** have been better for you to have integrated it int
tful observations on how this was carried out. It **might** have been better for you to have organised this se
strate your analysis. The move structure analysis **might** have been better presented diagrammatically than d
e essay. The analysis is generally well done. It **might** have been good for you to have extended the move a
section on teacher roles was good. Once again, it **might** have been good to compare the roles with the diffe
e issues you discuss are raised by them. Also, it **might** have been good to have read a couple of more recen
ifferences and similarities between the texts. It **might** have been good to have referred to some sources to
s that some of the students had demonstrated'. It **might** have been good to have seen what some of these 'mi
Your interview data was interesting to read and **might** have been incorporated more into your essay. Over
relevant and interesting points and perhaps this **might** have been mentioned earlier in the essay. • With y
are using the Swales model for both the texts. It **might** have been more appropriate to have used the Swales
although using Thompson's move structure analysis **might** have been more illuminating for your spoken text.
jealousy is rather tenuous. Perhaps this analysis **might** have been more useful if you had combined it with
d refers to a one source (Paltridge) for this. It **might** have been more useful to have drawn on a few other
tructure analysis is fairly well done although it **might** have been more useful to have shown the analysis d
ervations. In your introduction to the essay, it **might** have been more worthwhile for you to have discusse

y in the rest of your essay. Having said that, it might have been more worthwhile for you to have displayed minating for your spoken text. Also, the analysis might have been presented in a more reader-friendly fashion in nature. While this was done fairly well, it might have been useful at the beginning of your essay to look which was not the focus of Swales' research. It might have been useful for you to have highlighted this. ation on her language is a useful one although it might have been useful for you to have had more than one literature. One point I wish to make is that it might have been useful for you to have placed the information y the teacher through your classroom examples. It might have been useful for you to have read more widely tract. Here are some points for you to note:

- It might have been useful for you to have had the second part of the section on 'Pronunciation Error Correction' it might have been useful for you to have reflected on the discussion on academic discourse is good. I think it might have been useful for you to have connected some of
- On your discussion on the use of connectors, it might have been useful for you to have raised the point so this point does need to be clarified. Also, it might have been useful to say what the teacher was talking about in the presentation of your analysis on nominalisation, it might have been useful to have begun your discussion with the question-answer exchange fairly extensively. It might have been useful to have also looked at the distribution. For example, you analyse nominalisations and it might have been useful to have mentioned this earlier in the text... - what exactly are you referring to? - It might have been useful to have indicated the purpose of the analysis. In Observation Discussion 2, it might have been useful to say if the teacher was speaking about the connectors, it might have been useful to have explored how sentences are used that might have improved your analysis: (1) It might have been valuable for you to have considered the use of connectors as a combination of these. While this is true, it might have been worthwhile to have mentioned this at the beginning of the discussion. It might have broadened your discussion further. You write about the ideas. I have very few criticisms. To improve, you might have considered contextual information pertaining to the evidence you observed some evidence of this and perhaps you might have elaborated a little on this point. The other points were good although a more sustained comparison might have enriched your discussion further. Your comment about tracking the use of pronouns through the text might have further illuminated your point about I and we in the analysis which comes later in the essay. What might have helped the essay achieve more is an integration of the two core texts by Harmer and Cook. These texts might have helped with some of the difficulties with interactionist theories. Perhaps a better link might have helped your argument to progress.
- You have mentioned individual differences. I think reading his chapter might have helped your essay considerably in terms of how he organised your discussion little differently, this might have helped. You make some very good and interesting points although a more sustained comparison of features might have highlighted the differences and similarities around the topic. There are two suggestions that might have improved your analysis: (1) It might have been better than through a discussion with line numbers. This might have made the move structure analysis clearer. This comment. We will also discuss what other sources you might have read and referred to in answering this question where a reference to a source or research studies might have strengthened the point you are discussing.
- It has been more detailed and a more sustained comparison might have yielded a more detailed description of both texts and their advantages? Considering the alternative viewpoint might make the argument in your essay more convincing.

Appendix 8.10. Concordances of *should*

Should as necessity

is that the final reference in your bibliography should appear earlier on your list. A competent essay. meant to use non-sexist language not avoid it. It should avoid sexist language. • Your analysis of single v on: • 'spoken discursive elements' (page 1) - it should be 'discursive' • 'quantitude' (page 1) - there is of publication comes before the publisher. So, it should be 'London:Routledge' and not 'Routledge:London'. ? Repeated use of 'practise' as verb used when it should be 'practice' as noun. ? Your essay needed to be p . • Your reference to Brooks is for 1920 when it should be 1960 (page 4). An essay that attempts to answ Your reference to 'Pasty et al' is incorrect. It should be a reference to 'Lightbown and Spada'. • You us ional points for you to note: • Longer quotations should be indented. • When you refer to an author, in-tex ot enter till after the introductory episode, and should be live members of Oedipus' Kingdom, not ghosts, f he Style Guide. Please note that the bibliography should be presented in alphabetical order. A good essay owever, you do need to note that the bibliography should be presented in alphabetical order. A good essay heir first names or initials. • Your bibliography should be presented without bullet points. A fairly goo re omitted. This is how your sentence from page 3 should be rewritten: 'Interactionist methodologies.... se out production plan and prompt copy. Perhaps more should be said in the Rationale about precisely what you errors - in the opening paragraph, the full stop should come after (1992) and in your Bibliography, Harmer wing a reference in your sentence - the full stop should come at the end of the sentence not before the ref designed to answer specific essay questions. You should conduct your own research to support and develop i he advertisement and this is what your discussion should focus on. • On page 3, you once again associate M f all of the other types of analysis! In sum, you should get credit for the amount of analysis presented in r 1991:31-32)'. • Your reference to Douglas-Brown should just be 'Brown'. 'Douglas' is his first name. • Y is and discussion. Here are some points that you should note which could have been better explained interp en them are insightful. Here are a few points you should note: • It would have been helpful to have begun y g conventions. However there are a few points you should note: • Page 1: You need to provide a reference fo he potential it could. Here are a few points you should note: • There are several places in the essay wher enerally good although there are a few points you should note: • You do not need a comma after your quotati y and progresses well. There are a few points you should note: • Your introduction could be a little better t at argument. There are a few general points you should note: Your introductory paragraph is not very usef te the quotation into your sentence. • Full stops should occur at the end of sentences after the reference. ce the reference in brackets. So, this is how you should present your sentence beginning 'Kress and Van Lee asion. These are the main topics of the essay. It should then describe your advertisements and perhaps stat emic essay of this nature, an analysis of colours should use some of the terminology in the field of semiot

Appendix 8.11. Concordances of *would*

***Would* as criticism**

ood although hedging and use of personal pronouns **would** be part of the category on linguistic features. Th
g scholarly rigour and fluency. My only criticism **would** be that you are occasionally overly-reliant on you
om the classroom. With example 1, my only comment **would** be whether it is accurate to say that the intentio
rest of the lesson. Perhaps, my only comment here **would** be with regard to your conclusion on page 8 which
to learn from their mistake' - what other methods **would** have been open to this teacher? On page 4-5, you
rgument' is not accurate. Some of the sources you **would** have read (e.g. Harmer) will show you that Long de
acher did not get as much focus as I thought they **would** have. Generally, your essay is easy to understand
an appropriate academic style. In particular, I **would** like to highlight your use of punctuation, referri
ion of why the theories are only satisfactory. I **would** only question your argument that the interactionis
depth of understanding and awareness. One point I **would** raise concerns the range of theories within the br

***Would* as suggestion**

rther illuminated your point about I and we. This **would** also have provided evidence for your analysis - e.
going longing for this. Including more quotations **would** also help to consolidate and extend some of your p
hen you are moving from one point to the next. It **would** also help to show how the points are connected wit
lingual method. ? On page 6, you mention that it **would** be "useful to speculate" on the correlation betwee
ete example to substantiate illustrate your point **would** be beneficial. • On page 6, you state that 'teache
, what exactly is the modal in this example? • It **would** be helpful to refer to some of your sources when y
nt. Primarily, I think an important consideration **would** be if they require speech or writing or both for c
ademic writing'. If you added 'text' to this, it **would** be more accurate. • On page 1, 'The reason why th
question in your opening paragraph. Instead, what **would** be more useful is to develop the question by provi
ssive was not used then the focus of the sentence **would** be on the photographer - 'the photographer determi
pproach in the essay. For Task 1, my only comment **would** be on the section on page 5 where you mention the
on of the Bibliography. Just to point out that it **would** be sufficient for you to list your references alph
s not need to be bulleted - an alphabetical list **would** be sufficient. A good essay. This essay shows
r....motivation and intelligence' - this sentence **would** benefit from further development or some reference
e over-descriptive and you made some points which **would** benefit from further development, and I think your

uage. Here are a few examples of English use that would benefit from revision: Page 1 - '...which factor m
 ich perhaps a more stringent proofreading process would catch. I'm not sure you understand metre fully (ta
 d could be revised as 'for the purposes of' which would convey more accurately your intended meaning. • T
 iendly fashion - perhaps diagrammatically as this would have allowed the reader to see the moves more clea
 o have refereed to Machin. I think his parameters would have allowed you to provide evidence for some of y
 use learning of grammatical rules. • Your essay would have also benefited from a discussion of age or pr
 o why the advertisements are appealing to you, it would have been a more convincing argument to have used
 to distinguish from the rest of your essay. What would have been a more effective way to present your ana
 relation to this in one of the seminars and this would have been a more useful point for you to bring up.
 on explain further. In Mrs D, Elizabeth or Davis would have been better examples - though I agree that CD
 e set on colour and the other on composition). It would have been better for you to have dealt with these
 would have given your essay more coherence and it would have been better organised. • Throughout your essa
 r than just line numbers. Also, the move analysis would have been clearer if you had actually extracted th
 well (though a little bit more in-depth analysis would have been even better), and this essay provides a
 tful. Here are a few points you should note: • It would have been helpful to have begun your essay with pa
 o your essay was a little too general. I think it would have been more useful for you to have engaged more
 s the most satisfactory view of the learner. This would have been more useful as a discussion point in thi
 n't quite developed it sufficiently. I think this would have been quite an interesting argument to have ma
 e and the teacher's explanations for them as this would have been quite important to the success of the gr
 e effective way to present your analysis, perhaps would have been to present these sentences individually
 ertisements. • With all your points on colour, it would have been useful for you to have refereed to Machi
 tice is well discussed and clearly explained. It would have been useful for you to have mentioned that th
 which may or may not be significant is whether it would have been useful for you to have considered the di
 rence to a lesson from Situational English and it would have been useful for you to have either put the ex
 room and how that measure up against research. It would have been useful for you to have read Ur or Tsui o
 ere are different uses of the first person and it would have been useful for you to have analysed the inst
 urse and highlights some of its main features. It would have been useful if you had a paragraph or a coupl
 k of clarity (confusion) over the concept that it would have been useful to elaborate on explain further.
 lars as being 'rigid' needed more information. It would have been useful to have said why these scholars c
 e stages of the lesson. This was good although it would have been useful to know why the final stage was o
 ut not all of them are relevant to your essay. It would have been useful to have said which components of
 phrase 'communicate in the language'. I think it would have been useful to have mentioned the points on
 At the moment, Harmer is your main source and it would have been useful to have looked at Cook, Brown,
 • Page 6: an example right at the top of the page would have been useful. • Page 7, 2nd para: there is er
 sustained argument linking this with the question would have been useful. • There is a concern that you mi
 ideas including some that are very recent. These would have been worth considering but would have require
 d. Your reflection on the use of a learning diary would have benefited from reference to academic texts (e

rately. There are some points in your essay which would have benefited from a clearer explanation or more at you have read in your essay. Your observations would have benefitted from a wider reading of material o have read reasonably widely, although your essay would have benefitted from more specific references to w rror correction (for e.g. Ur and or Tsui) as this would have broadened your discussion. At the moment, the r reading on interaction and classroom management would have broadened your discussion. At the moment, Har definition and explanation of the category. This would have given your essay more coherence and it would ns where a some additional examples from the text would have helped support your point - for e.g. on page few, rather vague sentences on this point. • It would have helped your essay if you were more specific: vague beginning to your essay and a little focus would have improved it. • I'm not entirely clear how Ad h 2 and then move on to paragraph 1. This way you would have introduced the topic first before launching i u are dealing with the same target audience so it would have made sense for you to have grouped some of th , but it could have been developed. Both of these would have not only added evidence, but also increased t cent. These would have been worth considering but would have required further reading. (72%; listed as 'Cr ised in the next paragraph) to this example. This would have then provided more illustration of your point tween teacher-student and student-student as this would have yielded more interesting points for discussio the dialogue that the focus of the lesson as this would help us to understand the exchanges between the te ple, you do need to point out explicitly what you would like the reader to see. For example, when you refe rate your points. Perhaps the only suggestion I would make in the section on 'Teaching Pronunciation' is analysis of texts. Perhaps the only suggestion I would make is for you to have illustrated the move analy an eye on your presentation - justifying the text would make it easier to read. Overall though, this is an ia? The points above are minor ones which I feel would only lend a little more weight to an already extre dary theoretical material (eg. Jameson and Woods) would strengthen your arguments. Still, I'm pleased with esented as a bulleted list - an alphabetical list would suffice. A good essay. This essay demonstrates ail. Your references to history were ok but often would've benefited from greater precision and analysis. " (Tomlin 1990:34). • Use capital letters as you would within your own sentence and amend the quote to fi bown not Lightbrown. • Use capital letters as you would within your own sentence and amend the quote to fi t the essay. • Page 3: Use capital letters as you would within your own sentence and amend the quote to fi

Appendix 8.12. The log-likelihood test on vague language in the EdEng corpus
(Calculated using the log-likelihood calculator developed by Rayson (2004))

Note:

- Vague language which did not comprise vague items were not tallied. For instance: *sentences tend to be **more** complex than simple in academic discourse.*
- Vague language which was found in quotations was also not tallied. For instance: “Krashen then took some of...” where the tutor was quoting the student’s work.

	Department A		Department B		Total (A + B)		+/-	LL
	Raw freq.	Words per thou.	Raw freq.	Words per thou.	Raw freq.	Words per thou.		
Hedging								
some	11	2.4	97	3.1	108	3.0	−	0.60
few	6	1.3	69	2.2	75	2.1	−	1.62
a little	10	2.2	14	0.4	24	0.7	+	12.60
a couple of	-	-	5	0.2	5	0.1	−	1.35
something	-	-	5	0.2	5	0.1	−	1.35
TOTAL	27	6.0	190	6.0	217	6.0	+	0.00
Non-hedging								
more	23	5.1	133	4.2	156	4.3	+	0.62
some	30	6.6	119	3.8	149	4.1	+	6.68
many	6	1.3	5	0.2	11	0.3	+	11.05
few	-	-	8	0.3	8	0.2	−	2.15
a lot	3	0.7	3	0.1	6	0.2	+	4.92
TOTAL	62	13.7	268	8.5	330	9.2	+	10.20

Note:

The row shaded in grey is found only in Department B.

+ indicates over-representation in Department A relative to Department B

– indicates under-representation in Department A relative to Department B

Appendix 8.13. Concordances of *some*

Some as hedging

do analysis although **at times** your analysis lacks **some** accuracy. The essay demonstrates a wide reading of is **generally well done**. There are portions where **some** additional examples from the text would have helped **ght** have also been better for you to have retyped **some** aspects of your appendix (for e.g. the models) that **could** have been improved with **some** attention to presenting opposing points of view (s **written in fairly good English** although there are **some** awkward collocations 'instigate a discussion' (pag **although I can see that you are trying to provide** **some** background information on individual differences. **might** be useful for you to begin your essay with **some** background information on the topic. Perhaps a dis **gument** in your essay could be better by providing **some** balance. For example, you could improve your discu **raph** introducing your advertisements. • There are **some** claims in your essay that need rethinking: o Your **heoretical** issues raised in the course. There are **some** concerns with your interpretation of the question **ussion** do not fully explain your points. There is **some** confusion on page four regarding the topic of Brit **unicative** approach is not a theory. There is also **some** confusion over terminology – you have 'communicati **y** decision is justified or rationalised. However, **some** decisions are unworkable (e.g.. the Chorus on a fo **hotomy?** • Page 4 – your point on motivation needs **some** development. Primarily, I think an important consi **ature** that exists in the area and to also include **some** discussion on the use of the methods on the learne **account** for second language learning? There are **some** errors in your essay which could have been avoided **itten** in an appropriate academic style. There are **some** errors which could have been easily avoided if you **re** the font size changes – page 5 – and there are **some** errors which might have been avoided through proof **derstand** the 'revolt' better. • Page 2 – you need **some** evidence in the form of references (perhaps even s **ered** in the current lesson'. Unless, you observed **some** evidence of this and perhaps you might have elabor **s** on interaction. You really needed to have given **some** examples here to illustrate your point on 'quality **asy** to understand. A few points you could note: • **Some** examples of awkward phrasing: 'acting as if an ext **ery** clear. I have listed a few examples: Here are **some** examples of where you need a better explanation: **controversial** in the earlier section. Here are **some** examples where your point or the argument you are **ion** is worrying inaccurate in the essay. Here are **some** examples: • Throughout the essay you refer to beha **se** related to your point on proficiency? You need **some** explanation at the end of that paragraph. • Page **here** are a few places in the essay where you need **some** explanation or where your argument is not very cle **then** the differences between the texts. There are **some** features where you could have explained them furth **ntroduction** of your essay could also benefit from **some** further detail on the effect of advertisements on **r** the students. Observation Discussion 3 needed **some** information on the dialogue that the focus of the **ge 7**, needed more explanation. I think you needed **some** information on the task for us to understand the e

e 4 'An adult...grammatical structures', There is developed, particularly in terms of incorporating developed, particularly in terms of incorporating ions of writing in an academic setting. There are itten in an appropriate academic style. There are ntions of writing in an academic style. There are ..' • Page 5 - '...to seal the deal...' There are points you make in your essay. However, there is oach which is influenced by the innatist theory. about the plot, is meticulously given, there are st theory to take age into account...' - you need oints for you to note: • Some of your claims need ults are at "a disadvantage in this theory" needs captured? • At the bottom of page 2, you describe ssay. Your analysis was reasonably done although rmer and Cook. These texts might have helped with it would have made sense for you to have grouped anding of the theories taught on the course. Only There is much potential for you to have discussed in the full bibliographical details for Smith. • Some of the links between your paragraphs can be better aching Pronunciation' is for you to have explored detail and work out how best you could have used have also mentioned the use of reporting verbs. • Some of the nominalisations you suggest are not nominal could have been achieved if the essay interpreted ur discussion at the beginning of your essay with e 'nature and nurture' argument' is not accurate. Some of the sources you would have read (e.g. Harmer) w e general. From page 2-3, you attempt to analyse some of the strategies being used but you do not fully rated'. It might have been good to have seen what some of these 'misunderstandings' were and the teacher ur points needed clearer explanation. I highlight some of these below. Generally, the essay covers the ou need to be mindful of the original purposes of some of these studies before extending them to suit sup tures of the text. You needed to include at least some of this in addition to the structural analysis. T hat you needed to have done is either incorporate some of this information into your main discussion or c ed it further. What you could have done is linked some of what Cook says (summarised in the next paragrap oken texts. Generally, this is well done although some of what you say is more applicable to general spok ensibly in the context. You could have quantified some of your analyses to add weight - e.g. tracking the ve read. Here are a few points for you to note: • Some of your claims need some more thought. o On page

some irrelevant discussion in the essay: ? Your discuss some literature into the discussion. Your command of some literature into the discussion. Your command of some minor issues with expression but these do not impe some minor points to do with punctuation and awkward ph some minor slips, for example, '...s he must trouble ov some minor typographical errors. You have adhered to some misinterpretation of information which affects the Some misinterpretation: • The theories of innatism, beh some misunderstandings (number nature of Chorus for e.g some more evidence for this as it is a very strong clai some more thought. • On page 1, you say that one of th some more thought. Krashen's theory has not disadvantag some of Machin's work on typography. Not all of this is some of the analysis that comes later in the essay to t some of the critiques you have of the models you use ne some of the difficulties with interpretation which are some of the discussion points along the points you are some of the information here is relevant and accurately some of the issues you raise in greater depth and to ex some of the links between your paragraphs can be better some of the literature on the use of contrastive phonol some of the material here to construct your argument. W some of the nominalisations you suggest are not nominal some of the observations from the analysis. This essa some of the points that you raise during the analysis. Some of the sources you would have read (e.g. Harmer) w some of the strategies being used but you do not fully some of these 'misunderstandings' were and the teacher some of these below. Generally, the essay covers the some of these studies before extending them to suit sup some of this in addition to the structural analysis. T some of this information into your main discussion or c some of what Cook says (summarised in the next paragrap some of what you say is more applicable to general spok some of your analyses to add weight - e.g. tracking the some of your claims need some more thought. o On page

ure of your data not fitting in with her model. *Some of your conclusions need more thought too.* Interru

what ideas and knowledge are you referring to? • *Some of your discussion in the section 'the learner' is*

e of lexically dense language, *you could refer to some of your earlier discussion* on academic discourse r

ave been more convincing if discussed in light of *some of your earlier points* - e.g. the use of the colou

re *valuable for your discussion to have rewritten some of your examples* in order to illustrate your point

rs *would have allowed you to provide evidence for some of your observations* about the uses of colour in t

English although *you do need to pay attention to some of your phrases:* • *'...techniques will be consider*

tations *would also help to consolidate and extend some of your points here.* On the whole, a very good ess

poetic form and literary devices like the *, but *some of your points could* use development and a greater

rtisements are accurate and insightful. *At times, some of your points could* have been developed more to h

issues you raise in greater depth and to *explain some of your points more clearly.* Here are *some* points

ur analysis and discussion. • *You need to explain some of your points more clearly:* • I'm not sure what y

hat Long developed much of what Krashen said. • *Some of your points need substantiation or explanation.*

. Here are a few specific points for you to note: *Some of your points need development or explanation:* •

e course. It *could have been better organised and some of your points needed clearer explanation.* I highl

o present the classroom materials as evidence for *some of your points, it might* have been better for you

There is *a concern that you might be overstating some of your points.* For e.g your argument on equipoten

n this example? • It *would* be helpful to refer to *some of your sources when you explain your examples* of

our interpretation of the question and the use of *some of your sources.* These points are highlighted in t

y make reference to noise levels, humour and *make some passing comments on interaction.* You really needed

emonstrates a *fairly good academic style* although *some phrases words could be revised.* For example, 'posi

mmatical features. There was a *slight* tendency in *some places for your comments to move away from a stric*

rpreseted the theories fairly accurately. There are some points in your essay which would have benefited fr

d interpreted your advertisements well. *There are some points in your essay which could be better:* • Your

you *sometimes* are prone to over-generalisations. *Some points need developing - could* you say more about

focuses on the analysis and discussion. Here are *some points that you should note* which could have been

casionally a little over-descriptive and *you made some points which would benefit from further developmen*

rtisements you have chosen to analyse. *There are some points you need to note:* • While you have attempte

entence *would benefit from further development or some references.* • Page 3 - 'This is to say therefore t

d have made an interesting discussion. • *There is some repetition in the essay* especially in the section

re a few *arguments claims in your essay that need some rethinking:* • Your point on the 'H' in the echinaf

ed. *Written expression is generally good* although *some sentence wordings are a little awkward in places.*

ey occur at the beginning of sentences. *There are some sentences that needed to be rephrased to ensure th*

ne negative to such drills...' page 2). *These are some sentences, especially sentences with integrated qu*

ial and *sustain a clear line of argument. There's some slight* lack of clarity (confusion) over the concep

exts. It *might have been good to have referred to some sources to support these points.* You write well

uage modification was *far too general. You needed some specific examples of modifications of language tha*

Page 1 - '...instrumented into SLA..' There are **some** typographical errors (for e.g. top of page 2, page
ntions as stated in the Style Guide. You do have **some** typographical errors in the essay which could have

Some as non-hedging (positive)

resting points here [Name omitted], and **you show some ability in literary analysis**. Your structure is a competent and constructs a good argument. Here are **some** additional points for you to note: • It might be u

You've researched this topic well and use s and conclusions. The introduction begins with inner class in Spanish. You introduction provides between written and spoken texts. You also provide topics of discussion. Your introduction provides ins with a good, solid introduction that provides usions in this essay. The introduction provided nt value at £3.25 per hour'. On page 2, you make ative analysis of the advertisements. You do make You also state the aims of your essay and provide here are also some interesting comments about how the required reading on the topic and you provide ll researched and well written essay. You include ing and well supported by your readings. You make y extremely convincing and successful argument. f your text. You mention the source text and give entence. This is a fairly good essay that shows hat your essay will be about. You essay does have explain this a little more. There is evidence of s what your views are on the issue. You have used ly a good account of Krashen and Long. • Page 7: ery well developed close reading skills. You make appropriately on the work of Mills here. There is aracter roles - this is interesting. You provide solid, core argument and it reads well. You have The conclusions are insightful and you provide wever, this is a very good essay. (67%) You have e conducted some very thorough research and hence d presenting a Bibliography. An essay that has

ate materials like this more seamlessly. You made is. Here are **some** points for you to note and also ' '. Well done. Keep it up! (68%) [Name omitted], have a similar effect on the audience. There are ages of the lesson. Having said that, you do make into the arguments. Generally, the essay makes literal meaning in the advertisement. There are of these oppositions. There is a good attempt at the essay where you say the teacher needed to use struct a convincing argument although you do show agraph on the aims of your essay and also provide u also present the aims of your essay and give us ping. Example 4 is good and your conclusion makes sson. Overall, your analysis is good and you make d conclusion of your essay display this. You make . The opening paragraphs and your conclusion make of gender stereotypes in the text. There are also some very good secondary reading. You make use of d not modifying their use of English. There are lity'. Your final two pages on schema theory make he Bibliography. A fairly good essay that makes pulated in the Style Guide. An essay that makes n the whole, a very good essay. Well done. (66%) erencing guide. A fairly good essay which makes ed clearly and neatly. A good essay which makes ore the reference. A competent essay that make coherent overall argument. The essay also raises information on academic discourse and highlights ly around the issue. It shows that you understand de reading and displays an attempt to engage with This essay demonstrates that you have understood ve a couple of examples of the teacher explaining he essay especially in the section on typography. f academic writing is good. It could be better if ur analysis enables you to explore and illustrate and conclusions were well explained and you used essay is insightful. Your introduction summarises

some good points about poetic form and literary devices
some good points about your essay: • Your analysis of r
some good points are made here, and you've obviously pu
some good points for e.g. your analysis of foregroundin
some good points in the final section on motivation and
some good points. However, there are a few places in th
some good points: • Your point on the Blackberry advert
some grammatical analysis and hoe this contributes to t
some grammatical explanations to 'clear up the misunder
some indication of having understood **some** of the materi
some information on your chosen texts. The analysis wa
some information on your chosen texts. The analysis is
some insightful comments on error correction in the cla
some insightful observations. You also provide useful e
some interesting and insightful observations. Your es
some interesting and relevant points about academic dis
some interesting comments about how **some** elements of th
some interesting ideas and sources, all of which allow
some interesting observations in your conclusion but th
some interesting points but you don't develop all of th
some interesting points but does not fully exploit the
some interesting points but these points are not suffic
Some interesting points here [Name omitted], and you sh
some interesting points on teaching practice. This as
some interesting points on the practice of language tea
some interesting points. This essay demonstrates that
some interesting points. I look forward to discussing i
some of its main features. It would have been useful if
some of the basic principles of the course. It could ha
some of the central issues in the question. I look forw
some of the concepts taught on the course. You show in
some of the content of the lesson but what about specif
Some of the elements you mention work together to conve
some of the features you analyse in the essay are also
some of the limitations of Propp's model. I thought you
some of the literature to support these. You write fa
some of the main issues around academic discourse well

the question with relevant information. It covers some of the material covered on the course but does not you do show some indication of having understood some of the material. The main concern is in the ways i ic points for you to note: • You have interpreted some of the methodologies (Suggestopedia, TPR etc) as h nt and your observations are insightful. Here are some of the more outstanding points: • Your detailed de read a reasonable number of sources which support some of the point you make in your essay. I do think yo es not quite reach its potential. We will discuss some of the points here in greater detail when we meet. ited in the appendix) to substantiate and explain some of the points. The essay does attempt to link th ack of') Your conclusion is good as it highlights some of the prevailing issues which surround academic d an interesting approach and the approach did show some of the similarities and differences in the texts. of this nature, an analysis of colours should use some of the terminology in the field of semiotics to su the main issues in the question. We will discuss some of these points further when we meet. The essay evidence and a central argument. We will discuss some of these points in further detail when we meet. ple you provided of the 'Pub' lesson to highlight some of these. On that note, you needed to include the You have read the two main sources and integrated some of what you have read in your essay. Your observat is information in your essay, using it to support some of your analysis and interpretations about academi porated this information in your essay to support some of your analysis and observations. Your essay b g and research of this essay. You write well, and some of your close readings of the chosen poems display e too reliant on rhetoric and blanket statements. Some of your insights into your chosen texts are intere ed them at the beginning of your essay to support some of your observations. The introduction of your e ave incorporated these into your essay to support some of your observations and conclusions. The introd ou refer to schema theory and use it to interpret some of your observations. In your introduction to the ave incorporated these into your essay to support some of your observations and conclusions. The introd s also something that is lacking in your essay. • Some of your paragraphs could have a better organisatio hods. You have also tried to provide evidence for some of your points by referring to classroom materials ts and have incorporated this material to support some of your points. Your essay begins with a list of les in order to illustrate your point. There are some places in your essay where your analysis, interpre tioned the points on 'competency' vs 'fluency' at some point in the essay with reference to the use learn ly to the guidelines in the Style Guide. Here are some points for you to note: • Please do check how to p xplain some of your points more clearly. Here are some points for you to note: • On page 3, you discuss a fully. Your discussion is also relevant. Here are some points for you to note: • Your introduction provid ur points on academic discourse clearly. Here are some points for you to note: • Your initial discussion ints that you raise during the analysis. Here are some points for you to note and also some good points a m well using examples from your extract. Here are some points for you to note: • It might have been usefu terpretations of theory are impressive. Here are some points for you to note: • On page 4, you mention h chniques and meanings fairly accurately. Here are some points for you to note: • The first advertisement d although at certain places it falters. Here are some points for you to note: • Your analysis of reporti useful examples to illustrate key points and take some points to draw out their significances. I am impres

ons of the British class system. (67%) You make
 rvation and this was well done. You also provided
 n speech and writing is all that useful. You make
 iterature. This essay shows that you have read
 t to the learning process. • On page 6, you make
 ween spoken and written texts. You have also read
 ween spoken and written texts. You have also read
 evidence in the form of references (perhaps even
 nt on the three-part exchange being criticised by
 ing Propp's 31 functions. You accurately identify
 mains at a rather simplistic level. I have listed
 explain yourself as well as you could. Here are
 ation of the features is well presented. Here are
 s and sources, all of which allow you to draw out
 a thoughtful analysis of the text, commenting on
 nterpretation of your sources. You have also used
 Marxism has various positions and ideas including
 freading before submission. An essay that shows
 vely into your essay. The introduction provides
 e students and method is well done as it provides
 nts for you to note: • Your introduction provides
 ents are fairly clearly presented and you do draw
 oughtful and carefully expressed. You also deploy
 fferences between speech and writing. You provide
 e introductory portion of the essay also presents
 rrectly in your essay. A good essay which makes
 ted in the Style Guide. A good essay that makes
 iscussion on the audiolingual method by providing
 th more references to the literature. You do make
 %) You have some good ideas and you've conducted
 accurately presented. A good essay that makes
 sions you draw are solid and insightful. You make
 with the actual lettering. There is evidence of
 tle differently, this might have helped. You make
 memory on page 3. Your essay also demonstrates
 ed argument and is organised quite well. You make
 isted as 'Critical Commentary') [Name omitted],

some reasonable comments, but don't really make beyond
 some reflection on what you observed by referring to th
 some relevant and interesting points and perhaps this m
 some relevant material about the practice of language t
 some relevant points about how the innatist view offers
 some relevant sources and integrated them into your ess
 some relevant sources and used them at the beginning of
 some research studies?) on the debate of the effect of
 some scholars as being 'rigid' needed more information.
 some significant binary oppositions in the text. Again,
 some specific points for you to take note of: • Your pa
 some specific points for you to note: • Your introducti
 some specific points I wish to commend you for: • You h
 some strong points. However, I felt that you never real
 some structural and grammatical features. There was a s
 some teaching material as part of your evidence and thi
 some that are very recent. These would have been worth
 some understanding of concepts on the course but does n
 some useful background information and basic coverage o
 some useful background information and sets up your tas
 some useful background information on academic discours
 some useful conclusions from these arguments. You demon
 some useful examples to illustrate key points and take
 some useful information on your texts and also present
 some useful information on the texts themselves. The a
 some useful observations. This essay shows that you h
 some useful observations. These observations could have
 some useful outcomes of using drills in class. This is
 some useful passing comments in your introduction by sa
 some useful research. However, I don't think you've spe
 some valid points about academic discourse. The analysi
 some valid points about the differences and similaritie
 some very good analysis and interpretation: • The analy
 some very good and interesting points: • Very good obse
 some very good argumentation: • Good connection made be
 some very good points about academic discourse and illu
 some very good points are made here. Your writing style

of ideas. (59%) This essay contains evidence of **some** very good secondary reading. You make use of **some** achieving new vocabulary' was well done and you make **some** very insightful observations on how this was carried out by a student as an example. In the essay, you make **some** very relevant and interesting points regarding the here: • Your analysis of colour is good and makes **some** very relevant points. • Your interpretation of the effect on the audience. • There is evidence of **some** very sound analysis and interpretation in your discussion and a strong response. You have conducted **some** very thorough research and hence **some** good ideas. This is an interesting essay. You have conducted **some** very useful research and you engage well with the

Appendix 8.14. Two-word clusters of *some* in the EdEng corpus

Note: clusters in **bold** are found only in Department B (all figures are rounded up to one decimal point)

	Department A		Department B		Total (A + B)	
	Raw freq.	Words per thou.	Raw freq.	Words per thou.	Raw freq.	Words per thou.
some of	7	1.6	73	2.0	80	2.2
is/are some	2	0.4	42	1.3	44	1.2
make(s/de) some	4	0.9	29	0.9	30	0.8
some good	7	1.6	13	0.4	20	0.6
provide(s/ed)some	1	0.2	15	0.4	16	0.5
some points	2	0.4	13	0.4	14	0.4
some useful	2	0.4	10	0.3	12	0.3
some interesting	3	0.7	8	0.3	12	0.3
some very	4	0.9	8	0.3	12	0.3
of some	2	0.4	6	0.2	8	0.2
some background	–	–	7	0.2	7	0.2
support some	–	–	7	0.2	7	0.2
With some	–	–	7	0.2	7	0.2
need some	–	–	6	0.2	6	0.2
some examples	–	–	6	0.2	5	0.1
some relevant	–	–	5	0.2	5	0.1
to some	–	–	5	0.2	5	0.1
used some	–	–	5	0.2	5	0.1

Appendix 8.15. Three-word clusters of *some* in the EdEng corpus

Note: clusters in **bold** are found only in Department B (all figures are rounded up to one decimal point)

	Department A		Department B		Total (A + B)	
	Raw freq.	Words per thou.	Raw freq.	Words per thou.	Raw freq.	Words per thou.
some of your	5	1.1	27	0.9	32	0.9
some of the	1	0.2	33	1.1	34	0.9
there are some	1	0.2	20	0.6	18	0.5
here are some	–	–	17	0.5	17	0.5
are some points	–	–	13	0.4	13	0.4
you make(s/de) some	4	0.9	11	0.4	13	0.4
some points for	–	–	9	0.3	9	0.3
some interesting points	1	0.2	7	0.2	8	0.2
some good points	2	0.4	5	0.2	7	0.2
support some of	–	–	7	0.2	7	0.2
some background information	–	–	6	0.2	6	0.2
some of these	–	–	6	0.2	6	0.2
some very good	2	0.4	4	0.2	6	0.2
to support some	–	–	6	0.2	6	0.2

Appendix 8.16. Concordances of *some* either preceded by or followed by [POS], [NEG] or [SUG]

(Concordances extracted using ConcGram© (Greaves, 2005)).

(a) Concordances of *some* either preceded by or followed by *although*

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node word, *some*, and co-occurring word, *although*)

say in the following paragraphs achieves this to **some** extent **although** your final 'crucial' questions
Written expression is generally good **although** **some** sentence wordings are **a little awkward in places**.
Your analysis was reasonably done **although** **some** of the critiques you have of the models you use
a fairly good academic style **although** **some** phrases of words could be revised. For example,
texts. Generally, this is well done **although** **some** of what you say is more applicable to general
in fairly good English **although** there are **some** **awkward collocations** 'instigate a discussion'
not a convincing argument although you do show **some** indication of having understood **some** of the
analysis **although at times** your analysis **lacks** **some** **accuracy**. The essay demonstrates a wide reading
English **although** you do need to pay attention to **some** of your phrases: • '...techniques will be
analysis **although** it could have been improved with **some** attention to presenting opposing points of view

(b) Concordances of *some* either preceded by or followed by *but*

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node word, *some*, and co-occurring word, *but*)

presenting a Bibliography. An essay that has **some** good observations **but** could have been better
in the Style Guide. An essay that makes **some** interesting points **but these points are not suff**
analysis of the advertisements. You do make **some** comparative points **but these are just in passing**
Your final two pages on schema theory make **some** interesting points **but** you **don't develop** all of
Bibliography. A fairly good essay that makes **some** interesting points **but does not fully exploit** th
of the British class system. (67%) You make **some** reasonable comments, **but don't really move beyon**
of writing in an academic setting. There are **some** **minor issues with expression but** these do not im
general. From page 2-3, you attempt to analyse **some** of the strategies being used **but you do not full**
of discussion. Your introduction provides **some** background information on both topics **but** you do
before submission. An essay that shows **some** understanding of concepts on the course **but does**

not modifying their use of English. There are some interesting observations in your conclusion but poetic form and literary devices like the *, but some of your points could use development and a

(c) Concordances of some either preceded by or followed by however

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node word, some, and co-occurring word, however)

the arguments. Generally, the essay makes some good points. However, there are a few places in and sources, all of which allow you to draw out some strong points. However, I felt that you never You have some good ideas and you've conducted some useful research. However, I don't think you've decision is justified or rationalised. However, some decisions are unworkable (e.g.. the Chorus on a points you make in your essay. However, there is some misinterpretation of information which affects

(d) Concordances of some either preceded by or followed by not

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node word, some, and co-occurring word, not)

• At the bottom of page 2, you describe some of Machin's work on typography. Not all of this analysis and discussion. • You need to explain some of your points more clearly: - I'm not sure what are a few places in the essay where you need some explanation or where your argument is not very c also mentioned the use of reporting verbs. • Some of the nominalisations you suggest are not nomin in the Style Guide. An essay that makes some interesting points but these points are not suff general. From page 2-3, you attempt to analyse some of the strategies being used but you do not full of writing in an academic setting. There are some minor issues with expression but these do not im

Appendix 8.17. Concordances of the clusters of hedges with *some*

(Concordances extracted using ConcGram© (Greaves, 2005)).

Note: Concordances of *some* + MODAL which were not suggestions were deleted.

(For instance: in meta-statement such as: [w]e *will* discuss *some* of these points in further detail when we meet)

(a) Concordances of *some* + *could*; or *could* + *some*

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node word, *some*, and co-occurring word, *could*)

although it **could** have been improved with **some** attention to presenting opposing points of view
in your essay **could** be better by providing **some** balance. For example, you **could** improve your
for second language learning? There are **some** errors in your essay which **could** have been
in an appropriate academic style. There are **some** errors which **could** have been easily avoided if
the differences between the texts. There are **some** features where you **could** have explained them
of your essay **could** also benefit from **some** further detail on the effect of advertisements o
presenting a Bibliography. An essay that has **some** good observations but **could** have been better
around the issue. It shows that you understand **some** of the basic principles of the course. It **could**
academic writing is good. It **could** be better if **some** of the features you analyse in the essay are als
detail and work out how best you **could** have used **some** of the material here to construct your argument.
it further. What you **could** have done is linked **some** of what Cook says (summarised in the next
in the context. You **could** have quantified **some** of your analyses to add weight - e.g. tracking
of lexically dense language, you **could** refer to **some** of your earlier discussion on academic discourse
also something that is lacking in your essay. • **Some** of your paragraphs **could** have a better
poetic form and literary devices like the *, but **some** of your points **could** use development and a
are accurate and insightful. At times, **some** of your points **could** have been developed more to
course. It **could** have been better organised and **some** of your points needed clearer explanation. I
a fairly good academic style although **some** phrases words **could** be revised. For example,
interpreted your advertisements well. There are **some** points in your essay which **could** be better: •
you sometimes are prone to over-generalisations. **Some** points need developing - **could** you say more abou
on the analysis and discussion. Here are **some** points that you should note which **could** have bee
as stated in the Style Guide. You do have **some** typographical errors in the essay which **could**
in the Style Guide. A good essay that makes **some** useful observations. These observations **could**

(b) Concordances of *some* + *would*; or *would* + *some*

(Concordances extracted using conogram search engine tool, node word, *some*, and co-occurring word, *would*)

generally well done. There are portions where **some** additional examples from the text **would** have information on academic discourse and highlights **some** of its main features. It **would** have been useful it **would** have made sense for you to have grouped **some** of the discussion points along the points you ar 'nature and nurture' argument' is not accurate. **Some** of the sources you **would** have read (e.g. Harmer) **would** have allowed you to provide evidence for **some** of your observations about the uses of colour in **would** also help to consolidate and extend **some** of your points here. On the whole, a very good this example? • It **would** be helpful to refer to **some** of your sources when you explain your examples the theories fairly accurately. There are **some** points in your essay which **would** have benefited a little over-descriptive and you made **some** points which **would** benefit from further **would** benefit from further development or **some** references. • Page 3 - 'This is to say therefore has various positions and ideas including **some** that are very recent. These **would** have been wort

(c) Concordances of *some* + *might*; or *might* + *some*

(Concordances extracted using conogram search engine tool, node word, *some*, and co-occurring word, *might*)

might be useful for you to begin your essay with **some** background information on the topic. Perhaps a the font size changes - page 5 - and there are **some** errors which **might** have been avoided through in the current lesson'. Unless, you observed **some** evidence of this and perhaps you **might** have **might** have been useful for you to have connected **some** of the analysis that comes later in the essay to and Cook. These texts **might** have helped with **some** of the difficulties with interpretation which ar It **might** have been good to have seen what **some** of these 'misunderstandings' were and the present the classroom materials as evidence for **some** of your points, it **might** have been better for yo There is a concern that you **might** be overstating **some** of your points. For e.g your argument on It **might** have been good to have referred to **some** sources to support these points. You write well differently, this **might** have helped. You make **some** very good and interesting points: • Very good

(d) Concordances of *some* + *should*; or *should* + *some*

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node word, *some*, and co-occurring word, *might*)

on the analysis and discussion. Here are **some** points that you **should** note which could have been of this nature, an analysis of colours **should** use **some** of the terminology in the field of semiotics to

(e) Concordances of *some* either preceded by or followed by *need*/ *needs*/ *needed*

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node word, *some*, and co-occurring word, *not*)

introducing your advertisements. • There are **some** claims in your essay that **need** rethinking: o You the 'revolt' better. • Page 2 - you **need** **some** evidence in the form of references (perhaps even clear. I have listed a few examples: Here are **some** examples of where you **need** a better explanation: related to your point on proficiency? You **need** **some** explanation at the end of that paragraph. • Page are a few places in the essay where you **need** **some** explanation or where your argument is not very theory to take age into account...' - you **need** **some** more evidence for this as it is a very strong for you to note: • **Some** of your claims **need** **some** more thought. • On page 1, you say that one of **need** to be mindful of the original purposes of **some** of these studies before extending them to suit read. Here are a few points for you to note: • **Some** of your claims **need** **some** more thought. o On page of your data not fitting in with her model. **Some** of your conclusions **need** more thought too. English although you do **need** to pay attention to **some** of your phrases: • '...techniques will be analysis and discussion. • You **need** to explain **some** of your points more clearly: • I'm not sure what Here are a few specific points for you to note: **Some** of your points **need** development or explanation: Long developed much of what Krashen said. • **Some** of your points **need** substantiation or you sometimes are prone to over-generalisations. **Some** points **need** developing - could you say more about you have chosen to analyse. There are **some** points you **need** to note: • While you have a few arguments claims in your essay that **need** **some** rethinking: • Your point on the 'H' in the

• Page 4 - your point on motivation **needs** **some** development. Primarily, I think an important are at "a disadvantage in this theory" **needs** **some** more thought. Krashen's theory has not

on interaction. You really **needed** to have given **some** examples here to illustrate your point on

essay where you say the teacher **needed** to use **some** grammatical explanations to 'clear up the the students. Observation Discussion 3 **needed** **some** information on the dialogue that the focus of th 7, **needed** more explanation. I think you **needed** **some** information on the task for us to understand the points **needed** clearer explanation. I highlight **some** of these below. Generally, the essay covers th you provided of the 'Pub' lesson to highlight **some** of these. On that note, you **needed** to include th of the text. You **needed** to include at least **some** of this in addition to the structural analysis. you **needed** to have done is either incorporate **some** of this information into your main discussion or course. It could have been better organised and **some** of your points **needed** clearer explanation. I on the three-part exchange being criticised by **some** scholars as being 'rigid' **needed** more occur at the beginning of sentences. There are **some** sentences that **needed** to be rephrased to ensure modification was far too general. You **needed** **some** specific examples of modifications of language

Appendix 8.18. Concordances of *more*

e other two categories as you do not say anything **more** about it beyond a definition of what these categories. Some points need developing – could you say **more** about Itol, use of blank verse, for instance? Also have made. • I think you could have said a lot **more** about the lexis – what are the usual implications is adequate. The essay could have benefited from **more** argument and less description. The essay uses a few points could maybe have been clarified a little **more** but you generally write in a clear and coherent way where your analysis and interpretation need to be **more** carefully thought through. I have listed a few points of the models you use need to be thought through **more** carefully. Thompson's model was accounting for a lot of materials. Your essay needs to be organised **more** clearly and your argument needs to be strengthened e, your reflections are good. However, these seem **more** clearly focused on your skills and strategies in the actually extracted the lines and illustrated them **more** clearly than presenting in a discursive fashion. t ideologies. To help you to structure your essay **more** clearly, you could take each text and say how it develops the relationship between goals and motivation **more** clearly. • Page 2 – what myth are you referring to? he differences and similarities between the texts **more** clearly. Your conclusions were not always clearly seen better for you to have organised this section **more** clearly. At the moment, it is a list of strategies with greater depth and to explain some of your points **more** clearly. Here are some points for you to note: • On text to its suitability for the intended audience **more** clearly. I am not sure what exactly the connection is would have allowed the reader to see the moves **more** clearly. The analysis of the linguistic features comes out of the discussion. • You need to explain some of your points **more** clearly: • I'm not sure what you mean when you say of the category. This would have given your essay **more** coherence and it would have been better organised. I think your argument could have benefited from a **more** coherent structure. This is still strong work, though academic discourse. You could have highlighted the **more** common use of complex sentences than simple ones as looking to make. • Your essay could have done a **more** comparative analysis of the advertisements. You do and conclusions was fairly insightful although a **more** comparative discussion might have broadened your detectors are important because sentences tend to be **more** complex than simple in academic discourse. Your elements are appealing to you, it would have been a **more** convincing argument to have used some scholarship approach? I think you could have selected other, **more** convincing evidence to support this point. • Page I think the points you raise here could have been **more** convincing if discussed in light of some of your evidence viewpoint might make the argument in your essay **more** convincing. • On page 6, you mention Gass and the y. A good attempt at answering the question but **more** could have been achieved if the essay interpreted approach is used in the classroom could have been **more** critical. What are the drawbacks of the approach? e **more** useful to the reader in terms of providing **more** detail of the theories you will be discussing in the analysis of the linguistic features could have been **more** detailed and a **more** sustained comparison might have been alysis of the linguistic features could have been **more** detailed and your discussion on the similarities could have been **more** detailed description of both texts. The conclusion a **more** sustained comparison might have yielded a **more**

• There are several places in your essay where a more detailed explanation is needed. A few examples are missing from this essay is any analysis of the more detailed linguistic and grammatical features of the discussion on the similarities could have also been more detailed. Fairly good conclusions and interpretations have achieved more if the analysis was a little more detailed. This essay shows that you understand the also looked at the distribution and effect of the more difficult questions compared to the ones you have from the rest of your essay. What would have been a more effective way to present your analysis, perhaps would be to take age into account...’ – you need some more evidence for this as it is a very strong claim. You could have benefited from a clearer explanation or more evidence. I list a few for you to note: ? Page 3, examples in the essay where you could have provided more examples or suggested an explanation to improve the analysis. (page 4) needs to be substantiated either through more examples or through the use of other sources that have had more than one example of this. If you had more examples, you could have discussed the different criteria. However, each of your elements needed far more explanation. How did you come to the conclusion that this essay where your analysis and interpretation needed more explanation. I have highlighted a few examples for the example you use on the bottom of page 7, needed more explanation. I think you needed some information on ‘Presentation and Presentation’). There could have been more explicit description of the audiolingual approach to ‘improve your skills. Your skills need to be a more explicit focus! Your conclusion is clear and does Your introduction could be a little better with a more explicit link between the two major distinctions you as itself is fairly well done. You do need to make more explicit reference to the exact linguistic feature that is not there somewhere but you need to make that link more explicit. • Page 4, para 3, does acquisition of the text more explicitly the element you were analysing – for example, the narrative effects of the text not so more explicitly the central argument of the essay. I thought you could perhaps have discussed more explicitly to the general growth of English. • You could have pointed out more explicitly when you are moving from one point to the next. I thought you could perhaps have discussed more explicitly with other relevant teaching methods. the link the first sentence of your second paragraph more explicitly. You have adhered to the conventions of your essay could be improved if you signalled more explicitly. This essay displays a good understanding of the drawbacks of the methods and contrasted it more explicitly. We covered these in class. Your introduction...’ – might be useful to say what ‘it’ refers to more extensively research than required. Your use of less than one example you use on the bottom of page 7, needed more extensively in your essay. Your focus in this section has been more specific and linked to the discussion more focus on the part of the question which refers to the discussion by showing the link with language acquisition more fully, exploration of the data in this section. Your range of books and are to be commended for doing more fully into the section on ‘Language’. • I’m not sure their books. You could have also used your sources more general one about methods of teaching. ? Page 3: your essay although it could have been strengthened by more general points lead your discussion. From the outset but these needed to be extended and incorporated more generally. This is also something that is lacking in your essay. I think there could have been a further, more if a greater number of specific examples were analysed but these needed to be extended and incorporated more fully into the section on ‘Language’. • I’m not sure antiate the point you are making. His point was a more general one about methods of teaching. ? Page 3: your boundaries on what’s acceptable, but you let these more general points lead your discussion. From the outset and to your discussion about academic writing more generally. This is also something that is lacking in your essay. A good essay that could have achieved more if a greater number of specific examples were analysed

f academic writing. The essay could have achieved **more** if the analysis was a little **more** detailed. This hompson's move structure analysis might have been **more** illuminating for your spoken text. Also, the analy h) to this example. This would have then provided **more** illustration of your point and developed your core e to use a delayed technique here compared to the **more** immediate technique (if we assume that it was imme uld have been **more** useful for you to have engaged **more** immediately in the analysis after perhaps a paragr ld have developed on the 'symbolism of the apple' **more** in your discussion of advertisement 1 (page 5). Th with critical material well (though a little bit **more** in-depth analysis would have been even better), an elevant and **more** recent sources and substantially **more** in-depth exploration of the main issues in the que s between the two languages but you need a little **more** information to explain your point. • Page 3 - 'CAH iticised by some scholars as being 'rigid' needed **more** information. It would have been useful to have sai nt and student-student as this would have yielded **more** interesting points for discussion. Perhaps, you co eresting to read and might have been incorporated **more** into your essay. Overall, the analysis of the err e essay. What might have helped the essay achieve **more** is an integrated discussion which includes your re , as I said earlier, could have been supported by **more** literature on the topic. The final discussion poin an academic audience. The essay could have been **more** neatly presented. There are instances where the fo alysis. The work flowed well but needed to have a **more** obvious central thesis. You must pursue one line o . In academic discourse, frequently, the focus is **more** on the information than the person responsible for observations are insightful. Here are some of the **more** outstanding points: • Your detailed description of ocus of audiolingualism was on speech and nothing **more**? - Page 6: 'Considering the teachings of Chomsky... suggest her on-going longing for this. Including **more** quotations would also help to consolidate and exte Also, the analysis might have been presented in a **more** reader-friendly fashion - perhaps diagrammatically ter to learn language at a younger age could have **more** reasons besides the one that you mention. • Page 3 that needs **more** thorough research of relevant and **more** recent sources and substantially **more** in-depth exp it might have been good to have read a couple of **more** recent sources. Your interview data was interest icative language teaching' in greater detail with **more** references to the literature. You do make some use f your discussion in the section 'the learner' is **more** relevant to the learning process. • On page 6, yo sion is an interesting discussion on the need for **more** research and a better understanding of academic di monstrates. I think your work will be enhanced by **more** research and advise you to develop this dimension ation - you need to integrate materials like this **more** seamlessly. You made some good points about poetic rked out production plan and prompt copy. Perhaps **more** should be said in the Rationale about precisely wh erhaps it is here that the teacher's role becomes **more** significant? • On page 10, you make the point tha secondary sources - if you could integrate these **more** smoothly, while * your own, very promising, critic and you need to integrate your secondary material **more** smoothly. This is solid work, but could use a litt mation on both topics but you do need to refer to **more** sources than the two you have used. It is also not ter: • Your introduction could have been a little **more** specific about the advertisements and the impact i y good argument and could have achieved **more** with **more** specific analysis and interpretation. This essa od essay that could have been better if there was **more** specific analysis to support the comments about ac

academic discourse. The analysis could have been more specific and linked to the discussion more explicitly. Here are a few more specific points for you to note:

- Your opening paragraph has not been interpreted accurately. Here are a few more specific points for your attention:
- I am surprised by the specific references to what you have read. The evidence is more specific: for example on page 2, you refer to the stringent proofreading process would catch. I'm not sure a sustained argument linking this with the question of a sustained argumentation and better overall organization of the text. A more sustained comparison of features might have highlighted a more sustained comparison might have yielded a more detailed analysis.
- Your interpretations and conclusions were good although a more sustained comparison might have enriched your discussion of the realities, but your argument is about a great deal more than a realist "mirror" - do you mention things like interactionist theories.
- Are you certain that these were actually influenced by innatist theories?
- I am not sure a disclaimer that the essay is unable to reflect on your analysis of the classroom does not do anything more than just the three unnamed theories.
- Behaviour analysis might have been useful for you to have had more than merely point out where there is error correct than one example of this. If you had more examples than one occasion, 'an academic writing'. If you a more. There is evidence of some good argumentation in the end of each reference. An essay that needs more thorough research of relevant and more recent sources would be more useful.
- Your work could be improved by a more thorough understanding of linguistics and a wider meaning in the seminars. The essay also needed to show a more thorough understanding of the audio-lingual method more.
- Some of your conclusions need more thought too. Interruptions are not really 'discrepancies' for you to note.
- Some of your claims need some more thought.
- On page 1, you say that one of the features are at "a disadvantage in this theory" needs some more thought. Krashen's theory has not disadvantaged adults to be explored! (Good Pass) There is considerable more to do with the actual lettering. There is evidence more to highlight the impact the techniques in use have more to make your point explicit.
- Page 4 - 'The advantage of a traditional introduction to ease the reader into your up-to-date version of your primary source (Harmer) is more useful as a discussion point in this section.
- TB is more useful for you to have engaged more immediately in your discussion.
- It is more useful if you had combined it with Machin's parameter.
- It is more useful is to develop the question by providing details more useful point for you to bring up.
- Page 6: 'Howe more useful to have drawn on a few other sources for the analysis more useful to have shown the analysis diagrammatically.

r you to note: • Your opening paragraph could be **more** useful to the reader in terms of providing **more** de
esting comments which you could have incorporated **more** usefully in the rest of your essay. Having said th
which raise criticisms against this point will be **more** valid. • Bottom of page 7 to top of page 8, you s
ocussed on your examples. It might have also been **more** valuable for your discussion to have rewritten som
minor ones which I feel would only lend a little **more** weight to an already extremely convincing and succ
s. It might have been useful for you to have read **more** widely on the issue on error correction (for e.g.
ake in your essay. I do think you could have read **more** widely on the topic of error correction as you hav
tbooks for the course but you needed to have read **more** widely to achieve a better understanding of the th
reasonably good argument and could have achieved **more** with **more** specific analysis and interpretation.
our introduction to the essay, it might have been **more** worthwhile for you to have discussed the issues yo
your essay. Having said that, it might have been **more** worthwhile for you to have displayed your understa

Appendix 8.19. Concordances of the clusters of hedges with *more*
(Concordances extracted using ConcGram© (Greaves, 2005)).

Note: Concordances of *more* + MODAL which were not suggestions were deleted.

(For instance: in quoting students work '[a]lthough this *can* be seen to be much *more* interesting...')

(a) Concordances of *more* + *could*; or *could* + *more*

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node word, *more*, and co-occurring word, *could*)

Some points need developing - **could** you say **more** about Ltol, use of blank verse, for instance? have made. • I think you **could** have said a lot **more** about the lexis - what are the usual implication is adequate. The essay **could** have benefited from **more** argument and less description. The essay uses a points **could** maybe have been clarified a little **more** but you generally write in a clear and coherent ideologies. To help you to structure your essay **more** clearly, you **could** take each text and say how it think your argument **could** have benefited from a **more** coherent structure. This is still strong work, discourse. You **could** have highlighted the **more** common use of complex sentences than simple ones looking to make. • Your essay **could** have done a **more** comparative analysis of the advertisements. You approach? I think you **could** have selected other, **more** convincing evidence to support this point. • Pag think the points you raise here **could** have been **more** convincing if discussed in the light of some of A good attempt at answering the question but **more could** have been achieved if the essay interprete is used in the classroom **could** have been **more** critical. What are the drawbacks of the approach of the linguistic features **could** have been **more** detailed and a **more** sustained comparison might of the linguistic features **could** have been **more** detailed and your discussion on the similarities on the similarities **could** have also been **more** detailed. Fairly good conclusions and in the essay where you **could** have provided **more** examples or suggested an explanation to improve had **more** than one example of this. If you had **more** examples, you **could** have discussed the different and Presentation'). There **could** have been **more** explicit description of the audiolingual approach introduction **could** be a little better with a **more** explicit link between the two major distinctions **could** have been better if you had pointed out **more** explicitly the element you were analysing - for I thought you **could** perhaps have discussed **more** explicitly the narrative effects of the text not of your essay **could** be improved if you signal **more** explicitly when you are moving from one point to

books. You **could** have also used your sources **more** extensively in your essay. Your focus in this although it **could** have been strengthened by **more** focus on the part of the question which refers to 'easy'. I think there **could** have been a further, **more** full, exploration of the data in this section. order. A good essay that **could** have achieved **more** if a greater number of specific examples were academic writing. The essay **could** have achieved **more** if the analysis was a little **more** detailed. as I said earlier, **could** have been supported by **more** literature on the topic. The final discussion academic audience. The essay **could** have been **more** neatly presented. There are instances where the to learn language at a younger age **could** have **more** reasons besides the one that you mention. • Page secondary sources – if you **could** integrate these **more** smoothly, while * your own, very promising, crit you need to integrate your secondary material **more** smoothly. This is solid work, but **could** use a • Your introduction **could** have been a little **more** specific about the advertisements and the impact good argument and **could** have achieved **more** with **more** specific analysis and interpretation. This essay that **could** have been better if there was **more** specific analysis to support the comments about academic discourse. The analysis **could** have been **more** specific and linked to the discussion **more** a limited extent and **could** have been better with **more** sustained argumentation and better overall features **could** have been **more** detailed and a **more** sustained comparison might have yielded a **more** the literature. Your work **could** be improved by a **more** thorough understanding linguistics and a wider some of your points **could** have been developed **more** to highlight the impact the techniques in use you to note: • Your opening paragraph **could** be **more** useful to the reader in terms of providing **more** comments which you **could** have incorporated **more** usefully in the rest of your essay. Having said in your essay. I do think you **could** have read **more** widely on the topic of error correction as you reasonably good argument and **could** have achieved **more** with **more** specific analysis and interpretation.

(b) Concordances of *more* + *might*; or *might* + *more*

(Concordances extracted using conccgram search engine tool, node word, *more*, and co-occurring word, *might*)

model for both the texts. It **might** have been **more** appropriate to have used the Swales model for the and conclusions was fairly insightful although a **more** comparative discussion **might** have broadened your viewpoint **might** make the argument in your essay **more** convincing. • On page 6, you mention Gass and the of the linguistic features could have been **more** detailed and a **more** sustained comparison **might** a **more** sustained comparison **might** have yielded a **more** detailed description of both texts. The – **might** be useful to say what 'it' refers to **more** explicitly. You have adhered to the

move structure analysis **might** have been **more** illuminating for your spoken text. Also, the to read and **might** have been incorporated **more** into your essay. Overall, the analysis of the essay. What **might** have helped the essay achieve **more** is an integrated discussion which includes your the analysis **might** have been presented in a **more** reader-friendly fashion – perhaps it **might** have been good to have read a couple of **more** recent sources. Your interview data was features could have been **more** detailed and a **more** sustained comparison **might** have yielded a **more** and conclusions were good although a **more** sustained comparison **might** have enriched your chosen texts. The analysis was good although a **more** sustained comparison of features **might** have it **might** have been useful for you to have had **more** than one example of this. If you had **more** tenuous. Perhaps this analysis **might** have been **more** useful if you had combined it with Machin's source (Paltridge) for this. It **might** have been **more** useful to have drawn on a few other sources for is fairly well done although it **might** have been **more** useful to have shown the analysis on your examples. It **might** have also been **more** valuable for your discussion to have rewritten It **might** have been useful for you to have read **more** widely on the issue on error correction (for e.g introduction to the essay, it **might** have been **more** worthwhile for you to have discussed the issues your essay. Having said that, it **might** have been **more** worthwhile for you to have displayed your

(c) Concordances of *more* + *will*; or *will* + *more*

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node word, *more*, and co-occurring word, *will*)

more useful to the reader in terms of providing **more** detail of the theories you **will** be discussing in I think your work **will** be enhanced by **more** research and advise you to develop this dimension raise criticisms against this point **will** be **more** valid. • Bottom of page 7 to top of page 8, you

(d) Concordances of *more* + *would*; or *would* + *more*

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node word, *more*, and co-occurring word, *would*)

If you added 'text' to this, it **would** be **more** accurate. • On page 1, 'The reason why the as 'for the purposes of' which **would** convey **more** accurately your intended meaning. • Top of page **would** have allowed the reader to see the moves **more** clearly. The analysis of the linguistic features the category. This **would** have given your essay **more** coherence and it **would** have been better

are appealing to you, it **would** have been a **more** convincing argument to have used some scholarship the rest of your essay. What **would** have been a **more** effective way to present your analysis, perhaps to this example. This **would** have then provided **more** illustration of your point and developed your with critical material well (though a little bit **more** in-depth analysis **would** have been even better), by some scholars as being 'rigid' needed **more** information. It **would** have been useful to have methodologies, it **would** not be suited for the **more** inhibited learner' (page 4). • A minor point but and student-student as this **would** have yielded **more** interesting points for discussion. Perhaps, you her on-going longing for this. Including **more** quotations **would** also help to consolidate and although your essay **would** have benefitted from **more** specific references to what you have read. The • It **would** have helped your essay if you were **more** specific: for example on page 2, you refer to the few grammatical errors creep in, which perhaps a **more** stringent proofreading process **would** catch. I'm (page 6) • 'The HIGs prementioned **would** thus be **more** susceptible to this type of learning.' (page 6) view of the learner. This **would** have been **more** useful as a discussion point in this section. • a little too general. I think it **would** have been **more** useful for you to have engaged **more** immediately your opening paragraph. Instead, what **would** be **more** useful is to develop the question by providing one of the seminars and this **would** have been a **more** useful point for you to bring up. ? Page 6: minor ones which I feel **would** only lend a little **more** weight to an already extremely convincing and

(e) Concordances of *more + need/ needs/ needed*; or *need/ needs/ needed + more*

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node word, *more*, and co-occurring word, *need/ needs/ needed*)

Some points **need** developing - could you say **more** about Itol, use of blank verse, for instance? your analysis and interpretation **need** to be **more** carefully thought through. I have listed a few of the models you use **need** to be thought through **more** carefully. Thompson's model was accounting for a • You **need** to explain some of your points **more** clearly: • I'm not sure what you mean when you to take age into account...' - you **need** some **more** evidence for this as it is a very strong claim. where your analysis and interpretation **need** **more** explanation. I have highlighted a few examples improve your skills. Your skills **need** to be a **more** explicit focus! Your conclusion is clear and does itself is fairly well done. You do **need** to make **more** explicit reference to the exact linguistic there somewhere but you **need** to make that link **more** explicit. • Page 4, para 3, does acquisition of between the two languages but you **need** a little **more** information to explain your point. • Page 3 - is an interesting discussion on the **need** for **more** research and a better understanding of academic

- you **need** to integrate materials like this **more** seamlessly. You made some good points about you **need** to integrate your secondary material **more** smoothly. This is solid work, but could use a on both topics but you do **need** to refer to **more** sources than the two you have used. It is also book. I think you **need** to explain this a little **more**. There is evidence of some good argumentation i with her model. Some of your conclusions **need more** thought too. Interruptions are not really for you to note: • Some of your claims **need** some **more** thought. • On page 1, you say that one of the materials. Your essay **needs** to be organised **more** clearly and your argument **needs** to be page 4) **needs** to be substantiated either through **more** examples or through the use of other sources tha on the role of the teacher **needs** to be linked **more** explicitly to the central argument of the essay. **needs more** thorough research of relevant and **more** recent sources and substantially **more** in-depth the end of each reference. An essay that **needs more** thorough research of relevant and **more** recent at "a disadvantage in this theory" **needs** some **more** thought. Krashen's theory has not disadvantaged

- There are several places in your essay where a **more** detailed explanation is **needed**. A few examples However, each of your elements **needed** far **more** explanation. How did you come to the conclusion example you use on the bottom of page 7, **needed more** explanation. I think you **needed** some information but these **needed** to be extended and incorporated **more** fully into the section on 'Language'. • I'm not by some scholars as being 'rigid' **needed more** information. It would have been useful to have The work flowed well but **needed** to have a **more** obvious central thesis. You must pursue one line in the seminars. The essay also **needed** to show a **more** thorough understanding of the audio-lingual for the course but you **needed** to have read **more** widely to achieve a better understanding of the

Appendix 8.20. Concordances of *more* either preceded by or followed by [POS], [NEG] or [SUG]

(Concordances extracted using ConcGram© (Greaves, 2005)).

(a) Concordances of *more* either preceded by or followed by *although*

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node word, *more*, and co-occurring word, *although*)

is well done although some of what you say is more applicable to general spoken written texts than and conclusions was fairly insightful although a more comparative discussion might have broadened your although it could have been strengthened by more focus on the part of the question which refers to although your essay would have benefitted from more specific references to what you have read. The and conclusions were good although a more sustained comparison might have enriched your chosen texts. The analysis was good although a more sustained comparison of features might have high is fairly well done although it might have been more useful to have shown the analysis diagrammatical

(b) Concordances of *more* either preceded by or followed by *but*

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node word, *more*, and co-occurring word, *but*)

points could maybe have been clarified a little more but you generally write in a clear and coherent A good attempt at answering the question but more could have been achieved if the essay interprete there somewhere but you need to make that link more explicit. • Page 4, para 3, does acquisition of but these needed to be extended and incorporated more fully into the section on 'Language'. • I'm not on what's acceptable, but you let these more general points lead your discussion. From the between the two languages but you need a little more information to explain your point. • Page 3 - The work flowed well but needed to have a more obvious central thesis. You must pursue one line you need to integrate your secondary material more smoothly. This is solid work, but could use a on both topics but you do need to refer to more sources than the two you have used. It is also factors. You do make mention of these but a more sustained argument linking this with the questio for the course but you needed to have read more widely to achieve a better understanding of the

(c) Concordances of *more* either preceded by or followed by *however*

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node word, *more*, and co-occurring word, *however*)

your reflections are **good**. **However**, these seem **more** clearly focused on your skills and strategies in
However, each of your elements *needed far more* explanation. How did you come to the conclusion

(d) Concordances of *more* either preceded by or followed by *not*

(Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node word, *more*, and co-occurring word, *not*)

other two categories as you **do not say anything more** about it beyond a definition of what these
to its suitability for the intended audience **more** clearly. I am **not sure what exactly** the
• You *need to explain some of your points more* clearly: • I'm **not sure what you mean** when you
I thought *you could perhaps have discussed more* explicitly the narrative effects of the text **not**
analysis of the classroom **does not do anything more** than merely point out where there is error
with her model. Some of your conclusions *need more* thought too. Interruptions are **not** really
at "a disadvantage in this theory" *needs some more* thought. Krashen's theory has **not** disadvantaged

Appendix 8.21. The log-likelihood test on the other vague expressions in the EdEng corpus
(Calculated using the log-likelihood calculator developed by Rayson (2004))

Notes:

- Vague expressions which were not functioning as hedging were deleted. For instance, *the final reference in your bibliography should appear earlier on your list.*
- Vague expression which was found in quotation was not tallied. For instance: “[p]age 4 – ‘The advertisement seems to be largely based upon images...’” – where the tutor was quoting the student’s work.

	Department A		Department B		Total (A + B)		+/-	LL
	Raw freq.	Words per thou.	Raw freq.	Words per thou.	Raw freq.	Words per thou.		
I think	7	1.5	39	1.2	46	1.3	+	0.27
I’m not sure	2	0.4	18	0.6	20	0.6	–	0.13
appear	-	-	11	0.4	11	0.3	–	3.23
seem	8	1.8	3	0.1	11	0.3	+	21.07
tend to	1	0.2	2	0.1	3	0.1	+	0.86
TOTAL	18	4.0	74	2.4	92	2.6	+	3.56

Note:

+ indicates over-representation in Department A relative to Department B.

– indicates under-representation in Department A relative to Department B.

The row shaded in grey is found only in Department B.

Due to the relatively low frequency of occurrences of the other vague expressions in the EdEng corpus, a cut-off point of two occurrences was used.

Appendix 8.22. Concordances of *I (do) think, I thought* and *I don't think*

(Concordances extracted using ConcGram© (Greaves, 2005)).

Note: Concordances extracted using concgram search engine tool, node word, *I*, and co-occurring word, *think* in order to retrieve not only instances of *I think* but also instances of *I don't think*)

some of the point you make in your essay. I do think you could have read more widely on the done. The only comment I have is on page 3 where I don't really think that the students, at this 2 - 'This is also named 'conscious learning'.' I don't think 'conscious learning only refers to with reference to the Panasonic advertisement. I don't think a mere reference to background not sure that this point was clearly explained. I don't think Appendix iii did very much in of Japan to query their complicated spelling' - I don't think asking a question about spelling adhere to the rules of the English language but I don't think it is one of the features of academic is not repeat the same thing too many times". I don't think that your essay is strengthened in the 'Eternity' advertisement could be improved. I don't think the advertisers were trying to imply • '...evoke persuasion and significance...' - I don't think you can evoke 'persuasion or the semiotic versus the symbolic is fascinating, I don't think you elaborate on this in enough you've conducted some useful research. However, I don't think you've spent quite enough time on motivation needs some development. Primarily, I think an important consideration would be if they been useful for you to have refereed to Machin. I think his parameters would have allowed you to discussion on academic discourse is good. I think it might have been useful for you to have assignment 2 before you begin writing it as I think it will be helpful for us to meet. The of the phrase 'communicate in the language'. I think it would have been useful to have mentioned to your essay was a little too general. I think it would have been more useful for you to has an entire section on individual differences. I think reading his chapter might have helped your on the use of the semantic fields on page 6 and I think the points you raise here could have been focus on the explanation behind the grammar". I think the primary focus of drills was on to the ones you have labelled as 'easy'. I think there could have been a further, more full, that "could be termed a suggestopedia method". I think this could have benefited from further is related to? I am assuming proficiency but I think this needs to be made explicit. • There are but you haven't quite developed it sufficiently. I think this would have been quite an interesting with a specific accurate body of knowledge'. I think what you mean to say is that academic that page on typography is not quite accurate. I think you are referring to punctuation here. (page 3) used the audiolingual approach? I think you could have selected other, more 1 has a 'business-like style' (page 4). • I think you could have developed on the 'symbolism

quite an interesting argument to have made. • I think you could have said a lot more about the
a sense of certainty is accurate (Page 2, top). I think you could have developed this a little as
in the advertisements. • On the point on colour, I think you could have developed your points on the
material well, though on several occasions I think you could have gone into greater depth with
You repeat 'non-exist' in the following line. I think you mean 'non-sexist' and academic language
• 'quantitude' (page 1) - there is no such word. I think you mean 'quantity' • '...and to deduct
'detract attention from others'? • 'rethoric' - I think you mean 'rhetoric' • Avoid contractions
drill from what you were referring to earlier. I think you need to distinguish between the
advertisement looks like a page out of a book. I think you need to explain this a little more.
point on layering and lexical fields (although I think you need to rethink the point on the
the bottom of page 7, needed more explanation. I think you needed some information on the task for
would benefit from further development, and I think your argument could have benefited from a
- as your use of Wittgenstein demonstrates. I think your work will be enhanced by more research

ou've done and the level of detail is impressive. I thought the essay itself was rather disappointing in light
role of the teacher did not get as much focus as I thought they would have. Generally, your essay is easy to
done. The move analysis had only one move which I thought was not clearly explained - I'm not sure how the 1
ustrate some of the limitations of Propp's model. I thought you could perhaps have discussed more explicitly t

Appendix 8.23. The log-likelihood test on stance adverbs in the EdEng corpus
(Calculated using the log-likelihood calculator developed by Rayson (2004))

Notes:

- Adverb which was not functioning as hedging was deleted. For instance, *[t]his is very good as you don't simply use critics to shove up your argument but to develop it in an original way.*
- Adverb which was found in quotations was not tallied. For instance: “[y]ou need to develop your point on how the use of typography ‘symbolises the idea of not only ease but of comfort, which seems suitable impression to be making on the target audience’.” – where the tutor was quoting the student’s work.

	Department A		Department B		Total (A + B)		+/-	LL
	Raw freq.	Words per thou.	Raw freq.	Words per thou.	Raw freq.	Words per thou.		
perhaps	3	0.7	23	0.7	26	0.7	–	0.03
really	5	0.7	6	0.2	11	0.3	+	7.18
occasionally	4	0.9	4	0.1	8	0.2	+	6.56
usually	-	-	4	0.1	4	0.1	–	1.08
only	1	0.2	2	0.1	3	0.1	+	0.86
fully	1	0.2	1	0.03	2	0.1	+	1.64
probably	1	0.2	1	0.03	2	0.1	+	1.64
maybe	1	0.2	1	0.03	2	0.1	+	1.64
TOTAL	16	3.5	42	1.3	58	1.6	+	9.28

Note:

+ indicates over-representation in Department A relative to Department B.

– indicates under-representation in Department A relative to Department B.

The row shaded in grey is found only in Department B.

Due to the relatively low frequency of occurrences of the stance adverbs in the EdEng corpus, a cut-off point of two occurrences was used.

Appendix 8.24. Concordances of *perhaps*

to the discussion on the interactionist theories. **Perhaps** a better link **might** have helped your argument to pay with some background information on the topic. **Perhaps** a discussion on advertising discourse and persuasiveness although a few grammatical errors creep in, which **perhaps** a more stringent proofreading process **would** catch. **perhaps** a paragraph or two on the main differences between **perhaps** diagrammatically as this **would** have allowed the reader even some research studies?) on the debate of the limitations of Propp's model. **I thought you could** **perhaps** have discussed more explicitly the narrative effect of the interaction work together to convey the same meaning so **perhaps** if you'd organised your discussion little differently now to make 'comprehensible input' comprehensible. **Perhaps** it is here that the teacher's role becomes more significant. **Perhaps** more should be said in the Rationale about precise planning fully worked out production plan and prompt copy. **Perhaps**, my only comment here **would** be with regard to your presentation one as it contrasts with the rest of the lesson. **Perhaps**, one concrete example to substantiate illustrate your point. **Perhaps** one interesting point **you could have mentioned** was the discussion on your role as an observer in the class. **perhaps** state the aims of your essay. • You haven't really provided useful examples to illustrate your points. **Perhaps** the only suggestion **I would make in the section** on understanding how to undertake a good analysis of texts. **Perhaps** the only suggestion **I would make is for you** to have made your point. **Perhaps** this analysis **might have been more useful** if you had presented any examples of these from your extract. **Perhaps**, this discussion **could have just been part of your** presentation. **perhaps** this **might have been mentioned** earlier in the essay. **Perhaps**, towards the end of the essay **you could have had a** paragraph on a more effective way to present your analysis, **perhaps would have been to present** these sentences individually. **Perhaps**, **you could have considered** how the teacher's question yielded more interesting points for discussion. **Perhaps**, **you could have recast these suggestions** as weaker. **Perhaps** **you could have summarised it** and then launched directly into the background information on individual differences. **perhaps** **you could have used Brown's principles** on teaching. **perhaps** **you might have elaborated a little** on this point.

Appendix 8.25. Concordances of *really*

Note: Concordances of *really* which were not aspects of hedging were deleted.

(For instance: [y]our essay is also full of really interesting and perceptive ideas – where *really* is not a stance adverb but a booster, increasing the positivity.

The first advertisement you have selected is not really an advertisement in the sense of how we have been
ome strong points. However, I felt that you never really capitalised on this. You failed to push your ideas
mistakes which can be costly- did Samuel Jackson really coin the term 'metaphysical'?! I suggest you check
aders envious of the man. Your point here doesn't really come through clearly. o Page 3, top - you mention
aps state the aims of your essay. • You haven't really commented on the image of the people in the Blackb
ions need more thought too. Interruptions are not really 'discrepancies in the structure', they are part of
7%) You make some reasonable comments, but don't really move beyond the ideas discussed (and quotations pr
age of the learners were significant as you don't really mention this in any great detail beyond 'younger l
he only comment I have is on page 3 where I don't really think that the students, at this stage of the less

Appendix 8.26. The log-likelihood test on submodifiers in the EdEng corpus
(Calculated using the log-likelihood calculator developed by Rayson (2004))

Note:

- Submodifier which was not hedging was not tallied. For instance: [*t*]his is a *very* honest account of your placement – *very* in this case is a booster (comment is very certain or assertive).
- Submodifier which was found in quotations was also not tallied. For instance: *I am also not certain about what you mean by your sentence ‘This is not an obvious sentence but *rather* a question of tone.’* – where the tutor was quoting the student’s work.

	Department A		Department B		Total (A + B)		+/-	LL
	Raw freq.	Words per thousand	Raw freq.	Words per thousand	Raw freq.	Words per thousand		
quite	10	2.2	24	0.8	34	0.9	+	6.70
rather	8	1.8	15	0.5	23	0.6	+	7.47
entirely	2	0.4	5	0.2	7	0.2	+	1.26
slightly	-	-	7	0.2	7	0.2	-	1.88
fairly	-	-	3	0.1	3	0.1	-	0.81
TOTAL	20	4.4	55	1.8	75	2.1		

Note:

Rows shaded in grey are found only in Department B.

+ indicates over-representation in Department A relative to Department B

- indicates under-representation in Department A relative to Department B