Abstract of dissertation entitled

“I believe that” or “It is suggested that”?  
Authorial presence in the use of reporting verbs in ‘soft’ discipline  
academic writing by community college students in Hong Kong

Submitted by

Ho Kin Loong

For the degree of Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics  
at The University of Hong Kong  
in August 2012

An appropriate representation of self is crucial in reporting past research, establishing a committed writer stance, and persuading the reader in academic writing. While research has suggested an underuse of authorial reference in student writing at the university level, less attention has been devoted to students preparing to enter university. In this study, I seek to investigate students’ usage and perceptions of reporting verbs along a continuum of authorial power at a community college in Hong Kong. Based on a revised averral framework by Charles (2006b) and the reporting verb taxonomy by Hyland (2002a), an analysis was performed on 614 academic written assignments (compared with proficient writing by native-speaking students in the UK in both frequency and textual examination), 697 questionnaires, and interviews with 13 students and three teachers. Findings reveal that the community college students were impassioned opinion holders characterized by an overuse of first person I in a cognitive, affective, and factive fashion. However, they overlooked the potential of ‘mitigated’ expressions of self-mention (such as it is argued that) and discourse verbs such as argue and suggest to develop an argumentative ethos and dialogic interaction essential in effective reader engagement. A misunderstanding of the purpose of academic writing, an insensitivity to reporting verbs, and a categorical forbiddance of self-mention by teachers appear to be the main reasons for not further developing a writer presence by Hong Kong students. In view of the low language proficiency of the students, conflicting writing guides, and teachers’ nonchalance about providing help, teaching recommendations were offered with the use of learner corpora and non-academic materials. (262 words)
“I believe that” or “It is suggested that”?
Authorial presence in the use of reporting verbs in ‘soft’ discipline academic writing by community college students in Hong Kong

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics at The University of Hong Kong

August 2012
Declaration

I declare that this dissertation represents my own work, except where due acknowledgement is made, and that it has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this University or to any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualifications.

Signed: ________________________________
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This dissertation as well as my enjoyable experience in the MA programme would not have been possible without a number of extraordinary people.

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I also want to thank Professor Ken Hyland not only for introducing me to the use of The British Academic Writing Corpus in this study, but also for opening my eyes to the subtleties of academic writing. While I do not pretend, given my limited knowledge, to understand every theory and methodology in his books and journals, I have learnt to appreciate the role and importance of corpus analysis in language research, an indispensable basis of this dissertation study.

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<td>The British Academic Written English Corpus</td>
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<td>EAPP1 =</td>
<td>English for Academic and Professional Purposes I</td>
</tr>
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<td>FTA =</td>
<td>Face-threatening Act</td>
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<td>HK_CORP =</td>
<td>Corpus of academic written assignments by students at a community college in Hong Kong</td>
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<td>Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination</td>
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<td>HKCEE =</td>
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<td>IELTS =</td>
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Chapter 1  Introduction

Rather than merely reporting factual and impersonal information, academic writing is a social activity in which the writer actively engages with and persuades the reader to accept the writer’s proposition and to establish solidarity within a discourse community (Gilbert & Mulkay, 1984; Hyland, 2001, 2002a, 2002b; Myers, 1989). The success of achieving these purposes inherently depends on an appropriate level of personal commitment and representation of self (Hyland, 2001; Ivanič, 1998).

Research has suggested that establishing an appropriate degree of authorial presence is problematic among native-speaking students concerning the understanding of authorship and confidence (Pittam et al., 2009; Read et al., 2001), and among non-native-speaking students (Hong Kong students) regarding the specific use of linguistic resources such as first person pronouns (Hyland, 2002b) and qualification devices (Hyland & Milton, 1997). However, less attention has been dedicated to studying how an interplay of two pervasive and important reporting resources can project an authorial presence in academic writing - the reporting source and reporting verb in reporting clauses such as I believe that [proposition], it is suggested that [proposition], etc.

Comparing these language uses in writing by novice ESL students in Hong Kong with those by proficient native-speaking students in the UK, I seek to achieve three purposes in this study: 1) reveal the patterns of language use in less proficient local students’ academic writing as a baseline, 2) discover the potential of writing from proficient native-speaking students as a learning model for local students, and 3) unveil students’ and teachers’ general perceptions of authorial presence at the community college level.

In the remaining sections of this chapter, I will briefly offer a rationale of selecting reporting source and reporting verb to study authorial presence, describe the challenges encountered by students in projecting their voice, highlight the motivation of investigating learner corpora, and outline the objectives and scope of this study.
1.1 A preview of reporting source and reporting verb

To undertake what Groom (2000) describes as ‘propositional responsibility’, a variety of reporting sources is available to a writer who can either assume an explicit ownership of the proposition with first person pronoun as the subject in a reporting clause as in I believe that, or hide the writer identity through an inanimate subject as in It is believed that, or attribute the proposition to other sources as in Halliday believes that. Whether the emphasis on impersonality and objectivity in academic writing necessitates the eradication of writer presence such as the explicit use of I is debatable. Although Albert Einstein (1934, as cited in Hyland 2001, p. 208) wrote “when a man is talking about scientific subjects, the little word ‘I’ should play no part in his expositions”, self-mention with I has been identified as a prominent feature in published writing in soft discipline writing (Hyland, 2001, 2002b, 2008; Thompson, 2001). While disciplinary variation appears to offer a palpable explanation for the difference (Charles, 2006a; Hyland, 1999), this convenient distinction is not water-tight as an intentional, occasionally required, use of I and we has been observed in recommendation reports in engineering, and in textbooks on technical communication such as “The MIT Guide to Science and Engineering Communication” (Paradis & Zimmerman, 1997). To further understand how a reporting source can articulate or eradicate authorial presence, an analytical framework is required and will be introduced in Section 2.1.1.

In addition to reporting sources, reporting verbs are also worthy of investigation because of their prevalence in academic writing (Durrant, 2009; Hyland, 1999, 2002a) and their prominence in conveying the attitude of the writer (Hunston, 1995, 2011; Hunston & Thompson, 2000; Thomas & Hawes, 1994; Thompson & Ye, 1991). For example, the verb suggest as in I suggest that allows the writer to advance a proposition tentatively and thereby reduces the writer’s responsibility for the proposition as opposed to a more committed alternative argue as in I argue that. Besides the evaluative potential, reporting verbs also signal the type or nature of the reporting activities; for example, believe refers to mental activities emphasizing the writer’s personal thoughts and ideas.
whereas *argue* evokes an argumentative spirit to engage the reader. An elaborate taxonomy on reporting verbs will be discussed in Section 2.2.1.

1.2 *Challenges in projecting students’ voice*

In addition to effectively communicating ideational content, academic writers are often required to project their own voice and authority to introduce and propagate arguments as a member of a specific discourse community (Belcher & Braine, 1995). This poses a significant challenge to even native-speaking students who may find their own experiences and identities substantially compromised by a specialized and unfamiliar academic literacy (Ivanič, 1998). As for ESL students in Hong Kong, this issue of when to articulate one’s own voice versus others’ is aggravated by their oversight of the importance of secondary source attribution in academic writing (Evans & Green, 2007). Deciding when to project a writer’s voice leads to issues ranging from an ambiguity of reporting source cited (Thompson & Ye, 1991) to academic misconduct such as plagiarism (Ashworth *et al.*, 1997). Hong Kong students are also found to ambiguously express their stance (Hood, 2004), and conceal their presence in academic writing (Hyland, 2002b). Possible explanations include a lack of confidence, conflicting writing guides and a conservative cultural proclivity. These factors will be examined in detail and contrasted with the over-assertive nature of Hong Kong students’ writing (Hyland & Milton, 1997) in Section 2.1.2.

1.3 *Motivation for investigating learner corpora*

While expert writings may represent the ultimate target of scholastic excellence, they may present an ‘unrealistic standard’ for inexperienced students (Hyland & Milton, 1997, p. 184). On the other hand, writing by proficient students may offer insights into revealing subtle usage patterns of linguistic elements, such as the overuse and underuse of specific language features. In addition, textual examples in the target learner corpora may offer teaching insights and facilitate materials design (Flowerdew, 2001; Gilquin *et al.*, 2007). Comparison of learner corpora in conjunction with perceptive findings may
shed light on the practices and beliefs of Hong Kong students who may be exposed to a cultural setting, teacher expectations, and a learning environment different from their native-speaking counterparts. Additionally, academic essays from less proficient students before entering university may serve as a valuable baseline or starting point of their practices in academic writing. These students have generally not received formal training on authorship in secondary education, and their writing styles and perceptions may carry over to their future practices in university.

1.4 The present study: Objectives and Scope

The objective of this study is to explore the authorial presence exhibited in the academic writing by students in a community college in Hong Kong in three main areas: 1) a corpus-driven comparison of the choice of reporting source (adopting the averral framework by Charles (2006b)) and reporting verb (adopting the reporting verb taxonomy by Hyland’s (2002a)) with proficient writing by native-speaking students using the British Academic Written Corpus (BAWE) (Nesi et al., 2008); 2) a quantitative study of the students’ general perceptions of authorship through a student survey; and 3) a qualitative analysis of both students’ and teachers’ perceptions and expectations by means of semi-structured interviews. The focus will be on writing in humanities and social sciences because ‘soft’ disciplines, as opposed to the ‘hard’ discipline of natural or physical science, can better reveal the discursive and argumentative nature of reader engagement (Hyland, 2002a).

Following this chapter of general introduction, a literature review in Chapter 2 will discuss the theoretical framework and taxonomy used in this study, and the findings of previous research on authorial presence displayed by Hong Kong students. Chapter 3 will offer a rationale behind the design of this study with reference to the selection of corpora, the type of tools and methodology employed in textual analysis, and the structure of the questionnaire and interviews. In Chapter 4, the language patterns of self-mention by local students will be contrasted with those by the native-speaking students. I will also highlight the issues with specific discourse reporting verbs with a focus on how
they affect reader interaction. Chapter 5 will reveal students’ and teachers’ perceptions of and possible reasons for avoiding or favoring a writer presence, and their attitudes toward teacher help. In the final chapter, I will conclude by summarizing the main findings, highlighting the limitations of the study, offering recommendations with specific examples of learning activities and materials, and identifying potential areas for future research.
Chapter 2  Literature review

In this chapter, authorial presence in academic writing will first be explored under the notion of ‘authorial self’ introduced by Ivanič (1998). A continuum of authorial self, representing a variety of reporting sources, will then be examined using the theoretical framework of ‘emphasized averral (most explicit authorial presence), hidden averral, and attribution’ proposed by Charles (2006b). I will then discuss the issues of self expression by Hong Kong students which could be considered either too assertive or conservative. To analyze reporting activities, the denotative and evaluative potentials of reporting verbs will be looked at using the reporting verb taxonomy proposed by Hyland (2002a). A focus will be placed on cognitive and discourse verbs to show whether student writers concentrate on their own thinking or on interaction with the reader. To extend the concept of reader interaction, past studies on the prosody (discoursal and pragmatic characteristics) of specific reporting verbs will be introduced. The chapter concludes with a discussion of findings from past research on student and teacher perceptions which serve to define a manageable set of factors contributing to authorial presence such as students’ understanding of authorship and confidence.

2.1  A continuum of authorial self

2.1.1  Framework: Averral and attribution

The self representation of a writer has been thoroughly discussed by Ivanič (1998) from three different perspectives: an ‘autobiographical self’ is shaped by the writer’s life-history and sociocultural background; a ‘discoursal self’ represents an image projected by the writer; and an ‘authorial self’ signals the writer’s stance (Biber, 2006; Biber & Finegan, 1998; Hyland, 1999) or evaluation (Hunston & Thompson, 2000), claiming a responsibility of the related assessments and arguments. This study focuses on the ‘authorial self’ through which Ivanič (1998, p. 307) highlights a ‘continuum of self’ for different types of activities:
... there is a continuum from not using I at all, through using I with verbs associated with the process of structuring the writing, to using I in research process, and finally to using I with verbs associated with cognitive acts.

This continuum of self can be further extended with the commitment of writer responsibility in terms of the choice of reporting sources for a proposition under the notion of ‘averral versus attribution’ (Sinclair, 1987; Tadros, 1993). The writer responsibility can be explicitly assumed by the writer himself/herself as in I argue that or be transferred to another person as in Swales argues that in obscuring the writer identity. Varying degrees of authorship are further distinguished by Hunston (2000, p. 190) as ‘emphasized averral’, ‘hidden averral’, ‘averral without attribution’, and ‘other-sourced attribution’. ‘Emphasized averral’ signals overt attribution to the writer as in I think, the author suggests. ‘Hidden averral’ allows the writer to implicitly attribute the source to himself or his own work as in the previous section suggests or to people in general as in one may argue. ‘Averral without attribution’ does not attribute a proposition to a source, and the reader can only infer the writer’s responsibility as in it can be argued that. ‘Other-sourced attribution’ explicitly refers to a specific source as in Halliday argues that or in general as in other people suggest that.

This study, adopting a simplified approach by Charles (2006b), subsumed ‘averral without attribution’ under ‘hidden averral’ due to the occasional indeterminacy between the two similar categories (Hunston, 2000). The personal pronoun I was selected as the focus of this study because alternatives of ‘emphasized averral’ such as this paper, my interpretation are less frequent and explicit in manifesting the authorial presence. The collective pronoun we was also excluded as this study dealt with single-authored text and this collective pronoun can actually either enhance or obscure the writer identity depending on the context (Charles, 2006b). I believe that the simplified categorization as shown in Figure 1 is sufficient to offer a high-level understanding of the not-so-sophisticated writing by students.
Detailed textual examples of each category of this simplified framework are shown in Appendix 1. In the next section, I will discuss the struggle of Hong Kong students along this ‘slippery’ continuum in relation to the findings of past research.

2.1.2  Dilemma of Hong Kong students: Conviction or circumspection?

The use of first person pronouns as ‘emphasized averrals’ has been extensively studied on published writing (Hyland, 2001), revealing the use of first person pronouns, especially I, as a powerful rhetorical resource employed by expert writers to not only pledge conviction but also establish a credible ethos (Cherry, 1998). In contrast, Hyland (2002b) has shown that university students in Hong Kong significantly underuse I in their theses - four times less frequently than experts do in journal articles - and intentionally avoid their responsibility in making arguments and claims. Similarly, the textual analysis of the use of I in essays by first-year undergraduates in Singapore by Tang and John (1999) reveals that student writers prefer to assume the role of a ‘guide’ for introducing information instead of taking the lead as an ‘opinion-holder’ or ‘originator’ of academic contribution.

Hong Kong students in general, however, have also been reported as over-assertive when compared with their native-speaking counterparts in the use of modal verbs and adverbs (Allison, 1995; Hyland & Milton, 1997; Milton, 2000). Similarly, Hood’s (2004) study on introduction writing reveals that Hong Kong students are more personal and subjective than experts as shown by the students’ more frequent use of linguistic resources on
AFFECT (an evaluation of feelings and emotions) and on APPRECIATION (an evaluation of non-human objects). In addition, the predominant and assertive phrases such as I strongly believe that in secondary school argumentative essays suggest that many students may not refrain from overtly expressing their personal opinions.

These seemingly contradictory observations on authorial presence have been attributed to an absence of consistent writing guidelines (Hyland, 2002b) with notable examples shown below.

…most of our recommendations are designed to help you maintain a scholarly and objective tone in your writing. This does not mean that you should never use I or we in your writing. The use of I or we does not make a piece of writing informal. (Swales & Feak, 1994, p. 20)

The total paper is considered to be the work of the writer. You don’t have to say I think or My opinion is in the paper. Traditional formal writing does not use I or we in the body of the paper. (Spencer & Arbon, 1996, p. 26)

While conflicting writing guides may command a focus from teachers and researchers, questions can be raised on whether students, especially less proficient non-native speaking students, assiduously recall and adhere to these guidelines when they write. It might be interesting to determine, on a large scale, how students will react to these style guides if they are presented simultaneously. Other perception-related explanations may include an insufficient understanding of authorship, a low writer confidence, and the influence of a conservative Chinese culture, which are to be discussed in detail in Section 2.3.1.

The inconclusive findings from previous research and conflicting writing guides suggest that a frequency analysis of linguistic features such as the first person pronoun I without a context may not suffice in helping students to “create a texture that coherently presents an authorial perspective” (Chang & Schleppegrell, 2011, p. 140). Valuable as the studies on the use of first person pronoun are, it is argued that further insights may be drawn from various forms and degrees of authorial power displayed in different reporting activities such as cognitive versus discourse activities (See Section 2.2.1 for various types of
activities). For example, conjectures may be made on whether students frequently use *I believe* in expressing personal thoughts but employ specific alternatives of hidden averral as in *it is argued* for advancing arguments. Equally interesting is whether adjacent reporting clauses will work together to exert a specific rhetorical effect such as the mitigation of face-threatening comments by the writer. Hence, it is beneficial to examine how an interplay of different reporting sources and reporting verbs over a stretch of text can help the writer to articulate authorship and promote reader interaction beyond the lexical meaning of individual language units.

Before revealing the pragmatics of such interplay, I will in the following sections explore the potential of reporting verbs by introducing a classification framework adopted from Hyland (2002a), and explicate the concept of ‘a collocational and discoursal phenomenon’ named ‘prosody’ by Hunston (1995).

### 2.2 Potentials of reporting verbs

#### 2.2.1 Taxonomy: Denotative and evaluative categories

The classification framework by Hyland (2002a), modeled after Thompson and Ye’s (1991), is selected for this study because of its simplicity in delineating the various denotative categories and evaluative potentials of reporting verbs.

Denotation involves the type of activities being referred to: 1) ‘Research (real-world) Acts’ describe findings and procedures (e.g., *observe, show, find, calculate*); 2) ‘Cognition Acts’ represent mental processes (e.g., *think, know, believe, speculate*); and 3) ‘Discourse Acts’ depict communicative or ‘argumentative’ expressions (e.g., *argue, suggest, discuss, conclude*). A similar classification has been proposed by Francis et al. (1996) with ‘Show’ and ‘Find’ verbs (corresponding to ‘Research’ verbs), ‘Think’ verbs (to ‘Cognitive’ verbs), and ‘Argue’ verbs (to ‘Discourse’ verbs), indicating that Hyland’s taxonomy will suffice in describing the major types of reporting activities. In this study, I will adopt Hyland’s terminology, and primarily focus on cognitive and discourse verbs.
instead of research verbs because student essays, as opposed to theses, do not concentrate on reporting findings and procedures.

The evaluative potential of reporting verbs, on the other hand, convey the writer’s attitude toward the validity of the propositions from the original author. When compared with other epistemic devices such as modal verbs and adverbials, reporting verbs command special attention because they “offer a more overt and precise means of conveying the writer’s commitment to a proposition”, but are less preferred by both native-speaking and non-native-speaking students (Hyland & Milton, 1997, p. 190). A writer can vary his/her commitment in a proposition by presenting it as true - ‘factive’ (e.g., establish, demonstrate) or false - ‘counter-factive’ (e.g., overlook, exaggerate) or with no clear signal - ‘non-factive’ (e.g., state, describe).

More refined categories of cognitive verbs are ‘positive’ toward a proposition (e.g., agree, know), ‘tentative’ (e.g., believe, suppose), and ‘critical’ (e.g., disagree). Discourse verbs comprise categories of ‘factive’ (e.g., argue, point out), ‘tentative’ (e.g., suggest), ‘critical’ (e.g., exaggerate), and ‘non-factive’ (e.g., describe, discuss). A simplified version of the taxonomy is shown in Figure 2. Similar categories have also been proposed by Biber (2006) such as ‘epistemic certainty’ (e.g., know), ‘epistemic likelihood’ (e.g., believe), and ‘non-factive communication’ (e.g., argue), but Hyland’s terminology will be used in this study to complement the denotative part of the taxonomy.

![Diagram of reporting verb categories](image-url)

Figure 2. Categories of reporting verbs
This study aims to reveal the type of reporting activities - cognitive (conveying personal thoughts) versus discourse (engaging with the reader) - used in conjunction with *I* to determine the level of authorial presence expressed in ‘soft’ discipline writing. While the denotative demarcation appears relatively well-defined, it would be interesting to determine whether Hong Kong students possess a similar evaluative distinction ‘in mind’ and how such distinction, if exists, affects their use of particular reporting verbs because little research has been devoted to this heterogeneous language use.

In addition, rather than an exclusive focus on *I*, it may be worthwhile to investigate alternatives such as hidden averrrals in association with popular reporting verbs among Hong Kong students such as *believe, think* and among experts such as *argue* and *suggest* (Hyland, 2002b). This may further reveal how students’ commitment is conveyed by an interplay of reporting sources and reporting verbs. Little research has been exclusively conducted in this area except one by Charles (2006b) on master (politics) and doctoral (material science) theses of Oxford University students. The disciplinary distinction shows that while most instances of *I* (70 percent) were reported to be associated with discourse verbs, e.g., *argue, suggest*, in politics demonstrating writer commitment, the hidden averrrals were primarily displayed in the form of *it* in the passive form and were associated with research verbs in material science. Intriguing uses of hidden averrrals were also found to be associated with discourse verbs to perform specific rhetorical functions such as first introducing a theoretical position with which the writer disagrees and then establishing a counter-argument (ibid, p. 511).

... it could be argued that Britain could have followed ... independent defence policy. However, as noted in chapter 1, French disengagement increased Britain’s importance ...

Transcending the lexical and sentential scope of reporting source and verb, proficient writers are able to harness the potential of the ‘discoursal’ characteristics - or prosody - of these reporting resources to interact with the reader by ‘weaving together’ both the writer’s and reader’s voice. This concept of ‘dialogic interaction’ will be further elaborated in the next section under the term ‘prosody’.
2.2.2 Prosody: Dialogic interaction to articulate authorial presence

The notion of ‘semantic prosody’ was first introduced by Sinclair (1991) as a collocational phenomenon in which some words typically co-occur with others of a particular semantic set; for example, the word *cause* is typically followed by words with a negative meaning such as *damages, losses*. Similarly, Hunston (1995) argues that some reporting verbs also possess implicit meanings and pragmatic subtleties which can only be identified over a more extensive co-text, and she called this characteristic the ‘prosody of verbs of attribution’ (ibid, p. 139). In a textual analysis using *Bank of English at COBUILD*, she reveals that a predictable pattern with the discourse verb *argue* is usually employed in conflicts, and it usually signals a negatively evaluated proposition if used in the first ‘move’ of an argumentative couplet (ibid, p. 153).

1st Move: Many so-called financial advisers *argue* that a person should have at least a $30,000 mortgage in order to enjoy the advantage of tax relief.

2nd Move: This argument is valid if you can achieve a greater, low-risk rate of return … with the current high rates of interest …, this is very difficult to achieve. (ibid, p. 153)

In contrast, *argue* can carry a positive evaluation if used in the second move as shown in English textbooks as reported by Thompson (2001) in his article titled “Learning how to argue with the reader”.

1st Move: *We* are often inclined to *believe* that such differences arise naturally…

2nd Move: However, …I shall be arguing that the interrelationship between texts and contexts is much more complex than this. (ibid, p. 63)

It is interesting to observe that the writer involves the reader in the first move with a collective pronoun *we* and sets up a proposition, using the tentative *believe*, which the writer has planned to attack in the second move by articulating his/her position with an emphasized use of *I*. Similar interaction between the writer and reader is not confined to
public corpora and textbooks as examples are abound even in Thompson’s own writing in the same paper.

1st Move: ... it could be argued that the suggested revisions represent relatively optional icing on the cake.

2nd Move: However, there are a number of reason why I believe that it is valuable to focus on sensitizing students to the dialogic perspective on academic written text. (ibid, p. 73)

The pragmatic strategy by the writer to interweave his argument with a ‘projected’ voice for the reader appears similar to the notion of ‘intertextuality’ referred to by Hyland (1999, p. 342), and the notion of ‘heterogloss’ (Martin & White, 2005, p. 134). To reconcile similar concepts and highlight the interactive aspect of the engagement, I will use the term ‘dialogic interaction’. In terms of students’ difficulties in conveying a clear writer position, Hood (2004) shows that there is a general lack of consistency in the writer stance. For example, many non-native speaking students use the tentative suggest to introduce a proposition of another source pending to be opposed but, instead of countering it subsequently, reinforce it.

Goldberg (1990) suggested that interruptions had relational …and tried to distinguish power from power interruptions. She broadened the understanding. (Hood, 2004, p. 218)

While a successful management of such dialogic interaction is not straightforward, it is intriguing to see whether good examples can be observed in good undergraduate essays in BAWE as opposed to only 16 Oxford theses in the study by Charles (2006b) for the less proficient students in Hong Kong to imitate. This study will focus on cognitive verbs think, believe and discourse verbs argue and suggest because think and believe are the most popular and overused by community college students in Hong Kong (Ho, 2011) whereas argue and suggest are the most frequent reporting verbs in soft discipline academic writing (Hyland, 2010). To complement the language use in student writing, students’ and teachers’ attitudes toward their learning and teaching difficulties will be examined in the following two sections.
2.3 Students’ and teachers’ perceptions of authorial presence

2.3.1 Students’ perceptions

Apart from textual evidence, students’ perceptions of authorship may also help reveal the underlying issues and motives of presenting themselves in academic writing. In general, findings from past studies reveal four major aspects: students’ lack of understanding of authorship and confidence (Pittam et al., 2009), a lack of clear guidance from teachers (Hyland, 2002b), and for Asian students in particular, a culture that appears to value a collectivistic over an individualistic identity (Watkins & Biggs, 2001).

Interview data from a study by Hyland (2002b) on first person pronouns reveals Hong Kong students’ over-emphasis of impersonality as described in their responses “We have to be objective” and a severe lack of confidence “I am just ordinary student, not an academic scholar” at the expense of originality and individual contribution. Similar self-effacing perceptions were observed in native-speaking graduates by Read et al. (2001) as in “I don’t really have the confidence to, not so much gamble. I tend to, tend to play safe.”

For less proficient students, however, a question can be raised on whether a lack of understanding actually contributes to a covert writer presence more than a lack of confidence does since many assertive instances of I strongly believe that have been observed in their writing. Many students are also encouraged to express personal opinions in argumentative writing in secondary schools and public examinations such as IELTS (Moore & Morton, 2005). Questionnaire data may provide useful quantitative comparison in this light as response from undergraduates in the U.K. by Pittam et al. (2009) show that a low confidence could be more significant than a lack of authorship understanding. In addition, while most questionnaire surveys on the perceptions of authorship were on plagiarism in general, little emphasis has been devoted to specific areas such as students’ confidence in using specific reporting verbs such as argue versus
suggest. Such investigations may offer a more comprehensive picture of exploring writer confidence than the one merely focusing on the use of first person.

In terms of the absence of guidance from their teachers, students generally consider teachers’ instructions unclear and inconsistent (Read et al., 2001). Not knowing the writing requirements has been reported as the single greatest difficulty in the writing of university essays (Hartley & Chesworth, 2000). This absence of instruction may lead students to play a pragmatic guessing game in obscuring themselves and present views that are favored by their teachers: “if you argue the opposite view to what they believe, it’s that much harder to get a first” (Read et al., 2001, p. 396). While teachers’ influence on students’ position and writing approach is undeniable, it is worth exploring whether less proficient students are in fact propelled more by their own perceptions of what academic writing should be than by preferences of their teachers.

Another factor influencing the self-portrayal of Asian writers appears to be related to a self-effacing culture that values collectivistic success over individualistic achievement (Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999; Scollon, 1994; Watkins & Biggs, 2001). There may also be a deep-rooted belief that oriental students are stereotyped as passive in class (Jones, 1999) and are not willing to ‘speak-up’, which could be attributed to the Confucian influence (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996) and the anxiety of losing face (Littlewood & Liu, 1996). Textual analysis by Tang and John (1999) on essays written by Singaporean undergraduates also reveals their preference to take a ‘back-stage’ role as a ‘guide’ to information rather than an ‘opinion-holder’ or ‘originator of knowledge’.

Important as culture appears to be in academic writing, however, students’ attitude toward culture was seldom mentioned in the past studies described. One possible explanation may lie in the ‘slippery’ concept of culture which cannot be easily operationalized and interpreted. Fully aware of the inconclusive nature of the data on this ‘fuzzy’ attribute, I attempt to supplement interview data with questionnaire findings based on two arguments: first, culture is a collective phenomenon which may not be comprehensively unveiled only by anecdotal and individual interview data; and second, it
will be interesting to see whether these cultural studies, many conducted more than 15 years ago, are still applicable to a new generation of students who appear less reserved and more influenced by the western culture.

2.3.2 Teachers’ perceptions

In addition to student perceptions, teachers’ beliefs and expectations are also important factors in shaping students’ identity in writing. When compared with student’ perceptions, little research has been devoted to exploring teacher’ perceptions. One of the most thorough and illustrative studies in this area is interview study by Hyland (2002b) on university supervisors who generally expressed their approval of students’ commitment in ideas expressed and the use of first person pronouns.

I get an impression of the writer when I read these reports, and often my impression is that they are trying to hide themselves. Maybe they don’t know it is OK to use these.

(Interview with a university supervisor by Hyland (2002b, p. 1109))

However, many of these supervisors were unable to articulate the reasons, and did not offer concrete recommendations on how they can alleviate this befuddling issue.

Yes, I have noticed it. Student often get into weird contortions to avoid using I. I am not sure why, but they can see from the readings we give them that they don't have to do this.

(Interview with a university supervisor by Hyland (2002b, p. 1109))

In addition to reporting teachers’ acknowledgement of the issue, research focusing on teacher recommendations to bring about a change appears to be in need. Doubts can also be raised on whether teachers in community colleges in fact share with expert teachers the same perspectives on student authorship. With respect to the cultural effect, little attention has been devoted to revealing whether there is a difference between native-speaking and non-native speaking teachers in their perceptions and teaching approaches. By incorporating opinions of teachers with different first languages and cultural
backgrounds, this study attempts to further complement the student perceptions on the elusive concept of cultural proclivity.

2.4 Summary

In this chapter, I began by introducing a simplified model of ‘emphasized, hidden averrals, and attribution’ to describe the varying degrees of authorial presence in academic writing, and a taxonomy to depict the denotative categories and evaluative potential of reporting verbs for reporting the writer stance. Struggling along the continuum of authorial self, Hong Kong students have been reported as either conservative in avoiding I or as assertive in using other linguistic resources. Such inconclusive findings necessitate a more comprehensive investigation into how an interplay of different reporting sources and reporting verbs will reflect student writers’ position along this continuum. This concept of interplay was then elaborated beyond the sentence level to illustrate how a ‘dialogic space’ can allow the writer to both establish a presence and engage with the reader. I have also proposed that examination of such reader engagement in learner corpora may help determine the potential of the writing by native-speaking students as a learning target for local students.

In addition, while a number of possible explanations for students’ struggle have been offered such as a lack of understanding of authorship, conflicting writing guides, a conservative culture, questions can be raised on whether findings from long-ago studies can apply directly to less proficient students in community colleges who may not strictly adhere to teachers’ instructions, and are exposed to a less conservative culture than before. Previous findings on teacher reflections, on the other hand, exhibit a general lack of recommendations in the teaching approach and materials, offering an incentive for further studies in these deserted areas.
2.5 Research questions

Arising from the foregoing discussions, the overarching research question is:

With respect to displaying an authorial presence in the use of reporting verbs, what are the language patterns used by community college students in Hong Kong, and their, as well as their teachers’, perceptions of authorship in academic writing?

Analyses will focus on these specific areas:

1) Compared with native-speaking students overseas, do less proficient Hong Kong students overuse or underuse *I* in different reporting activities?

2) To what extent do they express an authorial presence with specific cognitive verbs (*think, believe*) and discourse verbs (*argue, suggest*)?

3) What are students’ and teachers’ perceptions of authorship and reporting verbs?

To answer these questions, I will in the next chapter describe the data and methodology employed in this study with respect to the background of the participants, the nature of textual data, the scope of linguistic elements, and the design of a questionnaire and interviews.
Chapter 3  Data and Methodology

In this chapter, I will begin by introducing the participants of this study, and the procedures of selecting assignments on literature review by Hong Kong students and ‘evaluative’ essays by native-speaking students to reveal their personal commitment in academic evaluation. To define a manageable scope of the study, the chapter will continue to explain the rationale and methods employed in determining the type and frequency of reporting sources and reporting verbs. Complementing the textual component of the study, I will delineate how the design questionnaire and interviews elicited perceptive data from students and teachers. While many methods adopted in this study are standard practices of comparable past research, such as the statistical treatment in corporal studies, I will dedicate the final section of this chapter to highlighting the major considerations in enhancing the reliability, validity and transferability of the study.

3.1  Student participants and corpora

This study was based on two corpora of academic written assignments: 1) HK_CORP which comprises writing assignments on literature review on humanities and social science in an introductory academic English course English for Academic and Professional Purposes I (EAPP1) by Year 1 associate degree and higher diploma students at a community college in Hong Kong who on average obtained a Grade D or below in HKALE, and level three¹ or below in HKCEE, and 2) UK_CORP which consists of randomly selected essays and critiques in the same discipline awarded a distinction or merit from The British Academic Written English Corpus (BAWE, see details of the corpus in Appendix 2). The essays in BAWE were written by English native-speaking undergraduates from three different universities in the UK, and only essays written by students who spent their entire secondary education in the UK were selected.

The literature review assignment by Hong Kong students is the first of its kind in the curriculum in the school requiring students to write about the literature reviewed in an academic fashion, representing a reasonable baseline for assessing their academic
writing. While the literature review was a group activity, the associated written assignment was an individual effort in which each student was explicitly required, as stated in the assignment instructions, to state his/her views and comments on the literature reviewed. Details of the course outline, assignment instructions, and sample written excerpts are shown in Appendix 3 and Appendix 4 which showcase the ‘evaluative’ nature of the writing.

Regarding the UK_CORP, essays with a distinction or merit in ‘soft’ disciplines from BAWE were randomly selected with no articles from the same author. Only genres of the type of ‘critique’ and ‘essays’ were selected to ensure the ‘evaluative’ nature of the writing (See details of a description of the disciplines and genres selected in BAWE in Appendix 5). A summary of the assignments collected in the two corpora is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Details of learner corpora - HK_CORP and UK_CORP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Size (no. of words)</th>
<th>No. of assignments</th>
<th>Average length per assignment (no. of words)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HK_CORP</td>
<td>158k</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK_CORP</td>
<td>400k</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>2367</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The small size of HK_CORP was partly mitigated by the specific and evaluative nature of the genres selected and its representativeness of a potentially large number of students with a similar background undertaking the same assignment. Transferability and limitations of the corpora will be further discussed in Section 3.5, and Section 6.3, respectively.

3.2 Scope of reporting source and reporting verb

First pronoun I was used as the example of emphasized averral as discussed earlier. Different textual examples of hidden averral, including references to the writer’s work and propositions, and attribution to other sources were identified according to the categorization proposed by Hunston (2000) and Charles (2006b) (see Section 2.1.1), and
a preliminary examination of ten essays from each corpus. While it is not uncommon to
discover more than 400 reporting verbs in one piece of expert writing, a focus on the
most frequent ones is generally considered adequate in broadly reviewing the writer
attitude (Hyland, 1999). To determine the type of reporting activities, a manageable set
of 42 reporting verbs (Appendix 6) was identified by compiling a superset of the most
frequent reporting verbs in academic writing from five sources: 1) Hyland and Milton’s
(1997) summary of epistemic lexical verbs from more than 10 other previous studies, 2)
Hyland’s (1999) study on reporting verbs in citation in journal articles, 3) Durant’s
(2009) study on the most frequent reporting verb + that structure, 4) a brief explanatory
notes on a list of 13 reporting verbs (Appendix 7) as part of the supplementary materials
in the course EAPP, and 5) four additional notable verbs agree, disagree, feel, and hope.
This superset is by no means exhaustive but is considered comprehensive enough for this
study.

3.3 Determining the frequency and prosody of averrals and reporting verbs

The frequency of I in each corpus was computed using the lexical analysis tool
WordSmith 5.0 (Scott, 2010). The overuse or underuse of I and reporting verbs in
HK_CORP in comparison with UK_CORP was determined using ‘Log-likelihood’ ratio
instead of a contingency table such as the Chi-square method because the former is a
more statistically valid method for comparing across populations of different sizes and
measuring ‘rare events’ in small corpora (Dunning, 1993). A conservative statistical
significance level of at least $p < 0.005$ (a level also used by Milton (2000) in his rigorous
study of interlanguage of Hong Kong students) was employed to mitigate the effect of the
relatively small size of the corpora. A manual count was performed on the 42 reporting
verbs (including all lemma forms) used in association with I in a reporting clause to
determine the nature of the associated reporting activities.

To further focus on the degree of authorial presence in cognitive and discourse activities,
30 random instances of the four selected verbs in each corpus – think, believe (cognitive)
and argue, suggest (discourse) were examined to determine their respective frequencies
of *I*, ‘hidden averral’, ‘other-sourced attribution’ in a concordancer according to the categorization examples shown in Appendix 1. To reduce human error in the examination, an additional teacher with four years of experience in teaching the *EAPP1* course examined these textual instances apart from myself (a discussion on the inter-rater reliability is reported in Section 3.5). In addition, counting errors were reduced by recording only *I* instead of other controversial emphasized averrals such as *we* which could refer to either the writer or the reader. A frequency check in *WordSmith* shows that other emphasized averrals such as *this author* and *this essay* were rare. To ensure capturing the possible dialogic interactions in the interplay of averrals and reporting verbs as discussed in Section 2.2.2, textual clues within at least four clauses before and after the four selected reporting verbs were examined, similar to the textual scope used by the study on reporting verbs by Hunston (1995). The general occurrence of dialogic features, rather than specific frequency, was the focus for this detailed textual analysis.

3.4 Students and teachers perception by a questionnaire and interviews

3.4.1 Student questionnaire

840 questionnaires were distributed to 30 classes of students in *EAPPI*, and 697 were collected with an approximate response rate of 83%. The questionnaire responses represent students’ general perceptions of authorial presence in five broad areas: understanding of academic writing, confidence, attitudes toward specific reporting verbs, cultural proclivity, and perceptions of conflicting writing guides. A sample of the questionnaire is shown in Appendix 8. Students’ preferences in using specific reporting verbs were solicited with statements such as *I am comfortable with using the phrase I argue that in expanding my arguments*. Attention was also devoted to whether students believed that the Chinese culture made them more conservative, and whether they valued group rather than individual contribution. With conflicting guidelines presented side by side, the questionnaire also reveals students’ relative receptiveness of different instructions. Internal consistencies of the questionnaire (a form of reliability) of various
categories, such as understanding versus ‘confidence’ were recorded (see Table 4 in Section 5.2) and comments on their acceptability are provided in Section 3.5.

3.4.2 Interviews with students and teachers

To complement the quantitative findings of questionnaires, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 13 students to provide a qualitative account of their perception. The interview consisted of two parts (modeled after Hyland’s (2002b) methodology): a specific section followed by a general section. The specific section sought to elicit students’ perceptions of writer commitment with a selected text in HK_Corp with selection criteria mainly based on the presence of reporting verbs and the ease of comprehension. Using familiar texts that students with which students can identify is believed to enhance the elicitation of responses because low proficiency students generally are not articulate in expressing their thoughts and are unfamiliar with the abstract concept of writer identity. Three texts, first identified by myself, were submitted to another English teacher with an experience grading the assignment for further screening using the same selection criteria. The finalized text was used in both the student and teacher interviews. Details of selection criteria and the selected text are shown in Appendix 9.

The general section collected students’ general understanding and practices in relation to authorship with questions such as “Do you use ‘I’ in presenting arguments? Why?” Leveraging the distinction of writer identity between ‘a guide’ and ‘an originator’ proposed by Tang and John (1999, p. 31), students were prompted for their perception of their roles in writing. Interviews with teachers followed a similar format except with an additional emphasis on their views of their teaching practices, and suggestions on helping students to use reporting sources and reporting verbs. Interviews were conducted with two non-native speaking teachers - one junior and one experienced - and one native speaking teacher. The junior teacher has one year of experience in teaching EAPP1 whereas the other two teachers have four. Interview questions for students and for teachers are shown in Appendix 10 and Appendix 11, respectively. To facilitate ideas
generation and discussion, except the interview with the native-speaking teacher, the interviews were conducted in the mother tongue of the interviewees which is Cantonese, and their responses were translated and reported in English in this study.

3.5 **Major considerations of Reliability, Validity and Transferability of the study**

Reliability and validity are two important considerations in the assessment of the quality of this study. Reliability generally refers to the ‘repeatibility’ of obtaining the same measurements in a study whereas validity represents the extent to which a study measures what it claims to measure. In determining the degree of authorial presence in the use of reporting verbs, one teacher with four years of experience in teaching academic English was invited to categorize various types of averrals and attributions in student writing apart from myself, and a reasonably high inter-rate reliability of 0.87 was achieved. In addition, all categories of questionnaire responses except ‘confidence’ (see Appendix 8) achieved a generally acceptable internal consistency (a type of reliability) of 0.6 (Dörnyei, 2003). Claims related to questionnaire responses under ‘confidence’ were made with an emphasis on the more detailed interview data in which elaborations from different interviewees were cross-referenced.

With regard to the validity of the study, construct validity was promoted using the most prominent linguistic items such as first person (for writer presence), think/believe (for cognitive activities), and argue/suggest (for discourse activities). A frequency check of popular sentence subjects and all 42 reporting verbs in both HK_CORP and UK_CORP confirms that these selected items were the most frequent in representing the underlying constructs. Validity of the claims made is also demonstrated through a triangulation of quantitative and qualitative analyses of different type of data collected. An example is shown in Figure 3 on how I cross-referenced data from frequency analysis, textual examination, questionnaire study, and interview analysis to make a major claim of this study - Hong Kong students generally do not focus on engaging the reader by articulating their arguments but generally agree with others’ views in their academic writing.
In terms of the transferability (external validity) of the study, 600+ writing samples were collected from 30 different classes taught by six teachers, representing a reasonably wide cross-section of the student body. The participants of this study are believed to be representative of the 5000+ students with a similar level of English proficiency (all satisfying the same community college entry requirements but not securing immediate entry into university) undertaking the same writing assignment in the same community college. Writing samples in UK_CORP are also believed to be representative of the proficient writing of native-speaking students as BAWE consists of student essays with a distinction or merit from three different universities in the UK. Only one essay was randomly selected per student to avoid over-representation of a particular student, and a wide range of arts and humanities, and social sciences disciplines was selected (see Appendix 5) to represent the ‘soft’ discipline writing. In addition, a wide representation of student interviewees was ensured with students from three different programmes in soft disciplinary fields: psychology, tourism and hospitality management, and business.
administration. Despite these procedures to enhance the reliability and validity of the study, limitations exist in this study which will be discussed in Section 6.3.

**Note**

1. Grades offered in HKCEE consist of five levels from level 1 (lowest) to level 5 (highest).
Chapter 4 Language patterns of authorial presence in student writing

4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to compare the language patterns exhibited in writing by community college students in Hong Kong (HK_CORP) and by native-speaking students in the UK (UK_CORP) concerning the use of reporting verbs along the continuum of authorial power. Various patterns of the overuse of I by Hong Kong students will first be delineated because the usage of I explicitly shows how students invested their personal commitments. I will then complement this observation with an oversight by Hong Kong students to project a ‘mitigated’ writer presence, a technique effectively used by native-speaking students for reader engagement. Since discourse verbs play an important role in reader engagement, the final part of this chapter will reveal the prosodies and issues in the specific use of two prominent discourse verbs - argue and suggest - under the lens of dialogic interaction (see Section 2.2.2). While detailed analyses on perceptions are the foci of Chapter 5, interview data will be employed selectively to complement the frequency and textual findings in this chapter.

4.2 Overusing ‘I’ cognitively, affectively, and factively

Compared with the native-speaking students, Hong Kong students significantly overused the first person pronoun I in both cognitive and discourse reporting activities with the exception of I argue as shown in Table 2.
The explicit writer presence by community college students bears a striking contrast with the avoidance of personal commitment by their university undergraduate counterparts (Hyland, 2002b). This disparity may be due to the preponderance of cognitive activities employed by community college students who casually commented on everyday affairs rather than cautiously structured robust arguments as revealed in their not-so-sophisticated writing.

(1) **I think** that people nowadays like to take supplements to enrich their nutrients consumption. …**I think** we should take supplements carefully to prevent overdose.

(2) **I think** that communication is a process between more than one person … … **I strongly believe** that if the problem can be solved, they will have a good communication and relationship with each other.

(3) **I believe** that self-control is very important for the consumer. Only if consumers have a strong self-control, their purchase behavior is not affected and can be controlled.

\[(HK\_CORP)\]
While self-mention and epistemic boosters may contribute to an over-assertiveness characteristic of Hong Kong students (Hyland & Milton, 1997), these rhetorical resources have also been observed in advanced writing. For example, *I* and strong adverbials are frequently employed by CEOs in their letters to shareholders to evoke a credibility appeal (Hyland, 2005), and distinguished scholars often use *think* and *believe* to establish a strong writer stance (Hyland, 2008).

However, such use of self-mention and epistemic verbs for persuasion with a credible persona does not appear to be the motivation of students who lack reputation and authority. This plethora of *I* + *cognitive verb* pattern may instead be attributed to the ‘carry-over’ effect of spoken English since the surface structure *reporting verb + that* is more frequently in spoken and classroom discourse than in written discourse (Biber, 2006). The significant influence exerted by spoken English to express personal thoughts was also indicated in the interviews with students, suggesting that speech may facilitate the articulation of authorial presence.

Maybe due to spoken English, it is natural to say *I* with what I think. (Interview with Student 2)

Teachers always say *I, I, I* in classrooms. I guess I naturally pick it up from them. (Interview with Student 13)

In addition to the predilection for cognitive activities, community college students also displayed an unexpectedly high level of affection in association with self-mention when compared with the native-speaking students.

(4) **I fully hope that** Health-care tourism will spread out more places in the future and most of the people can be benefited from it.

(5) **I am surprised that** there are Christians banning the animal rights because of the dominion given by God to human. **Another surprise is** Tom Regan can argue with them with strong reasons provided by the Bible.

(6) **I am glad that** I am the lucky one. What is more important is to protect the second generation from this nightmare. ...I believe everyone wants the
home to be our shelter, I appreciate UNICEF is attempting to stop this global issue.

(HK_CORP)

Affective appeals with self-mention may emphasize the writer’s personal evaluation and disposition. Similar strategies have also been observed in CEO letters (Hyland, 2005) and in the final chapters of books written by distinguished scholars (Hyland, 2000). Students, however, should be cautioned against the excessive use of affection in argumentative essays and research reports because of its rarity in published research articles (Hyland, 2002b).

Another salient feature observed in HK_CORP is a lack of argumentative ethos as shown by an overuse of factive agreement with the reported proposition as in I agree, and by a preference for innocuous recommendations expressed in the form of I suggest.

(7) I strongly agree with Priscilla Lui that domestic violence of children should not be tolerated. The government should spend more funding on child maltreatment but not only the economy.

(8) I strongly suggest the Hong Kong government should ensure people in public housing waiting list can get their home within three years.

(9) I agree with Cinder Heller that different solutions should be provided and suggest that patients do some treatments to improve their condition.

(HK_CORP)

While a factive stance is rare in published research articles (Hyland, 1999), Hong Kong students appeared explicit in expressing agreement as reflected by the use of boosters (e.g., strongly) and directives (e.g., should). An assertive stance by epistemic adverbs and modal verbs in Hong Kong students’ writing has been reported before (Hyland & Milton, 1997), but a display of writer prominence in the form of agreement and recommendations offers a different perspective to highlight a lack of argumentative and discursive writing ethos among Hong Kong students. In contrast, native-speaking
students appeared more inclined to advance their arguments in a more discursive manner through the use of discourse verb *argue* to express themselves and involve the reader.

(10) Their architectural form goes beyond the practical necessities of habitation, but was this the result of a need for defense? Although some aspects ..., I would argue that given the lack of evidence for ...

(11) It could be argued that part of the responsibility of building a knowledge base lies with the government. However, the UK government maintains an ambivalent position and has decided not to intervene ...

(12) Some argue that variable room rates can result in perceived unfairness; however, if the hotel ensures that the customer is aware of the different rates, with differing restrictions available should reduce this.

(UK_CORP)

The cognitive, affective, and factive use of first person by Hong Kong students suggests that they are at least involved ‘opinion voicers’ rather than indifferent information guides merely presenting neutral facts. However, an inability to employ discourse verbs in advancing arguments appears to convey an assertive image. While first person can accentuate a writer presence as shown, it may occasionally be appropriate to express the writer stance in a mitigated fashion. In the next section, I will explore how Hong Kong and native-speaking students differ in their preference for and use of hidden averrals and attributions in association with specific reporting verbs.

4.3 Dichotomy in authorial presence in reporting verbs usage

Preferences along the continuum of authorial power by Hong Kong and native-speaking students are shown in Table 3 in relation to popular discourse verbs - *argue* and *suggest* - and cognitive verbs - *believe* and *think.*
Table 3. Degree of authorial presence in the use of four main reporting verbs (30 textual instances randomly selected for each verb)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corpus</th>
<th>First pronoun</th>
<th>Hidden Averral*</th>
<th>Attribution with a specific source**</th>
<th>Attribution with an unspecified source***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>argue</td>
<td>HK_CORP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UK_CORP</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suggest</td>
<td>HK_CORP</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UK_CORP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believe</td>
<td>HK_CORP</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UK_CORP</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>think</td>
<td>HK_CORP</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UK_CORP</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Hidden Averral: e.g., it is argued that; it might be possible to argue that
**Attribution with a specific source: e.g., Robinson suggested that
***Attribution with an unspecified source: e.g., many people believe that

The most salient observation is that Hong Kong students either preferred *I* or attributions without employing hidden averrals such as *it is argued that* or *it is believed that* in both discourse and cognitive activities. Except the preference for *I* with *believe* and *think*, Hong Kong students predominantly delegated responsibilities to specified or unspecified sources to introduce literature without elaborated supports and arguments.

(13) Norman Hord, an associate professor in the department of Food Science and Human Nutrition, suggests that excess taking of supplements can cause toxicities. Kathleen challenges the common belief that …

(14) The supply-side theories argue that occupational gender is determined by the relative supply of the candidate’s gender. From the demand-side theory, it is related …

(15) There is a shortage of beds in the hospitals. Hong Kong people believe that it is caused by the flood of mainland pregnant women while mainlanders oppose this statement. As a result, the conflict between Chinese and Hong Kong citizens break out.

(HK_CORP)
In discourse activities represented by *argue* and *suggest*, while it is important to introduce specific viewpoints or provide a general background before articulating the writer’s own arguments, this inordinate delegation to ‘other views’ without a balance of the writer presence appears to be monolithic and one-sided. This echoes with what Tang and John (1999, p. 30) called an ‘information representative’ role which merely disseminates information with the least authorial power. A closer examination of *HK_CORP* also reveals that, apart from the *it is + reporting verb* expression, no other instances of hidden averral such as *this study, this paper, this author, my interpretation* were found.

This extreme concealment of writer presence by Hong Kong students in discourse activities is in stark contrast with the willingness of native-speaking students to reveal their own voice in the discursive construction and advancement of arguments. Mitigated expressions of self-mention were realized through the passive use of *it is* or the pronoun *one* accompanied by multiple transitional and evaluative signals.

(16) In the *so-called* knowledge economy long-term investment in education, … *Yet*, the assumption that firms will invest for the long-term is *contestable* … *It could be argued that* part of the responsibility of building a knowledge base lies with government.

(17) This indicates the courts’ unwillingness to examine any further hidden policy considerations … *One could argue that* this is a *sensible approach* as it allows for certainty within the commercial world.

(18) American freedom was never going to remain unchallenged as America grew in population and stature. *It could also be argued that* a united opposition toward the British was a timely distraction … *This, coupled with the increasingly appealing* idea of independence...

(UK_CORP)

These examples demonstrate how the use of a ‘hidden’ writer presence, as complemented by appropriate attitudinal signals, allows for an articulation of an unambiguous writer stance without projecting an assertive image of the writer. In the in-depth study on assertions in students’ academic essays by Milton and Hyland (1996), nine out of 13 most frequently used epistemic expressions by native-speaking students but not by Hong Kong
students involved the use of *it* and *this*. This controlled writer presence has also been revealed as a characteristic of advanced academic writing as Charles (2006b) highlighted how an eclectic employment of subject, reporting verb and deixis can convey a clear stance without employing the explicit first person.

… this thesis argues strongly that socialization in the international sphere (ibid, p. 504)

An indiscriminate use of hidden averrals, however, should not be encouraged because an ‘over-correction’ from being assertive to impassive was witnessed among Chinese undergraduates who overused mitigated self-mention such as *it is, this paper, it can be seen*, etc (Lee & Chen, 2009). It is therefore important to examine not only the quantity of these non-human expressions but also the subtlety of their usage in terms of their interplay with specific reporting verbs. In this light, proficient native-speaking students appear capable of downplaying their writer visibility without sacrificing a clear authorial stance by using *it (be) + suggested that* immediately after a theory or a piece of evidence.

(19) Thirdly, in line with the deterrence theory 7, it is suggested that, in general, an employer has ultimate control of his business and is therefore in the best position to maximise safety in order to avoid torturous liability.

(20) …monument and horizon were in alignment to a celestial object (Battersby 2002.) This then could show that the ditch perhaps came first or at least that the mound was built with the aim of creating an alignment to a certain celestial body. It could therefore be suggested that the use of the mounds as burial chambers was added to designs later...

(21) By looking at the previous evidence of citizen women and their prohibited relations with men, *it can be suggested* that it may have been unacceptable for most citizen women to attend the theatre.

(UK_CORP)

While Hong Kong and native-speaking students displayed a marked difference in the usage of non-human subjects in discourse activities, both groups preferred an explicit writer presence in their use of *think* and *believe* as shown in Table 3. This observation contrasts with findings by Charles (2006b) that the primary use of *it* with cognitive verbs,
especially tentative ones, is usually associated with hard-discipline writing. Although uncertainty and human fallibility are generally not preferred in ‘hard’ disciplines, these cognitive verbs appear to be more tolerated or accepted as a discursive means of collaborative knowledge construction between the writer and the reader in ‘soft’ disciplines (Charles, 2006a; Hyland, 1999, 2002a; Thompson, 2001). It could be argued that the use of cognitive and tentative verbs with first person in ‘soft’ disciplines is not only allowed but advocated if it is accompanied by writer credibility, such as in CEO letters.

The observation that tentative verbs such as suspect, speculate, guess are among the most frequent verbs used in conjunction with I by the eminent John Swales (Hyland, 2008) also shows that displaying writer visibility with speculative verbs can be an effective hedging strategy. This is contrary to the common perception that “first person should be avoided to play safe”. The use of I and speculative verbs can be a strategy that students can employ more frequently as both corpora reveal only one case of such usage.

As discussed above, an interplay of reporting source and reporting verbs allows the writer to effectively marshal their writer presence to facilitate reader engagement. In the next section, I will elaborate the concept of dialogic interaction as a form of reader engagement by examining the prosody and issues in the use of specific discourse verbs.

4.4 Prosody and issues in the use of Argue and Suggest

Extending the discussion of averrals and attributions in the previous sections, this section will examine in detail the differences between Hong Kong and native-speaking students in their usage of and common mistakes with the two specific discourse verbs - argue, and suggest. Emphasis will be placed on the potential of these verbs in establishing a dialogic interaction with the reader and performing rhetorical functions such as mitigating face-threatening acts over an extended stretch of text.
4.4.1 Argue

Hong Kong students tend to avoid *argue* as shown in its underuse in the corpus. Questionnaire responses (Q7, 10, 13, 16; see Appendix 12) also indicate that students were least comfortable with *I argue* (3.14) among selected reporting verbs – *I think* (3.32), *I believe* (3.38), *I suggest* (3.58). This is probably because of its perceptive ‘intensity’ in provoking conflict as revealed by the interviews with students.

I don’t normally use *argue*. This word has ‘sparks’. It can only be used when the issue is very controversial. (Interview with Student 3)

I will use *suggest*. *Argue* is like fighting with people. Like overwhelming people, winning against somebody. (Interview with Student 7)

It gives me a feeling of a fight. (Interview with Student 9)

When used in writing, however, *argue* did not appear to convey this intensity of debate but was primarily confined to introducing viewpoints along the same line of arguments.

(22) Brownlee suggested that the fast-food companies used a marketing strategy to attract customers. .. *She also argued that* food intake is not controlled by the body demand …

(23) He believes that Hong Kong needs some expert to adapt the changes of Hong Kong and solve fresh problems. *He also argued that* the exam of traditional schooling is easy to fail …

(24) According to Fruthey, students become more active than passive in class because they are creating their own notes with these devices. *She also argues that* the phenomenon of students distracting has existed ...

(HK_CORP)

This disparity between perceptions and usages appears problematic as Hong Kong students either avoided using *argue* altogether or undermined its potential of evoking an argumentative spirit in ‘soft’ discipline writing. Proficient native-speaking students, on the other hand, were able to use *argue* to dovetail one move with another in an
argumentative couplet. In this couplet, *argue* in the first move typically carries a negative evaluation whereas in the second a positive assessment (Hunston, 1995).

(25) 1\textsuperscript{st} Move: It is argued that in this case, each of the three conditions is met. 2\textsuperscript{nd} Move: I disagree. I think justification requires extra explanation.

(26) 1\textsuperscript{st} Move: …the appellants believed that it was disproportionate… 2\textsuperscript{nd} Move: …However, Lord Steyn argued, and the others agreed, that retention of information was proportionate… One reason given in support of this was that …

*(UK_CORP)*

Both instances of *argue* above represent a ‘dialogic expansion’ to open up a discursive space only to be constricted subsequently by the factive *agree* or *disagree*. It is through this alternate ‘dialogic expansion and contraction’ (Martin & White, 2005, p. 102) that an argumentative ethos is promoted. The combination of attribution with unspecified sources such as *it is argued that* also conjures up a ‘reader-in-the-text’ (Thompson & Thetela, 1995) to involve the audience to collaboratively construct and advance arguments, a spirit absent in the writing by Hong Kong students. The negative connotation of *argue* or perhaps of arguments in general may explain how Hong Kong students made mistakes either by ‘neutralizing’ the argumentative potential of the verb or by ‘closing off’ the discursive space altogether by equating *argue* with *strongly disagree* as respectively illustrated by the following examples.

(27) The article then describes and argues the suggestions from the public to the government that people believe are feasible to tackle with the fare hike. For example, some people have suggested that fare-stability fund should be set. Moreover, some others propose that.

(28) The author Craig Donnellan is also a doctor. She is against the usage of euthanasia. Donnellan argues that doctors have to put an end to people’s life for those who don’t want to die.

*(HK_CORP)*
4.4.2 Suggest

The non-argumentative nature Hong Kong students’ writing is not only confined to the use of argue, but also to suggest as reflected by the prevalence of I suggest in offering recommendations (discussed in Section 4.2) and by an insensitivity to the tentative nature of the verb.

In the writing by local students, many instances of suggest were used to introduce viewpoints of specific sources with which they expressed explicit agreement. This use of suggest can probably be replaced by the neutral verb state with no significant difference in the introduction of background information.

(29) Michael (2005) suggests that handling stress is not as harsh …
Michael (2005) suggests that stress and happiness are important elements
Michael (2005) suggests that how to create your happiness by...
In my opinion, yoga is a very efficient way to relieve our pressure …

(30) Norman Hord, an associate professor in…. suggests that excess taking of supplements can cause toxicities… So, I think we should take supplements carefully to prevent overdose.

(31) Firstly, they suggested on providing individual training to teenagers,
Secondly, they believe the family factor plays an important role. Lastly, they report that the school and community… On the whole, I agree with the Farrington and Welsh.

(HK_CORP)

This indifferent use of suggest by Hong Kong students seem to indicate their insensitivity to the tentative nature of the verb. This contrasts sharply with skilful writers who can exploit its tentativeness by introducing a proposition only to be refuted subsequently (Charles, 2006a; Hood, 2004). The tentative nature of suggest can be harnessed to mitigate what Brown and Levinson (1987) called face-threatening act (FTA) for the attributed sources. While the use of suggest for politeness has been discussed extensively with non-human subject such as these findings, results in hard sciences writing (Myers, 1989), it is argued that this mitigating effect is even more important in soft discipline.
writing in which human interpretations rather than absolute truth constitute the basis of argument development.

The insensitivity to the tentative nature of *suggest* is not only limited to less proficient community college students as Hood (2004) shows that university students in Hong Kong also suffer from an ambiguous stance in the use of *suggest*. To engage the reader in a discursive fashion, local students, however, may follow effective examples of using *suggest* tentatively by proficient native-speaking students.

(32) In theory, monetary and fiscal policy has the potential to be a very powerful tool in affecting the economy and *theory suggests* that it can be used by policy makers to improve macroeconomic performance. However, in practice the application of the theory is not always straightforward …

(33) Giddens (2000:69,79) indicates that the ‘knowledge economy’ reflects … Curry (1993), on the other hand, suggests that the ‘new economy’, a related term, is based on … It is argued that an analysis that combines these two approaches will emphasise …

(34) … the evidence suggests that these were in use over a long period of time and so are likely to have been at least partly contemporary with each other. However, this is not necessarily the case in all regions; in Shetland, for example …

(UK_CORP)

Hong Kong students’ unawareness of the tentative *suggest* was also found to be problematic at the conclusion of an essay where a strong commitment and assertion are generally expected rather than a tentative proposition.

(35) Moreover, many parents always neglect their son or daughter having low self-esteem. Furthermore, they never face on that problem. In my opinion, talk more with their children, know more about themselves are the major things they need to do. I suggest communication is vital for teenagers that can break out of a crisis.

(36) First, should know the goods and bad about online dating… Do not reveal your true identity before the relationship is working out. … Do not keep things inside only. For me I do not suggest online dating.

(HK_CORP)
While Hong Kong students are generally too assertive throughout an essay by overusing epistemic devices such as boosters, directives, etc. (Hyland & Milton, 1997), their use of *I suggest* to convey an unexpectedly tentative stance at the end of the writing will create considerable confusion to the reader. An inadvertent tentativeness expressed by *I suggest* appears worthy of further research because *I suggest* is overused and most preferred among the four selected reporting verbs (score 3.58 in Q16 in questionnaire, see Appendix 12 for questionnaire details).

4.5 *Summary*

This chapter has examined the language patterns employed by Hong Kong and native-speaking students along the continuum of authorial power. The overuse of *I* by Hong Kong students was primarily cognitive, affective, and factive in nature. This appears to be influenced by the spoken language and an urge to offer recommendations, suggesting that Hong Kong students are desirous rather than detached writers. However, their unawareness of employing mitigated expressions of self-mention such as *it is argued that* thwarted their attempts to articulate an unambiguous writer stance without portraying an assertive image. In addition, their avoidance of or insensitivity to the argumentative nature of *argue* constricted the dialogic space between the reader and the writer whereas their unawareness of the tentative *suggest* undermined its potential in mitigating face-threatening acts, and expressed an undesirable uncertainty in the conclusion of the writing.

To complement the corporal study of language patterns, I seek to investigate students’ and teachers’ perception of authorship in the next chapter. Emphasis will be placed on students’ considerations of avoiding and favoring *I*, and on the extent to which teachers encourage student authorship. Attitudes and suggestions on teacher help will also be explored.
Chapter 5  Student and teacher perceptions of authorial presence

5.1 Introduction

To better understand the rationale behind the language patterns of authorial presence discussed in the previous chapter, I attempt to examine related students’ and teachers’ perceptions in this chapter. A contrast between Hong Kong students’ dislike of and preference for self-mention will be drawn using quantitative questionnaire findings and qualitative interview data. Since potential factors contributing to these perceptions are many and varied, I will be selective in exploring a limited set addressed in past research (see Section 2.3) to facilitate comparison. These factors are students’ understanding of academic writing, confidence, attitudes toward the Chinese culture, and response to conflicting writing guides. Besides student perceptions, attitudes of community college teachers will also be compared with their counterparts at the tertiary level to shed light on teachers’ different expectations and their respective influences on the writing practice of their students.

5.2 Student perceptions

Students’ attitudes toward avoiding and favoring the use of I in their writing will be discussed with questionnaire responses shown in Table 4 and the interview data.
5.2.1 Avoiding I

Contrary to the actual overuse of I in their writing, a majority of students (except two) expressed their avoidance of it in interviews. While it is not surprising that formality and objectivity were cited as reasons, students’ lack of understanding of the purpose of academic writing is noteworthy as students considered using difficult vocabulary very important when asked about the purpose of academic writing. This is contrary to the high perceived understanding shown in the questionnaire (score >3.3 in Q1-3).

Writers need to use very fancy words. They have to be complicated. The writing has to be ‘entangling’, make people feel the writing is deep. (Interview with Student 3)
We need to use sophisticated and academic words. (Interview with Student 4)

It is to learn some basic grammar for examinations. In academic writing, we need to use many technical terms. Try to make ordinary readers not understand the writing. (Interview with Student 6)

Students’ preoccupation with grammar and vocabulary rather than a strong writer commitment may contribute to an obscured writer presence in their writing. Not being able to understand what is required in academic writing is among the top difficulties of students (Hartley & Chesworth, 2000). This predicament is exacerbated by a misleading self-perception that they already understand when to aver and when to attribute. This deceptive understanding is consistent with a large-scale study by Evans and Green (2007) which shows that undergraduates in Hong Kong considered using appropriate academic style the most difficult but referring to sources the least. In contrast, native-speaking students appeared to understand that the excessive use of I would disrupt the discursive construction of arguments in academic writing.

I try to use different opinions. I say someone’s opinion, then counter it with someone else’s. I weave my own perception in but I’d never say this is what I think directly. I use some arguing and counter but I always go back to my introduction stance. (Interview with a proficient UK student by the BAWE team, Nesi et al., 2008)

Another reason for an implicit authorial presence may be a lack of writer confidence as revealed by a great deal of literature on undergraduate studies (Hyland, 2002b; Pittam et al., 2009; Read et al., 2001). However, questionnaire responses (score 3.24 in Q5; 3.43 in Q6) seem to indicate that the lack of confidence is not about persuasion. When asked about whether they were confident in academic writing, students expressed concerns about their language proficiency (Tsui, 1996) rather than self-deprecation or a submissive status relative to the reader.

No, not much [confidence]. Grammar or vocabulary must be academic. Need to have a very good language proficiency, beautiful wording. (Interview with Student 6)
My conclusion is based on my research papers. I can prove my teacher’s concept wrong. (Interview with Student 2)

It is all about evidence. I can prove my teacher wrong. (Interview with Student 14)

It appears that a subordinate self-perception of undergraduates, which generally leads to an obscured writer presence, is not ingrained in pre-university writing. This self-confidence was also expressed in the overuse of I and the unrestrained affective appeal discussed in Section 4.2.

In addition, questionnaire responses on Chinese culture (score ~3.1 in Q19-21) appear to indicate that the conservative and self-effacing Confucian influence on students (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996) was not dominant, at least in self-perceptions, by students. Other interview data were inconclusive with about half of the students ignoring the Chinese culture as a factor and the other half acknowledging their preference for an indirect and subtle ‘Chinese’ way of communication to avoid conflict.

Culture is not a factor at all. I never consider that. I just use I. Only content matters. (Interview with Student 7)

You may not win any argument. Like Chinese, be a bit conservative. I may be too strong. Chinese are less direct and more tortuous when they speak. (Interview with Student 13)

Although the notion of culture is an abstract concept and the results were far from comprehensive, these mixed results and many students’ ‘speak-up’ attitude of proving their teachers wrong suggest that the traditional image of Chinese students as being reticent (Jones, 1999) and devaluing individual achievement (Scollon, 1994; Watkins & Biggs, 2001) may not be the overriding reason for avoiding self-mention by present-day students.

In terms of students’ responses to conflicting writing guides, no statistically significant difference was recorded between questionnaire responses to Q22 and Q23 (t=0.394, df=676, p<0.05), indicating that students were equally receptive (score ~3.3) of
contradictory instructions even when they were juxtaposed. This didactic permeability is also shown in the unquestioning compliance with teacher instructions as acknowledged by some interviewees.

Secondary school teachers before told us not to use I. No particular reason is given. (Interview with Student 1)

Teachers strongly stated that we should not use I. Just don’t. I guess it is a formality issue, but I didn’t bother to ask why. (Interview with Student 5)

It could be argued that the influence of teacher is more significant than textbook guides as all interviewees revealed no recollection of writing guides on self-mention before completing the questionnaire. This highlights the importance of understanding teachers’ mentality and perceptions which will be discussed in Section 5.3.

5.2.2 Favoring I

While a majority of students avoided the use of I in general, some specifically recalled that self-mention had helped them add a ‘personal touch’ to convince the reader or articulate their opinions and recommendations.

When I try to move others with both emotions and rationale. I think I believe can ‘draw’ people to believe me. (Interview with Student 6)

When I really want to say my own opinion. (Interview with Student 1)

Our projects require us to give suggestions and recommendations. I will use I believe, I suggest. I am studying tourism. A report requires us to think of some new scenic spots. Making use of some statistics and facts to show the benefits [of the scenic spots], naturally I will use I. For promotion, I will use I. (Interview with Student 9)

An affective appeal and an ownership of ‘individualistic’ content indicate that students can assume the role of what Tang and John (1999, p. 34) called an ‘originator’ who has the right and ability to originate new ideas contingent upon the underlying content of the writing. While managing dialogic interaction with the reader may be too advanced for
community college students, solicitation of personal opinions and explicit request for recommendations in writing instructions appear to foreground rather than foreclose the needs and rights of the writer to leverage his/her experience as an essential element of the writing process. These needs and rights, however, appear to gradually diminish in university because of the conventions and principalities demanded by academic practices. This ‘dilution’ of writer identity is not only confined to the less proficient Hong Kong students but also to studying adults (Ivanič, 1998) and professionals (Lea & Street, 1998) whose distinctive and extensive personal experience appeared devalued, if not marginalized.

Another interesting reason for the explicit use of self-mention appears to be related to the popular and public English proficiency test *International English Language Testing System* (IELTS) as many interviewees quoted the test and similar school exams as the reasons of using *I* in their academic writing.

> Use it [*I*] in exam when I am too nervous to think of other expressions and when the exam questions directly ask for my opinions such as those in IELTS. (Interview with Student 13)

> When the writing instruction prompt asks for my personal opinions or when it asks whether I agree or disagree. Of course I will then use *I*. In school examinations I will use *I* too as they are very similar to IELTS. (Interview with Student 9)

In a comparative study of the IELTS writing tasks and university assignments, Moore and Morton (2005) show that 85% of the information sources prescribed in university assignments are secondary whereas IELTS almost exclusively requires the use of prior knowledge by candidates. A typical IELTS writing task rubric is “To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement. You should use your own ideas, knowledge and experience...” and it appears to have molded students’ understanding of academic writing as illustrated by the following comments on the influence of the test (ibid, p. 46).

> Our various experiences of teaching on IELTS test preparation programs suggest to us that Task 2 [argumentative writing] has a major influence on students’
emerging understandings of what academic writing in Anglophone universities fundamentally entails.

This shows that instruction prompts and the design of learning activity present an area worth looking into if a delicate balance is to be struck between the voice of the writer and those from other sources. Learning activities to promote such an awareness will be discussed in Section 6.2.

5.3 Teacher perceptions

Perceptive data on student authorship were collected from the individual interviews with three teachers: a senior non-native speaking teacher (Teacher 1), a senior native-speaking teacher with (Teacher 2), and a junior non-native speaking teacher (Teacher 3). Both senior teachers had four years of experiencing teaching the underlying course of academic English, *EAPP1*, whereas the junior teacher had one year of similar experience. In addition to their teaching practices, these teachers’ own experiences as a writer and attitudes toward teacher help will also be discussed.

All three teachers were found to strongly discourage students from using *I* in the main body of the academic writing.

The main section must be objective. Then add a paragraph of subjective personal comments. They understand the main section cannot feature the use of *I*. (Interview with Teacher 1)

It depends on the goals of the assignment. Discursive: discussion done using impersonal verb phrases. In the conclusion, I expect *I*. That’s what I tell the students: don’t use *I* until you get to the conclusion. (Interview with Teacher 2)

When they are expressing their own arguments at the end, it is ok to use *I*. (Interview with Teacher 3).

This prescribed demarcation of the impersonal discussion from the subjective conclusion appears inconsistent with the observation that academic writing as a whole is never purely impersonal and objective (Hyland, 1999; Hunston, 2000). The permission of
personal evaluation merely at the end of the writing may disrupt the collaborative and
discursive construction of arguments by the reader and the writer throughout the writing.
Teachers at the tertiary level frequently lamented their students’ detachment in writing;
however, no explanations and remedies were offered.

Students often get into weird contortions to avoid using I. I’m not sure why, but
they can see from the readings we give them that they don’t have to do this.

(Info systems supervisor interview as cited in Hyland (2002b, p. 1109))

This straitjacketed forbiddance of I by the teacher interviewees may be attributed to their
own practice as a writer. Teacher 2 and Teacher 3 expressed an indiscriminate and
intransigent avoidance of I with only Teacher 1 recounted one occasion on using I for
‘face-saving’.

When I wrote my thesis, I did not use the word I at all. I used plenty of
impersonal phrases, secondary sources to express my opinions. (Interview with
Teacher 2)

When I was a student, I was very clear about detaching myself. Trying to be less
subjective. If I can, I will not use I at all in my whole passage. I know this is
merely my stubbornness as academic writing does not necessarily preclude the
use of I. But I just don’t use I. (Interview with Teacher 3)

I seldom use I, trying to be objective. Maybe when it is about speculation and
less certain things. I will use first person pronoun. (Interview with Teacher 1)

While personal style may be a significant reason of avoiding self-mention, it is argued
that instead of its judgmental exclusion, its judicious use can be encouraged in achieving
different rhetorical purposes. For example, the use of I is popular in published research
articles from stating goals to making claims and elaborating arguments (Hyland, 2002b).
Similarly, an eclectic interplay of I and reporting verbs such as I speculate can serve as a
useful face-saving strategy.
In terms of offering help to students on authorship and reporting verbs, teachers were not enthusiastic, referring specifically to the low language proficiency of students as the main issue. This lack of teacher enthusiasm was also echoed by students.

Compared with other problems, in terms of priority, [authorship and reporting verbs] are not a priority except those who are strong. We can do some fine-tune. But for the majority of students, they are still struggling with the fundamentals. (Interview with Teacher 1)

Getting them not to copy and to paraphrase correctly is already a challenge. Expecting them to choose more appropriate reporting verbs would be above and beyond the standard. (Interview with Teacher 2)

I don’t think they get it. I show them the reading I had in university. Students won’t follow. (Interview with Teacher 3)

Don’t need help or suggestions because teachers already have guidelines on projects. If we have questions, we can ask the teachers but not about showing our voices. (Interview with Student 9)

While teachers may suggest that basic grammar should take priority, I would argue that conveying an unambiguous and committed stance is more important than merely maintaining grammatical accuracy because many grammatical mistakes may not obscure a writer stance as much as reporting sources do. This argument is confirmed by the confusion of reporting sources as cited by Teacher 1 in the interview.

Sometimes they don’t have person pronouns. I will hesitate whether the writer is expressing himself or he/she is summarizing what the sources said. (Interview with Teacher 1)

Under further elicitation, some of the more elaborated teaching recommendations are explicit teaching with exercises and the use of relevant and interesting materials, showing that a willingness to teach and learn may exist if there is a paradigm shift in articulating the need and exploring non-academic teaching materials.

It needs to be explicitly taught. You group the verbs. Test them. Fill-in-the-blanks. …they should understand the subtle differences between various verbs. (Interview with Teacher 2)
Some everyday examples. Not a thick book in HKU library. Not a paragraph from a professor. (Interview with Student 3)

5.4 Summary

This chapter has explored the students’ and teachers’ perceptions of self-mention at the community college level. Students’ predominant avoidance of I appears to be due to their misunderstanding of the purpose of academic writing as showcasing difficult vocabulary rather than engaging the reader for argument construction. A didactic permeability under conflicting writing guides and teachers’ prescription also seems to undermine an overt writer presence. However, a lack of confidence due to writer submissiveness and the influence of the conservative Confucian culture may not be as significant as expected. Preference for self-mention, in contrast, was associated with an affective appeal to persuade, an ownership of unique content (such as recommendations), and instruction prompts in the IELTS examination emphasizing personal experience and prior knowledge instead of reporting on secondary sources.

Teachers’ attitudes, on the other hand, were mainly concerned with an indiscriminate forbiddance of self-mention in writing discussion, which inhibited the discursive and argumentative ethos in academic writing. This may be attributed to the teachers’ own categorical practice of writer detachment and a preoccupation with grammar accuracy despite students’ mistakes in confusing reporting sources and an advocacy of self-mention by teachers at the tertiary level. However, an explicit and committed stance through self-mention and its interplay with different reporting verbs may be promoted through explicit learning tasks and everyday materials to accommodate the less proficient students.
Chapter 6  Conclusion

6.1 Summary of the study

Academic writing is never purely an objective and impersonal presentation of facts but rather an act of self representation and reader engagement. While previous research was predominantly about published writing, this study has examined the writing by less proficient students in a community college in Hong Kong regarding their language patterns and perceptions of authorial presence and reporting verbs.

A comparison with the more proficient native-speaking students in the UK has revealed that Hong Kong students displayed a cognitive, affective, factive overuse of I with a high degree of emotional appeal and ownership of recommendations. While the cognitive association of I may be influenced by spoken English, the affective and factive dimension of self-mention suggest that Hong Kong students preferred an impassioned, rather than impassive, role of an opinion holder or even an originator of uncontroversial content. Nevertheless, their underuse of discourse verbs and mitigated expressions of self-mention such as it is argued that indicates Hong Kong students’ inattention to expressing an unambiguous writer stance without being overly assertive.

With respect to issues with specific reporting verbs, Hong Kong students’ insensitivity to the ‘dialogic expanding’ argue appeared to undermine the collaborative construction of arguments with the reader. Similarly, their unawareness of the tentativeness expressed by suggest possibly deprived them of an invaluable ‘face-saving’ strategy to introduce plausible propositions, and inappropriately conveyed an unexpected tentativeness in the writer stance in the conclusion section of their writing. Proficient native-speaking students, in contrast, appeared capable of exploiting the interplay of reporting sources and reporting verbs to establish a dialogic interaction with the reader. Examples of their writing may potentially provide a learning target for Hong Kong students to follow.
Contrary to the actual overuse of *I* in writing, Hong Kong students displayed a self-perceived reluctance to project an explicit writer presence. While a general deference to formality and objectivity is expected, students’ preoccupation with difficult vocabulary and grammar is noteworthy as it seems to reflect their serious lack of understanding in projecting a clear and committed writer voice as the main purpose of academic writing, an issue exacerbated by their receptiveness of conflicting writing guides. The cultural influence on writer presence, however, is probably not as predominant as expected because many students appeared not as conservative or subservient as suggested by the traditional self-effacing image of Chinese learners. In contrast, instruction prompts in public test IELTS seemed to encourage self-expression as they emphasize individual experience and prior knowledge.

While students avoided or preferred *I* with different reasons, teachers appeared to strictly forbid an overt writer presence in their students’ writing. Teachers’ aversion to self-mention may signal their insensitivity to the interactive potential of authorship for reader engagement as they sought to detach themselves in their own writing practice. This is in stark contrast with the encouragement of self-mention by teachers at the tertiary level who seemed to value their students’ articulation of their opinions. It can be argued that students’ affective appeal and ownership of content would diminish under this faceless if not stifling prescription by teachers at the community college level. Teachers’ view that effectively using reporting sources and verbs is merely an issue of ‘fine-tuning’ may explain why students continue to have problems with establishing an unambiguous writer position when they progress to university. Rather than preaching a categorical endorsement or preclusion of *I*, I attempt to, in the next section, discuss how students may improve their awareness of writer presence and reporting verbs by leveraging methods from experienced scholars and hopefully interesting non-academic materials.
6.2 Pedagogical implications

Findings of this study suggest that less proficient students are not entirely impassive; however, their unawareness of the various forms of authorial presence, inability to establish a dialogue with the reader over a stretch of text, and insensitivity to specific discourse verbs necessitate learning through a series of consciousness-raising activities.

Students can be required to identify the sources of propositions in a small stretch of text adapted from a good example in a learner corpus. A learning task of matching the sources in the intended and actual reading will not only reify the concept of ‘reader-in-the-text’ but also illustrate how an effective use of various reporting sources can contribute to a discursive and dialogic reader-writer interaction. An illustration of such learning task proposed by Thompson (2001) is shown in Appendix 13. To develop a sensitivity to reporting verbs, students may be asked to explicitly assign attitudes (positive, negative, or neutral) to reporting verbs in good writing. Training on guessing the intention of the writer can also force students to think from the reader’s perspective. One such learning activity (Cooley & Lewkowicz, 2003) is illustrated in Appendix 14.

Illustrative as writing from learner corpora are, teachers can also be adventurous in locating non-academic and interesting examples to show that dialogic interaction and subtleties of reporting verbs are not restricted to academic essays and reports. For example, President Obama’s fine rhetoric is exemplified in his use of the tentative suggest (as shown below) to save not only his wife’s face but also his when he recounted even his wife did not fully support him in his early political life.

And she - perhaps more out of pity than conviction - agreed to this one last race, though she also suggested that given the orderly life she preferred for our family, I shouldn’t necessarily count on her vote. … I let her take comfort in the long odds against me. (Obama, 2006, p. 5)
6.3 Limitations of the study

In spite of a triangulated approach, this study is limited by the simplicity and short length of the written assignments by Hong Kong students in which an elaborated construction of arguments may be downplayed. In addition, the exclusion of first pronoun *we* as an explicit writer presence neglects the individualistic and collectivistic aspects of self under various circumstances. Without perceptive data from proficient native-speaking students, this study is also far from comprehensive in contrasting the differences in student perceptions between the Chinese and western culture. The limited number of teacher interviews (three only) may only suggest a cursory representation of teachers’ perception at the community college level. The similarity reported between native-speaking and non-native speaking teachers can only be considered suggestive rather than definitive. Additionally, some of the perceptive constructs, such as the Chinese culture and confidence, are inherently abstract concepts not easily operationalized and understood. Therefore, related self-reported findings depending on a few questionnaire items and interview responses, albeit with a sizeable audience, should merely serve as a meaningful starting point which warrants further investigation.

6.4 Suggestions for further research

While an appropriate level of authorial presence and a judicious use of reporting verbs are important in evaluating secondary sources (e.g., literature review), this study can be extended to include other rhetorical functions such as stating results and elaborating arguments because the level of writer commitment and evaluation in these functions are potentially more substantial and critical. In addition, the difference between students at community college and those at university suggest that longitudinal studies may also shed light on the factors influencing how students, when progressing on their academic path, tiptoe along this slippery continuum of authorial power. The interplay of epistemic adverbs and reporting verbs also represents a potentially interesting area of future investigation. Hong Kong students have been known to overuse assertive adverbs such as *strongly* as in *I strongly agree* (Hyland and Milton, 1997), but whether these adverbs
may effect a perceived change in the prosody of reporting verb is not well known. For example, the verb *claim* may signal a very different attitude in *Johnson claims that* versus *Johnson rightly claims that*. Speculation may also be made on whether there is actually a L1 transfer effect, in a semantic sense and usage, on the use of reporting verbs by Chinese students. A contrastive comparison could be conducted between the uses of reporting verbs in English and Chinese corpora such as Lancaster Corpus of Mandarin Chinese (Xiao & McEnery, 2006).

To conclude, authorial presence is not merely about displaying confidence in and responsibility for a proposition. Its interplay with reporting verbs opens up a dialogic space in which a reader-in-the-text is reified and engaged. A collaborative and argumentative ethos between the writer and the reader can be promoted not only by an assiduous examination of corporal subtleties but also by a courageous paradigm shift in learning and teaching attitudes as I argue that facts do not speak for themselves, but the writer and the reader together have to argue for them.
References


Ho, K. L. (2011). ‘Suggest that’ or ‘Argue that’? An exploratory study of reporting verbs to express writer stance in humanities and social science academic writing by Chinese ESL students. (Unpublished report on a Masters applied research project). The University of Hong Kong.


Appendices

Appendix 1: Textual examples of hidden averral and other-sourced attribution

Note: These examples are based on studies provided by Hunston (2000, p.190) and Charles (2006b, p.497) and cursory examination of essays from the HK_CORP and UK_CORP

Hidden averral – Non-human (textual): internal attribution (statement to the writer’s work) + averral without attribution (Charles, 2006b, p.510)

This paper study/thesis/section/chapter/analysis/observation/findings/evidence [text and findings of the study] shows that ...
...there are few stage directions, especially in this extract. This/it suggests that the words of the play are more important than the actions
...the trees take on the appearance of ‘sentinels...pikes...lances’...These instances show that
10% unemployment is still indicative of a serious depression, suggesting that
Poe's repeated use of mirroring and doubling suggests that

It is suggested that … [no specific preceding text nor groups of people can be identified; it can be inferred as the reader’s general assessment]
It seems most sensible to concur with Roberts in arguing that …
… motherhood is no longer seen as synonymous with femininity. This shows that
Even drugs that are thought to have a calming effect
One may argue that …

Other sourced attribution – writer delegating responsibility

Specified (human or non-human), singular or group

Higgins argues that … He/she thinks that …
… as recommended by Slack and Chambers (2004). The authors/writers suggest that …
The study/calculation/theory/findings by Ross shows that
Belbin’s 9 team roles framework (1996) shows that
Realists challenged the conservative conception, they argue that
The school masters argued that the "cost of the benefit was
Rene Descartes puts forward the case of … This theory suggests the mind …
The government may argue that …
The Peasants’ War of 1525 showed that …
The Home Office statistics show that

Attribution – unspecified, including speech acts, general phenomena

Some/others/many have claimed that …
Myths suggest that …
Everyone knows that …
People know that …
Appendix 2: Description of The British Academic Written English Corpus (BAWE)

The British Academic Written English (BAWE) corpus

The Editors are pleased to announce that the 6.5 million word British Academic Written English (BAWE) corpus is now available to researchers who register with the Oxford Text Archive. It is listed as resource number 2539, see http://ota.ahds.ac.uk/headers/2539.xml.

BAWE was developed at the Universities of Warwick, Reading and Oxford Brookes as part of a larger ESRC-funded project to investigate genres of assessed writing in British higher education.1 Publications and findings from this project are available on request. The corpus developers were Hilary Nesi and Sheena Gardner (formerly of the Centre for Applied Linguistics [previously called CELTE], University of Warwick), Paul Thompson (Department of Applied Linguistics, Reading) and Paul Wicks (Westminster Institute of Education, Oxford Brookes).

The corpus contains 2,761 proficient student assignments, produced and assessed as part of university degree coursework, and fairly evenly distributed across 35 university disciplines and four levels of study (first year undergraduate to Masters level). About half the assignments were graded at a level equivalent to ‘distinction’ (D) (70% or above), and half at a level equivalent to ‘merit’ (M) (between 60% and 69%). The majority (1,953) were written by L1 speakers of English. As some assignments contained multiple pieces of coursework, the total number of separate texts in the corpus is 2,897. Texts have been categorised into 13 broad genre families, including “essays”, “critiques”, “case studies”, “explanations”, “methodology recounts”, “problem questions” and “proposals”.

Information about the genre family, discipline, level and grade of each assignment is provided in the header for each file, alongside contributor information which did not influence collection policy, such as gender, year of birth, native speaker status, and years of UK secondary education. A spreadsheet providing these details and a manual explaining the encoding conventions are also included as part of the Oxford Text Archive deposit.

The corpus is suitable for use with concordancing programs such as AntConc or WordSmith Tools, and provides scope for extensive research into lexis, phraseology and language variation in university student writing. The BAWE corpus developers welcome use of the corpus for research purposes, provided that they are informed of any output arising from analysis in the form of dissertations, theses, presentations or publications. Please contact Hilary Nesi h.nesi@coventry.ac.uk for details of how to cite BAWE, or if you have any queries about its design and development.

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Appendix 3: Course outline for “English for Academic and Professional Purposes I”

1. Course Outline
This course is an introduction to advanced English language skills for academic and professional purposes. The skills taught in the course include literature search for research, paraphrasing and summarizing, building up a repertoire of vocabulary and structures, oral presentations and engagement in discussions for different academic and professional situations.

2. Objectives
   General Objectives:
   To equip students with the basic skills required for various academic and professional purposes.
   Linguistic Objectives:
   Reading
   ▪ To introduce the register of academic and professional writing.
   ▪ To enhance the techniques involved in extracting necessary information efficiently – skills of skimming and scanning.
   ▪ To develop critical reading skills.

   Writing
   ▪ To build up a repertoire of vocabulary and structures for academic and professional writing. To advance students’ ability to paraphrase and summarize.
   ▪ To introduce the proper formats of referencing required in academic research.

   Listening
   ▪ To further improve students’ skills in note-taking and registering relevant and important information in spoken texts.
   ▪ To advance students’ ability to engage better in group discussions, meetings, or seminars.

   Speaking
   ▪ To advance students’ oral presentation skills in academic and professional situations.
   ▪ To equip students with better skills while handling questions in an oral presentation.
   ▪ To advance students’ ability to give explanations and expressing opinions.

3. Intended Learning Outcomes
By the end of the course, students will be able:
   ▪ To write introductory, body and concluding paragraphs of an essay effectively;
   ▪ To use cohesive devices such as connectives, transitional phrases, repetition and substitution to achieve cohesion in writing;
   ▪ To summarize, paraphrase and respond to a given text;
   ▪ To provide in-text citations and prepare a work-cited list using the MLA referencing style;
   ▪ To conduct secondary research and produce written and oral reports; and
   ▪ To employ tact in writing negative messages.

4. Teaching and Learning Methods
This course is based on an interactive teaching methodology. The weekly lessons will be conducted in the form of student-centred tutorials and workshops rather than teacher-guided lectures. Communicative activities, such as pair work and group discussions will take place frequently.
Students are expected to do readings and perform various writing tasks in preparation for discussion and other communicative activities in class. Teaching materials are based on the textbook listed below plus some supplementary handouts distributed in class.
Appendix 4: Description of sample snippets of the written assignment by HK students

**Reading Report**
In groups, students will choose a research topic and search for reference materials (literature search/review) on that topic. The assignment is a written report of students’ literature search.

**Contents of the Assignment**

Each member in the group will write a report on one reading on the topic. The report should consist of a summary of the reading and one other paragraph stating the student’s view on the main ideas in the reading. The word limit for the report on each reading is 250-300 words. The group should also write a short overall introduction and conclusion to contain all the reports (of all members) by giving some background information and commenting on their overall relevance to the topic. The group should write 120-150 words each for the overall introduction and conclusion. A Works Cited page (a list of all the reading that are referred to in the report) in correct format (MLA style) and a completed checklist should be included at the end of the report.

*Note: Introduction and conclusion are not used as data for this study and only individual work is used.*

**Sample snippets of writing assignments from Hong Kong students**

Finally, it can improve classroom atmosphere and students obtain more attention. **I believe** that small classes teaching gain benefits are more than large classes teaching.

First of all, is about myth and religion. **Many people believe** that it is difficult to take Greece religion seriously. In fact, the creation of the world is developed by the gods of Uranus (the Heavens) and Ge (the

**Piper and Merskey believe** that the diagnosis and treatment of dissociative identity disorder is impossible.

In my opinion, media should not bring an incorrect message to their reader, fat is a fault. **I think** that is totally injuring the new generation, since they are defective and that needs time to develop.

If you search this word in Google dictionary, you can see the explanation express: “the states of begin free from illness or injury”. **It is commonly thought** that health is a person has a good physical condition and without sick.

**Professor Salmivalli** quoted several studies and **argued** that bullying caused adjustment problems leading to physical consequences, such as school avoidance, low academic achievement and lack of school enjoyment.

There are various opinions toward suicide. **Some may argue** that suicide violates the morality and values of society, while **some** may **think** that ...

The article of “Does Anger Cause Blindness?” tells us how to deal with anger. **Daniel Robin suggests** that when people respond to someone’s anger, the better way is to facilitate

Besides figuring out the factors of problem gambling in individual aspects, **it has been suggested** that exploring to study the cultural perspectives on gambling can understand the gambling behaviors in an initiative way.
Appendix 5: Description of the ‘soft’ disciplines and genres “critique” and “essays”

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<tr>
<th>Genres</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Critique</strong></td>
<td>to demonstrate understanding of and the ability to evaluate and / or assess the significance of the object of study</td>
<td>academic paper review&lt;br&gt;approach evaluation&lt;br&gt;business environment analysis&lt;br&gt;business / organisation evaluation&lt;br&gt;financial report evaluation&lt;br&gt;interpretation of results&lt;br&gt;legislation evaluation&lt;br&gt;(legal) case report&lt;br&gt;policy evaluation&lt;br&gt;product/ building evaluation&lt;br&gt;programme evaluation&lt;br&gt;project evaluation&lt;br&gt;review of a book/ film/ play/ website&lt;br&gt;system evaluation&lt;br&gt;teaching evaluation</td>
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<td>includes descriptive account, explanation, and evaluation; often involves tests</td>
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<td>may correspond to part of a research paper, professional design specification or expert evaluation</td>
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<td><strong>Essay</strong></td>
<td>to develop the ability to construct a coherent argument and develop critical thinking skills</td>
<td>challenge&lt;br&gt;commentary&lt;br&gt;comparison&lt;br&gt;discussion&lt;br&gt;exposition&lt;br&gt;factorial</td>
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<td>may be discussion (issue, pros/cons, final position); exposition (thesis, evidence, restate thesis); factorial (outcome, conditioning factors); challenge (opposition to existing theory); comparison (series of comparative points or arguments); or commentary (series of comments on a text)</td>
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<td>may correspond to a published academic/specialist paper</td>
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Appendix 6: Reporting verbs to focus: (A superset from three literature sources and the supplementary notes from the course.)

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<td></td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>refute</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>reveal</td>
<td>R</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>say</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>show</td>
<td>R</td>
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<tr>
<td>speculate</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: Four notable verbs - agree, disagree, hope, feel - are added to the above list of 38 reporting verbs to make up a total of 42.

Appendix 7: 13 selected reporting verbs in course EAPP1

**Reporting Verbs**

This group of verbs communicates your attitude to your reader about what you are reporting. Of course, these verbs are sometimes used in more complex ways; try to notice and think about these as you read academic books and articles in the course of your study.

Below is a list of commonly used reporting verbs in formal academic writing, but of course there are many, many more. Don't just choose any reporting verb because their meanings are different. Make sure you know the meaning of a verb before you use it!

1. **To claim** - the author has made a simple statement of fact, which you do not agree with.

   *Giorgio (1995) claims that most eighteen year olds are intelligent. However, Giorgio’s definition of intelligence is very narrow.*

2. **To challenge** – the author argues against an opinion of another person, but at this point in the essay you do not need to say whether you agree or not.

   *Hughes (1998) challenges the common belief that employees are most strongly motivated by money, in the light of some studies of her own.*

3. **To argue** - the author has tried to persuade readers that something is true by using evidence and logic, but at this stage in your essay you do not need to say yet whether you agree or not.

   *Jin (1999) argues that providing safe injecting spaces is the best way to respond to the current wave of drug overdoses.*

4. **To describe** – the author has simply described a thing or a process and you want to refer to it. Describes is often used with 'as'.

   *Papadopoulos (1998) describes how the meetings of the group are conducted. She describes these meetings as “extremely well-organised” (page 32).*

5. **To define** – the author has given a precise definition (if you want to include the definition in your own work use "as")

   *Mullaly (1967) defines ethics as "moral correctness".*

6. **To show / demonstrate** – the author has tried to persuade readers that something is true by using evidence and logic AND the author has succeeded in proving her/his point to you, so you now agree with her/him (or you already had this opinion before you read what this author said).

   *Tran (1970) demonstrates that investment in tertiary education has a strong beneficial effect on the country’s potential for economic growth.*
Appendix 7 (continued): Notes on 13 selected reporting verbs in course EAPP1

7. To **highlight** - the author has treated this particular thing as the most important and you want to refer to it.

    *In his discussion of the types of users of accounting information, Fauve (1997) highlights the needs of the investor.*

8. To **list** – the author has given a list and you want to refer to it.

    *Nguyen and Tran (1998) list five possible approaches to this problem, a, b, c, d, and e.*

9. To **state** – Using the reporting verb to state means that the author has made a simple statement of fact, which you may or may not agree with. For example:

    *Jacubowicz (1997) states that child care is an unnecessary luxury.*

10. To **suggest** – the author has put forward an idea for consideration but has not argued very strongly for it and you do not need to say whether you agree or not.

    *Stephenson (1987) suggests that one reason for the increase in cases of tuberculosis may be the growth in movement between countries.*

11. To **maintain** - the author has tried to persuade readers that something is true by using evidence and logic, but you do not agree. Later in the paragraph or essay you will say you do not agree and explain why.

    *Skolimowski (1987) maintains that university entry should be restricted to students with TERs of 90 or above, because many current students have difficulty in their first year.*

12. To **refute** – the author argues that another person’s theory or claim is wrong AND the author has succeeded in proving to this to you, so you now agree that the theory or claim is wrong (or you already had this opinion before you read what this author said)

    *Opetai (1998) refutes the commonly accepted notion that aboriginal people accepted whites without struggle by listing hundreds of examples of resistance which occurred over a fifty year period in New South Wales.*

Adapted from online materials from Victoria University (http://tls.vu.edu.au/SLS/slu/ReadingWriting/Referencing/ReportingVerbs/ReportingVerbs.htm)
Appendix 8: Questionnaire on authorship and reporting verbs

**Questionnaire on authorship in academic writing**

Research title: “I believe that” or “It is suggested that”? Authorial presence in the use of reporting verbs in ‘soft’ discipline academic writing by community college students in Hong Kong

You are invited to complete this anonymous questionnaire as part of the above research by Kin Loong Ho who is currently studying the MA in Applied Linguistics programme offered by the Centre for Applied English Studies at the University of Hong Kong. Your opinion on the use of personal pronoun ‘I’ and reporting verbs in your academic writing will help you rESLect on your understanding of academic writing and will potentially benefit teaching at school.

Participation is entirely voluntary. If you do not want to participate in this study, you do not need to return this questionnaire. All information will be used for research purposes only. If you have any questions about the research, please feel free to contact Kin Loong Ho at 6779-2351. If you want to know more about the rights as a research participant, please contact the Human Research Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Faculties, the University of Hong Kong (2241-5267).

Please tick ONLY one box for every questionnaire item below.

5 - Strongly Agree 4 – Agree 3 - Neutral 2 - Disagree 1 - Strongly Disagree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire item</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I understand the purpose of academic writing.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I should present my own ideas and opinions in academic writing.</td>
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<td>3. I should hold a position rather than neutrally present facts in academic writing.</td>
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<td>4. I am self-confident in academic writing.</td>
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<td>5. I can persuade my reader (make him/her believe me) in academic writing.</td>
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<td>6. I know when to express my opinions and when to refer to other sources in academic writing.</td>
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<td>7. I am comfortable in using the phrase ‘I think that’ in expanding my arguments.</td>
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<td>8. When I use the phrase ‘I think that’, I am afraid it seems too strong and subjective.</td>
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<td>9. Good and experienced writers use ‘I think that’ in their academic writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. I am comfortable in using the phrase ‘I believe that’ in expanding my arguments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. When I use the phrase ‘I believe that’, I am afraid it seems too strong and subjective.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Good and experienced writers use ‘I believe that’ in their academic writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. I am comfortable in using the phrase ‘I argue that’ in expanding my arguments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. When I use the phrase ‘I argue that’, I am afraid it seems too strong and subjective.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Good and experienced writers use ‘I argue that’ in their academic writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. I am comfortable in using the phrase ‘I suggest that’ in expanding my arguments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. When I use the phrase ‘I suggest that’, I am afraid it seems too strong and subjective.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Good and experienced writers use ‘I suggest that’ in their academic writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. The Chinese culture makes me more conservative in my academic writing (if applicable).</td>
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<td>20. The Chinese culture makes me value group rather than individual contribution in my academic writing (if applicable).</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. The Chinese culture makes me use ‘I’ LESS in my academic writing (if applicable).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 8 (continued): Questionnaire on authorship in academic writing

Please do not change your opinions of previous statements. Read the following two textbook guidelines and indicate to what extent you agree with each of them.

5 - Strongly Agree  4 – Agree  3 - Neutral  2 - Disagree  1 - Strongly Disagree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire item</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22. &quot;...most of our recommendations are designed to help you maintain a scholarly and objective tone in your writing. This does not mean that you should never use 'I' or 'we' in your writing. The use of 'I' or 'we' does not make a piece of writing informal.&quot; (Swales &amp; Feak, 1994, p.20)</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. &quot;The total paper is considered to be the work of the writer. You don’t have to say 'I think' or 'My opinion is' in the paper. Traditional formal writing does not use 'I' or 'we' in the body of the paper.&quot; (Spencer &amp; Arbon, 1996, p.26)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

End of questionnaire. Thank you!
Appendix 9: Selection criteria and selected text for student and teacher interview

The text is a snippet of an assignment from the English course EAPPI which:

1. Contains phrases reporting verbs such as “I believe that”.
2. Features a topic easily understood after reading the title and the introduction.
3. Contains argument understandable in natural reading.
4. Quality of writing: at least grade B (estimated) in the assessment of the assignment based on the teacher’s evaluation.

Online Shopping Worldwide
Introduction
As the technology that drives the World Wide Web becomes more accessible, retailers have recognized the need to establish a presence on the Internet while consumers enjoy the convenience from online shopping. Consumers are now penetrating online retail markets. People can now ‘window-shop’ online shops at home, compare and evaluate products, choose, pay online and just wait for the delivery, in which online shopping appears to alter people’s consumption behaviour.

Global trend in online shopping
Since there is rapid development of e-commerce, increasing trend of online shopping is derived. Last year, Nielsen Company had done a research called “Online Shopping Around the World” because of the facilitate procedure of purchasing via internet so then to analyze the universal movement of it. There are about 30000 interviewees who come from different countries, including more than 50 markets globally (2). According to the research statistic, there are 79% and 84% respondents from Europe and Latin America purpose buying through internet separately. However, over a quarter of Asian, 30% of North American, 35% of Latin American and 30% interviewees from developing countries point out that have no planning for using computer to shopping (5-9).

To conclude these worldwide data, the percentage of who ever shopped by internet is 16, over 4000 people (6). Besides, the most popular goods that people have preference to buy online are book and clothes (2). In addition, the reasons that will affect them to shopping online are the evaluation of buyers and advice from friends (4). After reading this report, I believe that the number of online consumers will increase continuously as there are many developing and undeveloped countries which are advancing speedily, such as China. Nowadays, the Chinese shopping website “Taobao” become more famous in Asia, even in other western countries. There are lots of buyers from Hong Kong, Taiwan and Korea, etc. It means that online shopping is more accepted by people than before. Also, since the great advancement of technology, shopping on the internet is simple and convenient. I trust that the increasing tendency is the fact we cannot deny.

Online consumption behaviour in China
There is an increasing trend of online shopping around the world, as well as China. The Internet has transformed our life a lot. Online shop become the most fashion trend nowadays over the world. To understanding the Emerging of Online consumption behaviour in China, The Internet in China and online consumption was trun to be more mature.
Many analysts think that the most importance on the online shopping is the confident. China has more confident give to the shopper (5). Taobao.com is the most successful example in China. Taobao.com has set up a “university,” to development their business. (7) It can help Taobao.com be more success in the future market. Ko Shing Mo, director of Hong Kong Daigou.com, he comments that most of the online shopper they are buy the daily necessities items more than they buy luxury items. (8) They can buy any goods they want form online shop.

I agree that truth is the most importance factor when we are online shopping. We can't directly check the product, we just can follow our feeling to make the decision. Also, through online shopping in china, we can have more chance and the price is more cheaper than other country online shop. Price is a good advantages in china online shopping. The benefit is we can buy a product lower than market price. Online shop are not just are new means in China and it will be new trend in the world and become more mature and successful.

Online consumption behaviour in Hong Kong
After the situation of China, let’s turn back to Hong Kong now. Nowadays, in the Internet world, the most popular goods and services of online shopping in Hong Kong are fashions (cloths, Accessories and Shoes), flight ticket and hotel booking (Chan, 2010, ¶ 1-2). Also, other items like book, event tickets and electronics are the common product in online shop (Chan, 2010). Moreover, the opinions from friends and family playing a important role that affect the buyer’s final decision. More than half of the Hong Kong buyers trust their friends and family’s opinions to make the deal (¶ 7). On the other hand, some kinds of product mainly rely on user’s opinions and reviews when consumers buy it online, such as consumer electronics, personal care products, telecommunications services and cosmetics (¶ 7).
Appendix 9 (continued): Selection criteria and selected text for student and teacher interview

In my words, I am not surprised the information from the survey. Hong Kong is a big financial center in the world; sometime people get to work in overseas are very general, so flight and hotel services are necessary for those people. As what we seen, Internet could make anything faster and easier, so which is a great tool for Hong Kong people reduce the time to take the complex procedures. On the other hand, although the opinions from friends, family and the ex-users could help the consumers to make decision, those opinions may not always "true". The opinions are from different persons, got different tastes, review and feeling; the cloth is fit for person A and B doesn’t mean it is fit for C, so I suggest that consumers should also consider in their own view.

Individual purchase intention in online shopping

Individual perspective of online consumption will be explored. Henry analyzes various shortcuts that consumers adopt during the decision-making process of online shopping, which can simply satisfy consumers’ needs of purchasing, instead of further perfecting and maximizing consumption choices (352-54). Henry further illustrates the several types of shortcuts. Purchasers, who habitually repurchase, tend to stick to their habitual consumption patterns and preference list of categorical online shops. They incline to revisit the websites whenever certain needs pop up (Henry 352). Other than that, another major selection measure is relying on distinguished brand names, as they have inadequate information and evaluation of products in consumption (Henry 352-53). Having own sets of rational selection criteria, appealing to experts, friends and price can also allow consumers to eliminate alternate goods under prerequisite of lack of purchase information. In addition, online shops have their customers’ trust developed when customers are able to compare and evaluate goods by attributes according to their own preference (Henry 353). At last, Henry deems the shortcuts are valuable even consumers seldom regret from irrational purchase (353-54).

I agree that the shortcuts are very useful to explain the online purchasing behaviour. However, I do not totally agree with his saying of "we seek to satisfy rather than to optimize" (352). I believe optimizing and satisfying should be reciprocal in the sense that some may perceive optimizing as one of the criteria of satisfying needs. With limited time and information, some may want to seek for the best and optimize choices, rather than solely selecting one from their habitual purchase.

Conclusion

After reviewing both global and individual perspectives on online shopping, technology has played a critical role in online shopping that creates convenience and effectiveness for global consumers. All of the articles, research reports and statistics demonstrate that there is a continuous expansion of online shopping. The largest medium of online shopping in China, Taobao, has been ranked as the 12th valuable digital enterprise all over the world by Silicon Alley Insider. The total transaction value reached $US 290 (in billions) in 2009 and $US 590 (in billions) in 2010. There was such a tremendous rise in online transactions that represents trend of online shopping has been continually at a rapid rate of growth. It is believed that online shopping will still be at a high rise in the near future. Advancement of technology may totally change traditional consumption behaviour of purchasing from shops to online shopping one day.
Appendix 10: Questions for interviews with students  
(Duration for the interview – ~60 mins)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Specific section</strong> – The responses of students are in relation to a text of the written assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why do you think the writer used “I believe …” here? What if he/she uses “I suggest” or “I argue”?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What impression do you get of the writer? Give me one or two adjectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your feeling toward its alternatives? e.g., &quot;I believe that...&quot;, &quot;It is believed that ...&quot;, &quot;Others believe that ...&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>General section</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you use 'I' in writing? Why? Why not? Concerns?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you use 'argue' and 'suggest'? Why? Why not? Concerns?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you see yourself bringing anything new or contributing to the field? If yes, how? If no, why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you see yourself as a ‘guide’ to introduce information or the ‘creator’ of academic knowledge?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you see yourself “reporting up” to the reader? (Note: Students are reminded that they may actually know more than the reader for the literature review they have conducted.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you see the Chinese culture such as encouraging someone to be humble, affects the answer you gave in the above?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think you will get higher marks if you use 'I' with supports and evidence? What type of help and suggestions would you like from your teachers to help you show your ‘voice’ in academic writing?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 11: Questions for interviews with teachers (two non-native speaking teachers – one junior, one experienced, and one native speaking teacher. Estimated duration for the interview – ~60 mins)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Specific section</strong> – Same as above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why do you think the writer used “I believe ...” here? What if he/she uses “I suggest” or “I argue”?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What impression do you get of the writer? Give me one or two adjectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your feeling toward its alternatives? e.g., &quot;I believe that...&quot;, &quot;It is believed that ...&quot;, &quot;Others believe that ...&quot;</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>General section</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What's your view on expressing personal commitment in academic writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think the use of 'I' in writing can help achieve that? Why? Why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you give higher marks to students if they use 'I' with supports and evidence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your view on these two contradictory textbook guides? (Showing the two textbook guides (the last two items in the student questionnaire.))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you teach different expressions 'I argue that', 'it is argued that', 'One may argue'? Why? Why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you aware of any post-secondary curriculum, teaching materials that can help you explain the concept of authorship to students?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any ideas and suggestions to help students show their ‘voice’ in academic writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think we should provide explicit guidelines in the writing assignments, e.g. lecture notes, supplementary sheets, grading criteria with respect to the use of ‘I’ and reporting verbs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 12: Results of questionnaire on authorship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>0.725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>0.704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>0.678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>0.764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>688</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>1.335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>0.686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7</td>
<td>I think</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8</td>
<td>I think</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>0.893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9</td>
<td>I think</td>
<td>692</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10</td>
<td>I believe</td>
<td>694</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>0.813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11</td>
<td>I believe</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>0.873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q12</td>
<td>I believe</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13</td>
<td>I argue</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q14</td>
<td>I argue</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0.872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q15</td>
<td>I argue</td>
<td>694</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>0.833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q16</td>
<td>I suggest</td>
<td>694</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>0.789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q17</td>
<td>I suggest</td>
<td>694</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q18</td>
<td>I suggest</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q19</td>
<td>Culture</td>
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<td>Q20</td>
<td>Culture</td>
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<td>3.16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q21</td>
<td>Culture</td>
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<td>Textbook guideline 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q23</td>
<td>Textbook guideline 2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

5 - Strongly Agree  4 - Agree  3 - Neutral  2 - Disagree  1 - Strongly Disagree

1. I understand the purpose of academic writing.
2. I should present my own ideas and opinions in academic writing.
3. I should hold a position rather than neutrally present facts in academic writing.
4. I am self-confident in academic writing.
5. I can persuade my reader (make him/her believe me) in academic writing.
6. When I use the phrase ‘I think that’, I am afraid it seems too strong and subjective.
7. Good and experienced writers use ‘I think that’ in their academic writing.
8. When I use the phrase ‘I believe that’, I am afraid it seems too strong and subjective.
9. Good and experienced writers use ‘I believe that’ in their academic writing.
10. I am comfortable in using the phrase ‘I believe that’ in expanding my arguments.
11. When I use the phrase ‘I believe that’, I am afraid it seems too strong and subjective.
12. Good and experienced writers use ‘I believe that’ in their academic writing.
13. I am comfortable in using the phrase ‘I argue that’ in expanding my arguments.
14. When I use the phrase ‘I argue that’, I am afraid it seems too strong and subjective.
15. Good and experienced writers use ‘I argue that’ in their academic writing.
16. I am comfortable in using the phrase ‘I suggest that’ in expanding my arguments.
17. When I use the phrase ‘I suggest that’, I am afraid it seems too strong and subjective.
18. Good and experienced writers use ‘I suggest that’ in their academic writing.
19. The Chinese culture makes me more conservative in my academic writing (if applicable).
20. The Chinese culture makes me value group rather than individual contribution in my academic writing (if applicable).
21. The Chinese culture makes me use ‘I’ LESS in my academic writing (if applicable).
22. “...most of our recommendations are designed to help you maintain a scholarly and objective tone in your writing. This does not mean that you should never use ‘I’ or ‘we’ in your writing. The use of ‘I’ or ‘we’ does not make a piece of writing informal.” (Swales & Feak, 1994, p.20)
23. “The total paper is considered to be the work of the writer. You don’t have to say ‘I think’ or ‘My opinion is’ in the paper. Traditional formal writing does not use ‘I’ or ‘we’ in the body of the paper.” (Spencer & Arbon, 1996, p.26)
Appendix 13: A consciousness-raising task of comparing the reporting sources of propositions

Teaching notes: The sources involved can be illustrated in a grid of sources similar to the one below (adapted from Thompson, 2001, p.70-72). The grid will illustrate not only the concept of ‘reader-in-the-text’ but also how an effective use of various reporting sources can contribute to a discursive and dialogic reader-writer interaction. Various forms of self-mention, be it I or it is or other non-human expressions, can also be illustrated as examples to students. Discrepancies between actual and intended reading, if any (more so in less proficient writing), serve to signal a communication breakdown between the writer and the reader, something more problematic than most of the grammatical mistakes.

Extract

[S1] Lord Simon stated “the whole transaction took place in the setting of business relations.” [S2] His examination of the context led him to conclude that there was contractual intent. [S3] This indicates the courts' unwillingness to examine any further hidden policy considerations within the commercial context. [S4] One could argue that this is a sensible approach as it allows for certainty within the commercial world. [S5] It is however possible to rebut the presumption.

(adapted from UK_CORP)

Sources identification Grid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Actual reading</th>
<th>Intended reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Writer</td>
<td>Secondary Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Appendix 14: A consciousness-raising task of identifying meanings of reporting verbs

Notes: Students will read the following extract, identify the reporting verbs, and write down the meaning conveyed by the verbs.

Extract

Although numerous analysts have speculated about the relationship between residential architecture, the use of space, and changing gender patterns within married households, only a few researchers have empirically investigated these connections (Ken, 1990; Lawrence, 1979; Tognoli, 1980). In one study, Kent (1984) asserted that among Western Europeans and North Americans, the use of space in kitchens is consistently restricted to food preparation and related clean-up tasks. European and North American kitchens also tend to be predominantly gender specific and used mainly by women. Hasell and Peatross (1990), in an analysis of American house plans built between 1945 and 1990, found that interior spatial layouts had changed significantly over the years…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporting verb</th>
<th>Meaning conveyed by the verb</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>have speculate</td>
<td>Negative: The writer indicated that there has been no empirical investigation, only supported ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have investigated</td>
<td>Neutral: The writers neutrally report the existence of a few empirical studies, giving no indication of a positive or negative attitude toward them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asserted</td>
<td>Positive: The researcher is reported as being very certain that his/her findings were correct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>found</td>
<td>Neutral: The writers are reporting on a single completed study which does not necessarily provide proof.</td>
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(Cooley & Lewkowicz, 2003)
Appendix 15: Examples of using *argue* by native-speaking students from *BAWE*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Text</th>
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| **dialogic interaction** | *It could be argued* that part of the responsibility of building a knowledge base lies with government. **However, the UK government maintains an ambivalent position and has decided not to intervene with 'a stronger' statutory framework or obligation on employers to train* believing that 'in the a modern economy, we must look at a more imaginative set of levers'.

| tentative introduction, then hidden aerral support | **Lord Simon stated** "the whole transaction took place in the setting of business relations." His examination of the context led him to conclude that there was contractual intent. **This indicates** the courts' unwillingness to examine any further hidden policy considerations within the commercial context. **One could argue** that this is a **sensible approach** as it **allows for certainty within the commercial world**.  
<fnote>Edwards v Skyways Ltd [1964] 1 WLR 349</fnote>  
<fnote>Esso Petroleum Ltd v Commissioners of Customs and Excise [1976] 1 WLR 1</fnote>  
<fnote>...</fnote>

| **dialogic interaction** | To most people their will is there own and the only person capable of changing it is themselves. The key to being a successful manager, **some might argue**, is to change the will of the employee such that their key goal during working hours is to work as hard as possible. So far the paper has outlined why people work hard from the perspective of the employee, **however**, the person...

| negative 1st move dialogic | **Smith believes** (e) and he is justified in his belief. The conditions of the Tripartite Theory are fulfilled, **but it is clear that Smith does not have knowledge**. E. L. Gettier (1963). **I find this case to be absurd.** (e) is true purely by coincidence. If the proposition about ten coins was replaced with "is a human being" or "has blond hair" or "is six feet tall" and each of these facts happened to be true for both men, we would have the same outcome. **It is argued** that in this case, each of the three conditions is met. **I disagree.** I think justification requires extra explanation.

| negative 1st move dialogic | The more restrictions the customer is willing to accept the deeper the discount available" (Wirtz, 2003; 200). Many hotels practise this type of RM (app. ?!!). **Some argue** that variable room rates can result in perceived unfairness, **however** if the hotel ensures that the customer is aware of the different rates, with **differing restrictions available should reduce this**; "providing information on the hotel's pricing practices should enable customers to understand the reasons for differences in prices, and thus increase their judgements of fairness" (Choi, S., Mattila, A; 2004, 306).

| positive 2nd move Dialogic, | Coates refers to a study by Kramer (1974) which showed that students of both sexes characterised women's speech as 'stupid, vague, emotional, confused and wordy.' (1989: 65). **Coates argued** that this description was inappropriate when looking at the usage of women's language in all female discourse. She **took tag questions**, (a feature strongly associated with women's language), analysed how they were used in all female discussions and came to the conclusion that women use them to 'encourage the participation of others' and 'monitor that the speaker has the support of the group.' (1989: 73)

| positive 2nd move dialogic | Hippocrates believed that an epidemic was caused by the miasma theory, as when a large number of people all catch the same disease at the same time, the cause must be ascribed to something common to all...what they all breathe." In contrast, **Thucydides implies knowledge of contagion**, stating that 'the ...'. **I argue that** Thucydides was not truly aware of contagion and Longrigg supports...
### Appendix 16: Examples of using *suggest* by native-speaking students from BAWE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tentative 'play safe' in background knowledge before argument articulation</td>
<td>Similar pragmatism is raised by the argument of economic efficiency. Firstly, it is more efficient to negotiate a single insurance policy between the employer and the insurance company than for every employee to purchase their own policy. Secondly, if employees were individually liable businesses would be faced with a defensive, less productive workforce, and, in fields of particular risk, recruitment difficulties. Thirdly, <strong>in line with the deterrence theory</strong> it is suggested that, in general, an employer has ultimate control of his business and is therefore in the best position to maximise safety in order to avoid tortious liability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dialogic: tentative suggest then argue mitigate FTA</td>
<td>For instance, <em>Giddens (2000:69,79) indicates</em> that the 'knowledge economy' reflects the dominance of dynamic 'knowledge' sectors such as finance, computers and software, telecommunications, biotechnology and the communications industries, where highly skilled, flexible 'wired workers' are employed within collaborative small business networks in an entrepreneurial culture. <em>Curry (1993), on the other hand, suggests</em> that the 'new economy', a related term, is based on smaller firms, industrial districts, flexible firm strategies and production networks and flexible technology, which echoes the flexible specialisation thesis (Piore and Sabel 1984). Thus, the emphasis of the 'knowledge economy' literature tends to be service and 'knowledge sectors' whereas the flexible specialisation thesis is primarily centred on manufacturing (Hyman 1991). <strong>It is argued that an analysis that combines these two approaches</strong> will emphasise that commodity production continues to be important and, more broadly that 'manufacturing matters'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accompanied by other tentative devices</td>
<td>Melanie clearly has the intelligence and sexual freedom to take on the male defined visions of femininity which she is constantly pushed into. However Carter does not, arguably make her entirely successful. <em>The Leda and the Swan episode suggests</em> that these roles, though ridiculous and grandiose, are so established that in a sense she must experience them before she can escape them. <strong>It appears that</strong> she is not strong enough to immediately overthrow them by herself. This poses problems for the novel as a feminist text. As <em>Pauline Palmer suggests</em> it is difficult to 'represent a female protagonist as a victim...while at the same time portraying her as an autonomous individual.' When Melanie falls victim to the swan, she falls victim to male dominance. Perhaps Carter is criticising the system but finds that she can offer no alternative?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dialogic: argue with elaboration, then suggest</td>
<td><em>Bunn (2001) argues</em> that, &quot;given the quantities of meat obtained, it seems probable that, like the Hazda, early Homo shared meat&quot; (p212). Thus some of the theories of the 'Grandmothering' hypothesis such as the correlation between increased brain size and group size and food-sharing are not incompatible with current palaeoanthropological theory (Bunn/2001; Stanford &amp; Bunn/2001). <strong>However, their arguments are fundamentally weakened</strong> by the self-imposed dichotomy they themselves create. <strong>The majority of the evidence suggests that</strong> the driving force behind the grade shift in ergaster was not meat only vs. plant foods only, but rather a mix of the two elements (Milton/1999; Foley/2001; Vasey &amp; Walker/2001). Furthermore,</td>
</tr>
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| tentative, dialogic | Shortage of land may well have been a source of conflict, especially since many of the brochs were built quite close together. For example, on the island of Rousay, Orkney, three brochs fall within the boundaries of one modern farm (Scott 1947: 16). While it may be the case that these buildings were not occupied simultaneously, **the evidence suggests** that these were in use over a long period of time (Scott 1947: 16) and so are likely to have been at least partly contemporary with each other. **However, this is not necessarily the case in all regions;** in Shetland, for example,