

# Writing in the disciplines: Comparison of critical stance qualities in literary analyses by university students writing in L1 and L2 contexts

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## ABSTRACT

Construing critical stance in disciplinary writing is an important expectation. It is important because studies have shown a correlation between critical thinking and high score on writing. Therefore, this study compared the qualities of critical stance in literary analyses by university students in an outer circle country and by university students in an inner circle country. The data consisted of high-graded assignments by university students at seven universities in Gujarat state in India and successful assignments from British Academic Written English (BAWE) corpus. To analyze the data, appraisal theory- a subset of systemic functional linguistics- was employed. The results showed that university students in India predominantly construed in their literary analyses a descriptive and empty ethical stance. In contrast, university students in UK construed in their literary analyses a critic voice marked by caution, discourse alignment. Further, the results indicated that the descriptive and empty ethical stance was marked by the use of linguistic resources of affect and judgement in higher frequency while the critic voice in BAWE corpus was marked by the use of the linguistic resources of appreciation and engagement in higher frequency. These results have far-reaching implications for writing research and for assessing and teaching disciplinary writing in outer circle countries. They show evidence of the differences in the qualities of critical stance that students writing in L1 and L2 context construe in their disciplinary writing. They also give evidence of the differences in the assessment of students' writing in L1 and L2 context.

**Keywords:** Academic writing; corpus analysis; critical stance; disciplinary writing; literary discourse

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## INTRODUCTION

Writing in the disciplines (WID) is a movement in the field of writing research which arose in the 1970s in an inner circle country-United Kingdom-where English is the primarily means of communication (see, Silva & Limongi, 2019). This movement expanded to other inner circle countries, United States of America and Canada (Silva & Limongi, 2019). The movement emerged out of concerns for students writing in a particular discipline (Miller, et al., 2017; Hyland, 2016). The concerns were about the demands that students were

required to satisfy when producing a written text. These demands are cognitive and rhetorical in nature (Silva & Limongi, 2019). In order to understand these demands, scholars and writing teachers follow two approaches to writing: writing to learn and learning to write. Writing to learn is an approach which is employed to understand cognitive demands. Studies which adopt this approach attempt to show that writing is a means of acquiring disciplinary knowledge, showing understanding of disciplinary concepts and appreciating significance in any discipline (e.g., Britton, 1975; Emig, 1977;

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Silva & Limongi, 2019, etc.). On the other hand, learning to write is an approach which is followed to demystify rhetorical demands that writing in particular disciplines imposes on students. Researchers who follow this approach postulate that learning or teaching writing involves socializing students into the discourse conventions, the reasoning and argumentation styles, and the epistemological beliefs of particular disciplines (see Van Drie et al., 2021).

It is uncontested that success in disciplinary writing depends upon students satisfying cognitive and rhetorical demands. Although the approaches that are adopted to understand these demands differ from one other, they are complementary (Carter et al., 2007). Indeed, success in communicating disciplinary knowledge requires the use of rhetorical strategies. Undoubtedly, rhetorical strategies are means by which writers use to make knowledge communication acceptable and convincing to other members of disciplinary community. In this regard, many scholars have been attempting to examine these demands linguistically and what is involved in satisfying them (e.g., Coffin, 2002; Hood, 2004, 2006, 2010; Johns, 2008, Woodward-Kron, 2003). In this attempt, studies have shown that construing critical stance in disciplinary writing is an important expectation (see, Lancaster, 2012, 2016; Woodward-Kron, 2002). It is an important expectation because studies have shown a correlation between the display of critical thinking and high score on writing (Lancaster, 2016). Interestingly, a written text which satisfy cognitive and rhetorical demands displays critical stance.

Critical stance, as Lancaster (2016, p.16) shows, “is understood as encompassing three closely discursive components: the writer’s stance toward the subject matter at hand (attitudinal stance), towards the status of knowledge (epistemic stance) and towards the putative reader (interactional stance)”. It is clear from this definition that critical stance entails cognitive and rhetorical requirements in disciplinary writing. Indeed, construing critical stance in disciplinary writing requires writers to engage with disciplinary knowledge, to position their views with regard to the views of others and to express an attitude-positive or negative- toward the topic of discussion (Humphrey & Economou, 2015). This suggests that producing a written text of high quality involves selecting linguistic resources to construe a critical stance that agree with the epistemological values of a particular discipline (see Bruce, 2010, 2014, 2015, 2016; Macken-Horarik, 1996, 2003; Rothery & Stenglin, 2000; Wilder, 2012). In fact, academic writers in a particular discipline need to produce texts they assume other members of the disciplinary community accept and find convincing (Wilder, 2005; Wilder & Wolfe, 2009). With this understanding, scholars in inner circle have investigated the linguistic resources

needed to construe critical stance in a particular discipline, to compare the qualities of critical stance in low-graded and high-graded written assignments and in L1 and L2 essays, etc.

For example, Macken-Horarik (1996, 2003) examined the linguistic resources writers use to construe critical stance in literary analyses and analyzed the type of stance that successful literary writers project in their literary analyses. She conducted an appraisal analysis of narrative discourses and successful responses to narration by secondary school students. The findings of this analysis revealed that successful students employed the linguistic resources of judgement in higher frequency. According to Macken-Horarik (2003), these resources are employed to evaluate the behaviors or attitudes of characters according to moral and ethical norms. The results showed that using these resources help writer project an ethical stance in their literary analyses. Similar findings were observed in Rothery and Stenglin’s (2000) appraisal analysis of successful literary analyses by secondary school students. Rothery and Stenglin found that students construe in their literary analyses an ethical stance.

Another scholar who analyzed the linguistic resources needed to construe a successful literary analysis is Bruce (2016). Bruce carried out a genre and linguistic analysis of essays from British Academic Written English (BAWE) corpus to investigate the means by which writers use to construe critical stance. The results show that university students establish critical stance in their literary analyses by using different types of critical statements: ground conclusion, contra-expectations, and reason results. The findings in this study are similar to the results in Wilder’s (2012) rhetorical analysis of successful literary analyses by undergraduate students. The findings reveal that successful literary analyses predominantly employ a rhetorical device which invokes the apparent meaning of the literary text under analysis before arguing for the real meaning.

Lancaster (2016) compared stance qualities in high-graded and low-graded papers written by upper-level undergraduate students in economics and political theory at a large university in the United States. The results revealed that students who wrote high-graded papers used more hedges, boosters, attitude markers and disclaimers than students who wrote low-graded papers. The findings also show that students who wrote high-graded papers used these linguistic features to achieve the following critical stance qualities: underscoring points of disagreement among writers, theories and approaches; challenging others’ views; showing a critical distance from the object of analysis; and aligning positively with the discourse conventions of the disciplines of economics and political theory. Similarly, Lee (2015) compared critical stance

qualities in high-graded and low-graded persuasive essays by undergraduate students in a social science discipline at a regional university in Australia. To analyze critical stance qualities, Lee (2015) followed the theoretical framework of appraisal system, the sub-category of appreciation. The results of this analysis revealed that students who wrote high-graded essays employed more resources of appreciation, the sub-category of valuation, to establish the following critical stance qualities: looking at an issue from different perspectives, creation of critical voice, positive alignment with the discourse conventions of social science disciplines. In contrast, students who wrote low-graded essays employed more resources of appreciation, the subcategory of reaction, to establish a voice that is not valued in the discipline of social science.

Scholars who compared the qualities of critical stance in essays by L1 and L2 students include Lam and Crosthwaite (2018). Lam and Crosthwaite compared the appraisal resources employed by L1 and L2 students to construe evaluative stance in their argumentative essays. The findings showed a significant variation in the use of appraisal resources to construe evaluative stance. L1 students used in higher frequency the linguistics resources of engagement to construe in their essays a stance that is more objective, depersonalized and valued. In contrast, L2 students employed in higher frequency the linguistic resources of attitude, particularly, the linguistic resources of affect, to construe in their essays a stance that is more personal. Another study that compares the qualities of critical stance in L1 and L2 essays is the study by Lee and Deakin (2016). Lee & Deakin compared critical stance qualities in successful and less-successful argumentative essays by L1 and L2 undergraduate student writing. Using Hyland's (2005) model of interactional metadiscourse, they found that successful essays written by both L1 and L2 language contain greater instances of hedging than unsuccessful essays. They also found that L2 students were more reluctant to establish authorial identity than L1 students.

However, all the reviewed studies were conducted by scholars in inner circle countries, where English is a native language. Some of these studies compared the qualities of critical stance in low-graded and high-graded papers written by university students (e.g., Lancaster, 2016; Lee, 2015). Other studies compared the qualities of critical stance in papers written by L1 and L2 students (e.g., Lam & Crosthwaite, 2018). In outer circle countries, little research is conducted within the framework of writing in disciplines (WID) in order to understand the ways in which ESL students meet cognitive and rhetorical demands when writing in a particular discipline. In other words, few studies are conducted to understand how university students

write to demonstrate their critical thinking in a language which is not their native language and, in a country, where English is not used for daily communication. Scholars in outer circle countries seem to focus on language-related errors that students make in their writing. Therefore, this study aims to close this gap by comparing the qualities of critical stance in literary analyses by university students in India- an outer circle country and by university students in UK- an inner circle country. It provides answers to the following research questions:

1. How do the qualities of critical stance in successful literary analyses by university students in an outer circle country compare to the qualities of critical stance by successful literary analyses by university students in inner circle country?
2. What linguistic features make the qualities of critical stance in successful literary analyses by postgraduate students in outer circle country similar/different from the qualities of critical stance by successful students in inner circle country?

In an attempt to answer these research questions, this study employed appraisal theory by Martin and White (2005) to compare the qualities of critical stance in literary analyses by students in an inner circle country and by students in an outer circle country. This theory is a subset of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and comprises three linguistic systems: attitude, graduate and engagement. Attitude system includes the linguistic resources of affect, which are employed to construe emotions and feelings; the linguistic resources of judgement, which are used to evaluate human behavior according to ethical norms; and the linguistic resources of appreciation, which are employed to assess the value of things. Meanwhile, graduation system includes the linguistic resources that are used to intensify or to soften expressed meaning. According to Martin and White (2005), there exist two types of graduation: graduation according to focus and graduation according to force. Graduation according to focus involves sharpening or softening construed meaning (e.g., I like him **a bit**). Graduation according to force involves scaling of intensity (e.g., **very** happy) and scaling of amount or extent of entities (e.g., There are **many** studies on critical stance). Finally, the system of engagement includes the linguistic resources writers/speakers employ to express their positions with regard to expressed meaning. The positions writers/speakers express when writing or speaking are of two types. There are single-voiced positions (mono-glossic) and multi-voiced positions (hetero-glossic). Single-voiced positions are those which do not recognize other voices, (Martin & White, 2005). On the other hand, multi-voiced

positions are those that expand or contract dialogic space for alternative positions or voices (White, 2003).

**METHOD**

In this study, a discourse analytical research design and corpus techniques were used to compare the qualities of critical stance in literary analyses written by university students in an outer circle country and by university students in an inner circle country. Therefore, two samples of literary analyses were collected: a sample of successful literary analyses written by university students majoring in literature in India and a sample of literary analyses from BAWE corpus.

**Samples of Literary Analyses**

***Sample of Literary Analyses by University Students in an Outer Circle Country***

Fifty-two (52) samples of literary analyses by university students were collected from seven universities in Gujarat state in India, an outer circle

country: Bhavnagar University, MS University of Baroda, Gujarat University, Central University of Gujarat, Kachchh University, Sardal Patel University and BKNM University. They were written as part of formative assessment in the department of English. These samples were collected as follows. First, the researchers asked teachers at each of the seven universities to share high-graded assignments submitted to them by the students. The teachers were subject teachers in the department of English. They were asked to share the assignments they felt were successful assignments in literature. Therefore, they shared 52 hand-written and typed literary analyses that received marks that range from 8 to 10 out of 10 or A- to A+. Second, these literary analyses were typed in Microsoft word to create a corpus. After typing, the literary analyses were converted into plain text (TXT). This was used to calculate the size of the corpus through UAM corpus tool by O'Donnel (2007). Table 1 presents statistical information of the 52 literary analyses.

**Table 1**

*Statistical Information of 52 Literary Analyses*

<b>52 literary analysis</b>	<b>Words in text</b>	<b>Sentences in Text</b>
Length	95460	4477

From these 52 literary analyses, 24 assignments were selected for qualitative discourse analysis and quantitative corpus analysis. They were selected because they met the criteria of argumentative writing. The 24 assignments were selected as follows. The researchers read all the 52 assignments multiple times to make sure that the assignments were argumentative and dealt with an analysis of a literary text (novels, poems, plays, etc.)

from a particular literary theory. After two months, the researchers read again all the 52 assignments. This was done to ensure reliability in the selection of assignments. The selected assignments were used comparative purpose, comparison of the qualities of critical stance in these assignments and in literary analyses from BAWE corpus. The assignments constituted Students' Corpus. Table 2 presents statistical information of the Students' Corpus.

**Table 2**

*Statistical Information of Students' Corpus*

<b>Students' Corpus</b>	<b>Words in text</b>	<b>Sentences in text</b>
Length	48155	2171

***Samples of Literary Analyses from BAWE Corpus***

Twenty-four successful assignments in English literature were purposefully selected from (BAWE) corpus. BAWE corpus was developed under the directorship of Hilary Nesi and Sheena Gardener, Paul Thompson, and Paul Wickens at Universities of Warwick, Reading, and Oxford Brookes. The developers of this corpus point out that assignments in this corpus represent successful academic writing in discipline by university students. Therefore, the

24 assignments represent successful writing in the discipline of literary. They were written by upper-level university students majoring in English literature at universities in United Kingdom, an inner circle country. In addition, the selected assignments were concerned with an analysis of one or more literary texts (poems, novels, plays, etc.). These assignments were used to constitute BAWE corpus. Table 3 represents the statistical information of BAWE corpus.

**Table 3**

*Statistical Information of BAWE Corpus*

<b>BAWE Corpus</b>	<b>Words in text</b>	<b>Sentences in text</b>
Length	69819	2317

### **Analysis of the Data**

To examine the qualities of critical stance in literary analyses in the two corpora, a discourse analytical method was employed. The implementation of this analytical method involved manual coding of appraisal resources using UAM (Universidad Autonoma de Madrid) corpus tool (O' Donnel, 2007). The appraisal analysis of the two corpora was conducted as follows. First, the researchers drew on the appraisal sub-system of attitude analyze the ways in which students critically evaluated emotionally, ethically and aesthetically the portrayal of characters and the techniques used by the writers to convey a particular message. Second, the researchers drew on the appraisal sub-system of graduation to explore the ways in which students intensified or soften construed evaluation to evoke attitudinal meaning. Third, the researchers drew on the appraisal sub-system of engagement to examine the ways in which students expressed their position with regard to the message conveyed in the literary work and with regard to others' interpretation of this message.

### **Coding of the Data**

The coding of the resources of appraisal was carried out as follows. First, the researchers coded the resources that academic writers in literature use to critically evaluate the portrayal of characters in the literary works under analysis, the techniques literary writers use to convey a particular message, etc. These resources included the linguistic resources of affect, judgement and appreciation. To code these resources, the researchers had to read each assignment multiple times in order to interpret accurately the evaluative stance that students construed. This entailed reading each clause and sentences and resorting to co-textual relations to examine how the resources of attitude resonate with one another to create a particular evaluative stance. Example [1] illustrates this use of attitude markers. The sign (-) means negative polarity, the abbreviation (APP) stands for appreciation, (VAL) stands for Valuation, and (REA) stands for reaction.

[1]: "These textual examples support Galloway's comment that; 'Poe's own poetry is often seen as **poor** (-APP: VAL) evidence of the success of his theories of composition,' as predominantly eight syllables per line and predictable rhyming couplets make the extent to which he succeeds in making old forms new **questionable**." (-APP: REA) (BAWE corpus, Students' paper, 2008).

In this example, the evaluative terms "**poor and questionable**" resonate with one other to create a negative evaluative stance.

Second, the researchers coded the resources academic writers employ to intensify or soften evaluative meaning and therefore to evoke attitudinal meaning. The coded resources included

graduation resources of force and focus. If the graduation resources evoked attitude, then we coded the attitude type and its polarity. If the graduation resources did not evoke attitude, then we coded the graduation orientation. Example [2] and [3] illustrate this coding. The sign (+) means positive polarity, and COMP stands for composition.

[2]: "But, the limitations of language often force the writers to resort to *increasingly* [Force: intensity, up-scaling] **innovative** (+APP: VAL) strategies of rendering these concerns." (BAWE corpus, Students' paper, 2008).

[3]: "The alliteration **contributes** [Focus: fulfilment, up-scaling], [+APP: COMP] to the rhythmic continuity." (BAWE corpus, Student's paper, 2008).

Third, the researchers coded the resources that academic writers employ to create a critical distance from the construed evaluative stance, to engage with others' interpretations of the literary work, to persuade readers to accept writers' interpretation. The coded resources included engagement markers. These resources included the resources that are used to express single-voiced and multi-voiced positions. If propositions were multi-voiced formulated, the researchers coded the sub-categories. Example [4] and [5] illustrate this coding.

[4]: "Rushdie's prose works have brought **revolutionary** changes to the scenario of post-colonial writing." (Single-voiced) (Students' corpus, Gujarat Universities, 2019).

[5]: "At first glance, Conrad appears to consider the role of women as unimportant, as they are barely mentioned in the story. **However** (disclaim marker), a closer, **perhaps** feminist reading of the text **may** consider that it shows women to symbolize and **indeed**, maintain civilization." (Multi-voiced) (BAWE corpus, Students' paper, 2008).

The researchers coded these resources using UAM Corpus Tool. To ensure reliability of the coding, appraisal resources were coded at two-month interval using different methods. First, the linguistic resources which are employed to construe critical stance in literary analyses were coded manually. After two months, these linguistic resources were coded using UAM Corpus Tool. This was done to make sure that there was an inter-rater agreement at two-month interval.

## **FINDINGS**

### **Qualities of Critical Stances in Students' Corpus and BAWE Corpus**

Previous studies show that establishing critical stance in literary analyses involves the use of the linguistic resources of attitude to challenge conventional interpretations of the literary work being analyzed, to evaluate the strategies used by literary writers to convey a particular message, and to evaluate the portrayal of characters and the

message conveyed in the literary work (Rothery & Stenglin, 2000). It also involves the use of the resources of engagement to take positions about the message conveyed in the literary work being analyzed and with regard to others' interpretation of the message (Rothery & Stenglin, 2000).

**Table 4**

*Frequency per 1000 words of the occurrence of attitude resources*

Corpora	Affect	Judgement	Appreciation
Students' corpus	6.52	10.92	16.17
BAWE corpus	4.05	6.26	20.39

The results on table (4) indicate that the predominance choice in both corpora is the resources of appreciation (16.17 times in students' corpus and 20.39 times in BAWE corpus per 1000 words) followed by the resources of judgement (10.92 times in students' corpus and 6.26 times in BAWE corpus per 1000 words) and the resources of affect (6.52 times in students' corpus and 4.05 times in BAWE corpus). These results seem to suggest that the qualities of critical stance in literary analyses by students in an outer circle country is similar to the qualities of critical stance in literary analyses by students in an inner circle country.

However, the findings show that writers of BAWE corpus used more resources of appreciation than writers of students' corpus (20.39 times versus 16.17 times per 1000 words). In contrast, writers of students' corpus employed more resources of judgement (10.92 times versus 6.26 times per 1000

**The Resources of Attitudes in Students' Corpus and BAWE Corpus**

The results in this study reveal some similarity and differences in the use of the linguistic resources of attitude in students' corpus and BAWE corpus. Table 4 presents the distribution and occurrence of the linguistic resources of attitude in students' corpus and BAWE corpus.

words) and affect (6.52 times versus 4.05 times per 1000 words) than writers of BAWE corpus. An important question that arises from these differences in the use of the linguistic resources of attitude is why do writers of BAWE corpus use the resources of appreciation in greater frequency than the writers of students' corpus and why do the writers of students' corpus use the resources of judgement and affect in greater frequency than writers of BAWE corpus. Close reading of literary analyses in students' corpus and BAWE corpus revealed that the differences in the use of the resources of attitude resources led to differences in the qualities of critical stance. The findings showed that the use of the resources of affect and judgement in greater frequency resulted in construing an empathy stance and an ethical stance, while the use of the resources of appreciation in greater frequency resulted in establishing a critic voice.

**The Use of Affect Resources and Empathy stance.**

**Table 5**

*Frequency per 1000 words of the occurrence of attitude subtype of affect*

Corpora	Un/happiness	Dis/satisfaction	In/security	Dis/inclination
Students' corpus	2.30	1.00	1.11	2.11
BAWE corpus	0.71	1.18	0.92	1.23

Table 5 presents the distribution of the resources of affect in students' corpus and BAWE corpus. The findings on table 5 indicate that writers of students' corpus employed in slightly higher frequency affect resources of un/happiness (2.30 times versus 0.71 times per 1000 words), in/security (1.11 times versus 0.92 times per 1000 words) and dis/inclination (2.11 times versus 1.23 times per 1000 words) than writers of BAWE corpus. In contrast, writers of BAWE corpus employed in slightly higher frequency affect resources of dis/satisfaction (1.18 times versus 1.00 time per 1000 words) than the writers of students' corpus. The findings show that writers of students' corpus used the resources of affect to describe the feeling of characters in the literary works being analyzed as in [6] and [7]: The abbreviation (AFF) stands for affect, SAT for satisfaction, HAP for happiness, INC for inclination.

[6]: "Martha is a **frustrated** (-AFF: SAT) woman and finds pleasure in torturing Gorge by her words." (Students' corpus, Gujarat Universities, 2019).

[7]: "When Shashi's niece finds out that one of her classmates **loves** (+AFF: HAP) her, she asks Shashi whether she **loves** (+AFF: HAP) him too. Shashi blurted out in **agony** (-AFF: HAP) that she does not **crave** (-AFF: INC) for love, all that she **yearned** (+AFF: INC) for was just respect." (Students' corpus, Gujarat Universities, 2019).

In contrast, writers of BAWE corpus use the resources of affect to construe a detached emotional response to the literary works being analyzed as in [8] and [9]:

[8]: "This **ambivalence and contradiction** leads the reader to continually **question and challenge** (-AFF: SAT) their interpretations as his work may be no more than an exploration of madness, base entertainment designed to thrill and excite." (BAWE Corpus, Student's paper, 2008).

[9]: “This can also provoke the viewer into **questioning (-AFF: SAT)** their previous natural adaptation to the current urban environment, which as Morpheus states 'You felt it your entire life.'” (BAWE Corpus, Students’ paper, 2008).

The use of affect resources to construe a detached emotional response to the literary work being analyzed concurs with Rothery & Stenglin’s (2000) findings that successful literary analyses express an emotional response to the literary work being analyzed. However, the use of affect resources to describe the feelings of characters in the literary works being analyzed does not agree with the findings in Rothery & Stenglin’s (2000) study. These results seem to suggest that the quality of critical stance in literary analyses by university students in India, an outer circle country, is different

from the quality of critical stance in literary analyses by university students in UK, an inner circle country. Writers of students’ corpus construe a descriptive empathy stance in their literary analyses while writers of BAWE corpus establish a detached empathy stance in their literary analyses.

**The Use of Judgement Resources and Ethical Stance**

Table 6 presents the distribution of judgement subcategories in students’ corpus and BAWE corpus. The results show that the writers of students’ corpus predominantly use the linguistic resources of propriety, accounting for 5.04 times per 1000 words followed by the linguistic resources of capacity (3.35 times per 1000 words).

**Table 6**  
*Frequency per 1000 words of the occurrence of judgement resources*

Corpora	Normality	Capacity	Tenacity	Veracity	Propriety
Students’ corpus	1.58	3.35	0.62	0.34	5.03
BAWE corpus	0.81	3.32	0.19	0.42	1.42

In contrast, the writers of BAWE corpus predominantly use the linguistic resources of capacity (3.32 times per 1000 words) followed by the linguistic resources of propriety (1.42 times per 1000 words). In students’ corpus, the linguistic resources of propriety are used to describe the behavior of characters in the literary work being analyzed as in [10] while, in BAWE corpus, the linguistic resources of propriety are used to evaluate the behaviors of characters in the literary work being analyzed and to interpret these behaviors according to the demands of the assignment topic as in [11]. The abbreviation (JUDG) stands for judgement, and PRO for propriety

[10]: “Nick also represents another quality which American society values: sportsmanship. Nick is basically an **opportunistic (-JUDG: PRO)** and **selfish (-JUDG: PRO)** man who visit George and Martha not for any sense of human relationship but simply because Martha is the daughter of the college president.” (Students’ corpus, Gujarat Universities, 219).

[11]: “Whilst outwardly **polite (+JUDG: PRO)** and **respectful (+JUD: PRO)** to his victim; 'calling him by name in a **hearty (+APP: REA)** tone, and inquiring how he had passed the night,' the narrator remains consumed by **revulsion and loathing (-AFF: HAP)**. This could be read as an implication that the idealized notion of American citizens as open, progressive and liberal was in fact **deceptive**”. (-APP: REA) (BAWE Corpus, Student’s paper, 2008).

These examples show that the writers of students’ corpus use the linguistic resources of propriety to descriptively evaluate the behaviors of characters, but they do not connect this evaluation with the argument they are making in the

assignment. Therefore, they construe in their assignment an empty ethical stance. In contrast, writers of BAWE corpus strategically use the linguistic resources of propriety to make an argument according to the demands of the assignment topic, and as such to construe an ethic stance. This is in line with Macken-Horarik’s (2003) findings that successful literary analyses are characterized by a co-patterning of the linguistic resources of judgement, affect and appreciation.

In addition, in BAWE corpus, the linguistic resources of capacity are used to explore the writers’ (novelists, poets, etc.) strategies and techniques to convey a particular message as in [12] and [13] while, in students’ corpus, the linguistic resources of capacity are used to descriptively evaluate the ability of a literary writer in producing a literary work as in [14] and to evaluate the characters as in [15]. The abbreviation CAP stands for capacity.

[12]: “Poe’s linguistic **dexterity (+JUDG: CAP)** here enables him to create a tangible sense of oppressive confinement and stagnation...” (BAWE Corpus, Students’ paper, 2008).

[13]: “Hawthorne’s *well-documented sense of shame and inferiority (-JUDG: CAP)* in having chosen to do so enables him to empathize effectively with Hester’s inner conflict and disgrace.” (BAWE Corpus, Students’ paper, 2008).

[14]: “Milton **excels (+JUDG: CAP)** other poets in exhibiting the usage of supernatural machinery in the poem.” (Students’ corpus, Gujarat Universities, 2019).

[15]: “George is an associate professor of History, and is a **failure (-JUDG: CAP)** because he could not become a professor and head of his department.” (Students’ corpus, Gujarat Universities, 2019).

The use of linguistic resources of capacity by writers of BAWE corpus concurs with the Rothery & Stenglin's (2000) findings that successful literary analyses are characterized by the use of linguistic resources of attitude to evaluate the strategies and techniques used by literary writers to convey a particular message. While the use of linguistic resources of capacity by university students in India run counter to the findings in the study by Rothery & Stenglin (2000)

Therefore, the results from the analysis of the linguistic resources of judgement seems to show that the qualities of critical stance in literary analyses by

university students in India, an outer circle country, are different from the qualities of critical stance in literary analyses by university students in UK, an inner circle country.

**The Use of Appreciation Resources and Critic Voice**

Table 7 presents the distribution of the linguistic resources of appreciation in students' corpus and in BAWE corpus. The results show some similarities and differences in the use of the linguistic resources of appreciation.

**Table 7**

*Frequency per 1000 words of the occurrence of appreciation resources*

Corpora	Reaction	Composition	Valuation
Students' corpus	2.11	1.15	12.89
BAWE corpus	2.10	2.19	16.09

The similarities are that both corpora deploy more linguistic resources of valuation than the linguistic resources of composition and reaction. Therefore, in terms of frequency, it may be argued that the qualities of critical stance in literary analyses by university students in India, an outer circle country, are similar to the qualities of critical stance in literary analyses by university students in UK, an inner circle country. However, the differences show that writers of BAWE corpus use appreciation sub-categories of valuation and composition in greater frequency than the writers of students' corpus (16.09 times versus 12.89 times per 1000 words and 2.19 times versus, 1.15 times per 1000 words), and their use of appreciation sub-category of reaction is almost similar in frequency to the use of appreciation sub-category of reaction by writers of students' corpus. These differences in the use of linguistic resources of appreciation seem to underscore the point that the qualities of critical stance in literary analyses by university students in India, an outer circle country, are different from the qualities of critical stance in literary analyses by university students in UK, an inner circle country. These differences are indicated by the qualitative analysis of students' corpus and BAWE corpus. The qualitative analysis shows that the writers of BAWE corpus use the linguistic resources of appreciation to challenge conventional interpretation of the literary works being analyzed as in [16] and [17], to evaluate the strategies and techniques literary writers use to convey a particular message as in [18] and [19].

[16]: "As male, Hawthorne holds a dominant linguistic and societal position making whether he can ever *truly* understand the position of other and subordinate **debatable (-APP: REA)**, as he is never excluded from hegemonic language and ideology." (BAWE Corpus, Student's paper, 2008).

[17]: "These textual examples support Galloway's comment that; 'Poe's own poetry is often seen as

**poor (-APP: VAL)** evidence of the success of his theories of composition,' as predominantly eight syllables per line and predictable rhyming couplets make the extent to which he succeeds in making old forms new **questionable (-APP: REA)**." (BAWE corpus, Students' paper, 2008).

[18]: "Kurtz is a **highly complex (-APP: COMP)** character who simultaneously functions as an intriguing example of humanity and structural core." (BAWE Corpus, Student's paper).

[19]: "But, the limitations of language often force the writers to resort to **increasingly innovative (+APP: VAL)** strategies of rendering these concerns." (BAWE corpus, Student's paper, 2008).

In contrast, writers of students' corpus use the linguistic resources of appreciation to evaluate the portrayal of characters in the literary work under analysis as in [20] and to explore the strategies, techniques literary writers use to convey a particular message as in [21] and the stylistic features of the literary work being analyzed as in [22].

[20]: "It is **appalling (-APP: REA)** to observe that as soon as she sits to drink tea her mother-in-law wakes up and expects tea to be served immediately." (Students' corpus, Gujarat Universities, 2019).

[21]: "Virginia Woolf is one of the most well-known figures of the 20th century who advanced the frontiers of the English novel by adopting a **revolutionary (+APP: VAL)** technique for the expression of her vision of life and human nature." (Students' corpus, Gujarat Universities, 2019).

[22]: "It is **ambiguous (-APP: COM)** who the speaker is, whether it is a man or a woman. So the narrative dimensions in an **ambiguous (-APP: COMP)** state." (Students' corpus, Gujarat Universities, 2019).

The results from qualitative analysis of both corpora show that the use of appreciation resources by writers of BAWE corpus agrees with Rothery & Stenglin's (2000) findings that successful literary



analyses express a critic voice by challenging conventional interpretations of literary works being analyzed and by evaluating the strategies and the techniques literary writers employ in conveying a particular message. In contrast, the use of appreciation resources by writers of students' corpus does not concur with Rothery & Stenglin's (2000) findings from the analysis of successful literary analyses. This appears to show that writers of students' corpus do not establish a critic voice in their literary analyses while the writers of BAWE corpus construe a critic voice in their literary analyses. Therefore, these results seem to suggest that the qualities of critical stance in literary analyses by university students in India, an outer circle country, are different from the qualities of critical stance in literary analyses by university students in UK, an inner circle country.

**Table 8**

*Frequency per 1000 words of the occurrence of engagement resources*

Corpus	Single voiced	Multi-voiced
Students' corpus	27.17	19.53
BAWE corpus	17.04	25.00

These results seem to suggest that writers of students' corpus construe in their literary analyses a stance that is more assertive while writers of BAWE corpus construe in their literary analysis a stance

***The Resources of Engagement in Students' Corpus and BAWE Corpus***

Table 8 presents the distribution of single-voiced (monogloss) and multi-voiced (heterogloss) statements. The results show that the writers of students' corpus use more single-voiced statements (27.17 times per 1000 words) than multi-voiced statements (19.53 times per 1000 words). In contrast, writers of BAWE corpus use more multi-voiced statements (25.00 times per 1000 words) than single-voiced statements (17.04 times per 1000 words). In addition, writers of students' corpus use single-voiced statements in greater frequency than do the writers of BAWE corpus. In contrast, the writers of BAWE corpus employ multi-voiced statements in greater frequency than do writers of students' corpus.

which is more dialogic. In order to understand these differences, it is important to consider multi-voiced statements that occur in higher frequency in both corpora.

**Table 9**

*Frequency per 1000 words of the occurrence of multi-voiced statements*

Corpora	Disclaim, counter	Justify	Entertain
Students' corpus	5.84	2.62	4.66
BAWE corpus	6.14	2.55	9.25

Table 9 presents the distribution of multi-voiced resources in students' corpus and BAWE corpus. The results show that writers of students' corpus employ slightly fewer counter resources (5.84 times per 1000 words) than do writers of BAWE corpus (6.14 times per 1000 words), almost twice fewer resources of entertain (4.66 times per 1000 words) than do writers of BAWE corpus (9.25 times per 1000 words). In addition, writers of students' corpus use more counter resources than entertain resources while writers of BAWE corpus use more entertain resources than counter resources.

Close reading of the literary analyses in students' corpus and BAWE corpus showed that the differences in the use of disclaimer markers and entertain resources in the two corpora led to differences in the qualities of critical stance. The findings revealed that the use of disclaim markers in greater frequency resulted in establishing what Lancaster (2016) calls "competitive stance" while the use of entertain resources in greater frequency resulted in creating a dialogic stance.

***Disclaim markers and competitive stance.***

Qualitative analysis of literary analyses in BAWE corpus shows that disclaim markers were used to challenge others' interpretation of the portrayal of characters in the work being analyzed as in [23] and to problematize the strategies literary writers use to convey a particular message as in [24].

[23]: "The overwhelming paranoia that drives the protagonist to madness, **may** be indicative of the guilt of a nation haunted by its wrongs and fortifies the legitimacy of Walker's previously cited statement. **But (disclaim, counter)**, Poe's Southern origin implies a **probable** tendency towards the acceptance of slavery, making such deductions questionable." (BAWE Corpus, Student paper, 2008).

[24]: "At first glance, Conrad appears to consider the role of women as unimportant, as they are barely mentioned in the story. **However (Disclaim, counter)**, a closer, **perhaps** feminist reading of the text **may** consider that it shows women to symbolize and indeed, maintain civilization." (BAWE corpus, Student paper, 2008).

In [23], the disclaim marker 'but' is used to challenge Walker's interpretation of the literary

work by Poe. In [24], the disclaim marker 'however' is used to challenge the message conveyed in the literary work by Conrad. This use of linguistic resources of disclaim concurs with Rothery & Stenglin's (2000) findings that successful literary analyses challenges conventional interpretation of the literary work being analyzed. It also aligns with Bruce's (2016) findings that critical analysis in literary analyses is achieved through an organizational strategy he termed "concession Contraexpectation"

In contrast, qualitative analyses of literary analyses in students' corpus showed that disclaimer markers were used to contrast two different portrayals of characters as in [25] and to contrast the feeling of characters in the work being analyzed as in [26].

[25]: "She is also considered a conventionally feminine figure, being valued for her physical appearance, submissive nature and deferring to the patriarchal figures who are her father and the beast. Rosamund Hodge **however (disclaim, counter)** portrays Nyx in a very different light." (Students' corpus, Gujarat universities, 2019).

[26]: "One the other hand, there is a sparkle in her eyes that at least her husband is appreciative of her cooking. **However**, there is a sense of dejection in that her husband does **not** spend time with her and is not even attentive to her presence when at home." (**disclaim, counter**) (Students' corpus, Gujarat universities, 2019).

These examples show that writers of students' corpus use the linguistic resources of disclaim to transition from one point to the next. This runs counter to the findings in the study by Rothery & Stenglin (2000) and to the results in the study by Bruce (2016). This means that writers of students' corpus do not strategically use the linguistic resources of disclaim to achieve critical analysis. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that the qualities of critical stance in literary analyses by university students in India, an outer circle country, are different from the qualities of critical stance in literary analyses by university students in UK, an inner circle country.

### ***Entertain Markers and Dialogic Stance***

The qualitative analysis of literary analyses in BAWE corpus revealed that the linguistic resources of entertain were predominantly used to establish a critical stance that is dialogic and cautious. This is explained by the use of disclaim markers and attitude resources of appreciation by writers of BAWE corpus. Specifically, writers of BAWE corpus employed the resources of entertain when offering an interpretation of the portrayal of characters or an interpretation of the message conveyed in the literary work being analyzed or when drawing a ground conclusion from the argument they were making as in [27]. They also employed the linguistic resources of entertain when

challenging others' interpretations as in [28] and the message conveyed in the literary work being analyzed as in [29].

[27]: "**Despite (disclaim, counter)** Bosola's initial portrayal as an 'evil' character, it is **possible (entertain)** to read him as a construct or vehicle within the play, used by Webster to exploit the "price for private security amid court splendour, and also the psychology of a spy." (BAWE corpus, Student paper, 2008).

[28]: "The overwhelming paranoia that drives the protagonist to madness, **may (Entertain)** be indicative of the guilt of a nation haunted by its wrongs and fortifies the legitimacy of Walker's previously cited statement. **But (disclaim, counter)**, Poe's Southern origin implies a **probable (Entertain)** tendency towards the acceptance of slavery, making such deductions **questionable.**" (**attitude, appreciation: reaction**) (BAWE Corpus, Student paper, 2008).

[29]: "At first glance, Conrad **appears (Entertain)** to consider the role of women as unimportant, as they are barely mentioned in the story. **However (Disclaim, counter)**, a closer, **perhaps (Entertain)** feminist reading of the text **may (Entertain)** consider that it shows women to symbolize and indeed, maintain civilization." (BAWE corpus, Student paper, 2008).

It is clear from these examples that the writers of BAWE corpus employed the linguistic resources of entertain to engage with others' interpretations or conclusions, and therefore to create a critical stance that was dialogic. Further, these examples show that the writers of BAWE corpus used the resources of entertain to distance themselves from the interpretations or the conclusions they were drawing, and therefore to establish a critical stance that was marked with caution and equanimity. Specifically, the writers of BAWE corpus used the resources of entertain as rhetorical strategies to persuade readers to accept their cautious interpretations or conclusions informed by rigorous analysis. By using the resources of entertain alongside disclaim markers and attitude resources, the writers of BAWE corpus were showing that they reached the conclusions after analyzing others' interpretation as in [28] and after applying literary theory and concept as in [29]. In doing so, they were able to construe a critical stance that is interactional, epistemic and attitudinal, and therefore to establish a critical stance that aligns with the discourse conventions of literary criticism.

In contrast, qualitative analyses of assignments in students' corpus revealed that the resources of entertain were not used alongside disclaim markers and the resources of attitude to establish a critical stance that was dialogic and cautious. Nevertheless, the writers of students' corpus employed the resources of entertain when interpreting the portrayal of characters as in [30] and when reaching a conclusion about the portrayal of characters in the literary work being analyzed as in [31].

[30]: “Martha humiliates and insults him not only privately but in front of the guest and even encourages them to humiliate him simply because he is not a successful man. Albee, it **seems (entertain)**, has deliberately created the character of George as one such man, for he does not want to associate traditional success with the real personality of the man.” (Students’ corpus, Gujarat Universities, 2019)

[31]: “The father also behaves as if her fate to be used as her husband might wish, and she should go along with it, so that she can kill him in the end. It **can (entertain)** be inferred that Nyx is told that she might even have no control over her own body, that her sexuality is something to be utilized for the sake of her being the savior.” (Students’ corpus, Gujarat Universities, 2019).

It is clear from these examples that, though the resources of entertain were used to make cautious interpretations, they were not used alongside the resources of disclaim and attitude to show that the interpretations or conclusions were reached after careful analysis of others’ interpretations and after applying literary theories or concepts. Therefore, writers of students’ corpus missed an opportunity to construe a stance which was at the same time interactional, epistemic and attitudinal. They construed a stance which was not totally in line with the discourse convention of literary criticism.

## DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. How do the qualities of critical stance in successful literary analyses by university students in an outer circle country compare to the qualities of critical stance by successful literary analyses by students in inner circle country?
2. What linguistic features make the qualities of critical stance in successful literary analyses by postgraduate students in outer circle country similar/different from the qualities of critical stance by successful students in inner circle country?

For the first research question, the findings show that university students in India, an outer circle country, predominantly construed in their successful literary analyses a descriptive and empty ethical stance. This stance was assertive and did not totally align with the discourse conventions of literary criticism. It appears to correspond to the recorder voice in Coffin’s (2002) study of discourse of school history. The recorder voice is characterized by the presentation of past event as unproblematic and factual (Coffin, 2002). Similarly, the descriptive and empty ethical stance in literary analyses by university students in India, an outer circle country, was characterized by unquestionable portrayal of characters and the presentation of the message

conveyed in the literary work being analyzed as factual and unproblematic. In contrast, the findings indicate that university students in UK, an inner circle country, construed in their literary analyses a critic voice. This critic voice was marked by caution, dialogue and alignment with the discourse conventions of literary criticism. It appears to correspond to novice academic stance in Lancaster’s (2016) analysis of assignments in political sciences and economics by upper-level university students. This novice academic stance in Lancaster’s study was marked by contrastiveness, dialogic control, critical distance and discourse alignment. Therefore, the results from this comparison seem to indicate that the qualities of critical stance in literary analyses by university students in India, an outer circle country, are different from the qualities of critical stance in literary analyses by university students in UK, an inner circle country.

If the literary analyses in students’ corpus were written by university students in UK, then they would fall into the category of low-graded assignments. This is because the findings in this study concur with the findings in Lee’s (2015) study. Lee (2015) compared critical stance qualities in high-graded and low-graded persuasive essays by undergraduate students in a social science discipline at a regional university in Australia. The results of this comparison revealed that students who wrote high-graded essays established the following critical stance qualities: looking at an issue from different perspectives, creation of critical voice, positive alignment with the discourse conventions of social science disciplines. In contrast, students who wrote low-graded essays established a voice that is not valued in the discipline of social science.

For the second research question, the results showed that the descriptive and empty ethical stance in literary analyses by university students in India, an outer circle country, was characterized by the use of the linguistic resources of judgement in higher frequency. These linguistic resources were used to descriptively evaluate the behavior of characters in the work being analyzed. This stance was also characterized by the use of single-voiced statements in higher frequency. The use of single-voiced statements led to the creation of a more assertive ethical stance. In addition, it was characterized by fewer use of the resources of entertain and disclaim. Lancaster (2016) demonstrates that the resources of disclaim and entertain are used to cautiously challenge others’ views according to the demand of the topic and therefore to enact a contrastive stance marked by caution and equanimity. In this regard, fewer use of the resources of entertain and disclaim led to the establishment of descriptive and empty ethical stance.

In contrast, the findings showed that the critic voice in literary analyses by university students in UK, an inner circle country, was characterized by

the use of the resources of appreciation resources in higher frequency. These resources were used to challenge others' interpretation, and to evaluate the techniques literary writers employ to convey a particular message and the portrayal of characters in the literary work being analyzed. It was characterized by the use of multi-voiced statements in high frequency. The use of multi-voiced statement led the creation of a dialogic critic voice. The dialogic critic voice in literary analyses by university students in UK, an inner circle country, was characterized by the use of disclaim and entertain resources in higher frequency. It was shown that entertain resources alongside the resources of disclaim and attitude were used to make cautious interpretations of the portrayal of characters, to position readers to accept authorial interpretation, and to challenge others' interpretations and the message conveyed in the literary work being analyzed. The use of these linguistic resources led to the establishment of a critic voice marked by caution and discourse alignment. These results seem to concur with the results in the study by Lam & Crosthwaite (2018). The results in the study by Lam & Crosthwaite revealed some variations in the use of appraisal resources to construe evaluative stance in essays by L1 and L2 students. It was shown that L1 students used resources of engagement in higher frequency to construe a stance that is more objective, depersonalized, dialogic and valued while L 2 students employed the resources of attitude, particularly the resources of affect, to construe a stance that is more personal.

These results have far-reaching implications for assessing and teaching writing in discipline in outer circle countries. They show evidence of the differences in the qualities of critical stance that students writing in L1 and L2 context construe in their disciplinary writing. They also show evidence of the differences in the assessment of students' writing in L1 and L2 contexts.

## CONCLUSION

Writing In Discipline (WID) is a movement in the field of writing research which took place in inner circle countries, where English is the main means of communication. This movement was started in order to help university students meet the cognitive and rhetorical demands that writing in a particular discipline impose on them. However, this movement does not seem to have taken place in some outer circle country, where English is an official language and where university students are required to demonstrate knowledge in a language which is not their native language. In this context, the present study has sought to compare the qualities of critical stance in literary analyses by university students in India, an outer circle country, and the qualities of

critical stance in literary analyses by university students in UK, an inner circle country. The results of this comparison showed that university students in India predominantly construed in their literary analyses a descriptive and empty ethical stance. In contrast, university students in UK construed in their literary analyses a critic voice marked by caution, discourse alignment. Therefore, it was concluded that the qualities of critical stance in literary analyses by university students in India, an outer circle country, was different from the qualities of critical stance in literary analyses by university students in India, an outer circle country. The descriptive and empty stance in literary analyses by university students in India does not seem to agree with the discourse convention of literary criticism while the critic voice in literary analyses by university students in UK, an inner circle country, seem to align with the discourse convention of literary criticism.

These results raise important questions. First, what do teachers in the department of English in India pay attention to when rating written assignments by students? Do they pay more attention to grammatical, rhetorical and lexical features? Do they pay more attention to the content? Do they look at the grammatical errors in students' assignments? Second, are there differences between what raters in outer circle countries pay more attention to and what raters in inner circle countries pay more attention to when assessing students' written assignments? Is it the background of raters in inner and outer circle countries which justifies these differences in assessment? Is it because Writing in Disciplines is a movement which have not yet developed in India? Further researchers may try to provide answers to these questions as they may shed lights on the assessment procedures followed by assessors in inner circle countries and outer circle countries.

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