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The Impact of Genre-based Pedagogy in the Development of Critical Stance in MBA Students' Writing

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Abstract

There has been a debate over the use of genre-based pedagogy to develop university students' ability to create valued meaning in academic writing. Some researchers support an implicit genre-based instruction while others support an explicit genre-based instruction. However, few empirical studies move beyond this debate to investigate the effectiveness of genre-based approach to developing university students' academic writing skills. Therefore, this study investigates the impact of genre-based pedagogy in developing MBA students' ability to construe critical stance in their writing. The data consisted of 28219 words corpus of 40 essay assignments, collected pre-genre-based course and post-genre-based course. Using Hyland' s (2005) model of intersubjective positioning and Martin and White's (2005) theory of evaluation in discourse, the data were analyzed for the distribution of hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and disclaim markers through manual coding using UAM corpus tool. The results showed a significant decrease in the use of key linguistic resources that function to make a text informal. In addition, the results showed a less significant increase and a less significant decrease in the use of key linguistic resources that function to construe critical stance in academic writing. These results have implication for the use of genre-based pedagogy in developing students' ability to create valued meaning in academic writing. They show the extent to which genre-based pedagogy, implemented at the beginning or during subject learning, impacts students' academic writing skills.

Keywords: academic writing, critical stance, disciplinary writing, discourse community, genre-based pedagogy

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1. Introduction

There has been an accumulated body of research in writing studies that has examined the expectations articulated across a wide variety of disciplines (e.g., Bruce, 2016; Humphrey, & Econoumou, 2014; Lancaster, 2016; Woodward-Kron, 2002). One of the most important expectations which is articulated across a wide variety of disciplines is construing critical thinking in academic writing. Indeed, critical thinking or critical stance in many countries including Burundi is one of the first century skills that students should develop. In this regard, many researchers have made an attempt at defining the term critical stance.

Critical stance, as Lancaster (2016) points out, is defined as writer's stance towards ideas (attitudinal stance), towards the status of knowledge (epistemological stance) and towards others' views or voices (interpersonal stance). However, expressing criticality in disciplinary writing poses challenges to many university students, particularly students demonstrating disciplinary knowledge in English as a foreign language (Miller, Mitchell, & Pessoa, 2017; Woodward-Kron, 2002; Xie, 2016). In fact, this lack of critical stance in university students writing is a serious concern that is expressed in many research papers (e.g., Hood, 2006, 2012; Hyland, 2005). This is because of two main factors. First, students prior experience does not prepare students for the literacy demands of disciplinary discourse communities (Hyland, 2013). Second, defining what critical stance involves and pinpointing to students how it is achieved in disciplinary writing are difficult tasks (Woodward-Kron, 2002).

Awareness of these difficulties has prompted research in English for Academic Purpose, Systemic Functional Linguistics and discourse analysis to examine the linguistic resources associated with construing critical stance (e.g., Bruce, 2008, 2010, 2016; Crosthwaite & Jiang, 2017; Lee & Deakin, 2016; Lancaster, 2012, 2014, 2016; Ndoricimpa & Barad, 2019, 2021; Zare & Biria, 2018). This line of research is motivated by a pedagogical need to demystify to students how critical stance is linguistically achieved in disciplinary writing and to help teachers develop metalanguage needed to pinpoint to students how criticality is accomplished in academic texts (Hood, 2012; Lancaster, 2016; Macken-Horarik, 2003; Wilder, 2012; Wilder & Wolfe, 2009). Pedagogically, it is shown that linguistic resources associated with enacting critical stance vary across disciplines, genres, courses and assignments. Therefore, the analysis of the ways in which critical stance is linguistically created in a particular discipline alongside explicit teaching of these linguistic features improve students' success in disciplinary writing (Ndoricimpa & Barad, 2021; Wilder & Wolfe, 2009).

To meet this pedagogical goal, some researchers support the adoption of genre-based approach (e.g., Bruce, 2016; Hyland, 2007; Lancaster, 2016). Within this approach, teaching disciplinary writing involves familiarizing students with the genres that members of a discourse community recognize and share (Swales, 1990). When students master the genres, they learn the functional, linguistic and rhetorical features associated with the genres (Cheng, 2011). In fact, they develop an understanding of the ways in which members of a particular discourse community use language in a context of communication. By developing this understanding, students acquire the cultural capital that enables them to become members of the community (Paltridge, 2002). For example, students majoring in business administration become successful in this field of study by developing an understanding of how language is used in the discipline of business administration to communicate with other members. In this regard, genre-based pedagogy can be used to understand the ways in which critical stance is linguistically construed in a particular discipline and to teach the linguistic feature associated with critical stance to students.

However, although genre-based pedagogy can be used to understand how critical stance is construed in disciplinary writing, it has been criticized on different grounds. First, according to Prior (1998), genre-based pedagogy is over-prescriptive. It is a textual grounded model of teaching and learning that teaches the traditional rhetorical modes according to a rigid structural template (Carstens, 2009). Such an approach favors passive learners instead of cultivating active learners. In contrast, Gee (1997) defends genre-based pedagogy by saying that it is an approach which is based on explicit teaching of how language is used to achieve social purposes in a particular context. Second, genre-based pedagogy accommodates students into dominant ways of using language, which students have to acquire in order to succeed (Johns, 2003). Learning dominant genres leads to uncritical reproduction of the status quo (Luke, 1996). Yet, Martin (1989) contends that without understanding dominant genres, students cannot produce a text that is critical to the status quo.

The debate over the disadvantages and benefits of genre-based pedagogy remains unresolved due to few empirical studies (Carstens, 2009; Huang, 2014). These empirical studies would move beyond this theoretical debate to

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investigate the effectiveness of genre-based pedagogy in the development of students' disciplinary writing. Therefore, this study moves beyond the debate over the use of genre-based instruction to investigate the extent to which genre-based pedagogy impact MBA students' critical stance in their writing.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

There has been a debate over the use of genre-based pedagogy to develop university students' ability to create valued meaning in academic writing. Some researchers support an explicit genre-based instruction while others support an implicit genre-based instruction. The researchers who support an explicit genre-based instruction argue that adopting an explicit genre approach to teaching academic writing improve students' ability to create valued meaning within a particular discipline (Kuzmenkova & Erykina, 2022; Lancaster, 2016; Yu, 2021). The researchers who support implicit genre-based instruction argue that following an implicit genre approach to teaching academic writing improve students' creative and innovative skills (e.g., El-Dakhs, Yahya, & Pawlak, 2022; Karimpour, 2021). In this regard, few researchers have attempted to move beyond this debate around genre to investigate the effectiveness of implicit or explicit genre-based instruction in academic writing. For example, El-Dakhs, Yahya, and Pawlak (2022) investigate the impact of implicit and explicit genre instruction on the use of metadiscourse markers by Arab EFL learners.

Ndoricimpa and Barad (2021) explore the impact of genre-based instruction in the discourse conventions of literary analysis on students' development of critical stance in Gujarat state, India. However, although these few empirical studies have attempted to move beyond the debate about genre-based instruction and measure the effect of genre-based instruction on students' ability to create valued meaning in their writing, no study has attempted this measurement in the following contexts. First, no study has attempted to measure the impact of genre-based instruction in the context where students are required to demonstrate disciplinary knowledge in English as a foreign language. Second, no study has attempted to investigate the effect of genre-based instruction in a bilingual-medium university. In Burundi context where English is a foreign language and where some private universities are English-medium or bilingual-medium, no study has attempted to investigate the impact of genre-based pedagogy on students' ability to create valued meaning in disciplinary writing. This study fills this gap by investigating the impact of genre-based pedagogy on MBA students' development of critical stance

1.2 Research Questions

This study provides answer to the following questions:

- To what extent does genre-based instruction affect the distribution of critical stance patterns in MBA students' written essay assignments?
- Is there any significant variation in the distribution of critical stance features in MBA students' written essay assignments pre-and post-genre-based instruction?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Genre-Based Pedagogy

Genre-based pedagogy, which focuses on the understanding and production of genres, has become an influential concept in language education (Hyland, 2004). Genres is defined as any type of discourse- written or spoken that serves as responses by writers or speakers to the demands of discourse community (Johns, 2002). The concept of genre and its application to language education are discussed from three theoretical perspectives (Hyon, 1996). One of the theoretical perspectives, which is adopted in the present study, is English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

In English for Specific Purposes, genre is defined as structured communicative events in which members of a specific discourse community share broad communicative purposes (Swales, 1990). From this definition, genre is understood as a socially accepted way of using language in a specific discourse community. Hyland (2007) points out that members of discourse community learn this accepted way of using language through repeated experiences with texts that are produced in their community. Further, Hyland (ibid) says that members of a specific discourse community recognize similarities in texts they use frequently and are able to draw on their repeated experiences with such texts to understand and produce them.

In this regard, genre-based pedagogy puts into practice this explanation of genre by helping students understand how language is used in context of communication by members of discourse community and what is expected of them to

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successfully participate in the context (Paltridge, 2002). Once students develop this understanding, they become members of the discourse community. This suggests that genre-based pedagogy is an approach which is adopted to socialize students into the language practices of discourse community of which they aspire to become member. In applying this approach, ESP genre analysts follow different steps. First, they associate genres with discourse communities, such as academic disciplines, or professions (Cheng, 2008). Second, they identify valued genres that are produced in these communities. These valued genres are classified according to their social purposes, for example, to tell a story (narrative text), to argue (argumentative or expository texts), to argue for a position (discussion), etc. Third, they categorized the valued genres into different types of texts: essay, business case report, PhD thesis, research paper, lab report, etc.

As a result of this concern for achieving social purposes in discourses, ESP genre analysts focus on the whole text as a unit of analysis rather than on sentence, since it is through the whole and complete text that a discourse achieves its social purposes (Lin, 2006). In this regard, they draw on Swales' (1990) influential work to analyze 'moves' in the text. A move is a unit of meaning which is often defined as "a bounded communicative act that is designed to achieve one main communicative objective" and the language features that are employed to structure the move (Swales & Feak, 2000, p.35 cited in Cheng, 2008). This suggests that a text is 'a piece of language in use' which consists of a unified collection of meanings appropriate to its social context and therefore, "has unity of purpose" (Butt et al., 2000, p.3).

Drawing on Swales' (1990) work, ESP genre analysts focus on how units of meaning are created at the level of lexicogrammar and how these units of meaning form a high order patterning at the level of discourse (Lin, 2006). For example, Bruce (2016) analyses units of meanings in English literature and sociology essays and how these units of meanings combine to express critical stance. It is believed that the analysis of units of meanings at the level of lexicogrammar and discourse shows how language is used by members of a particular discourse community to achieve a particular social purpose. Therefore, genre-based pedagogy is an approach which is followed to make students understand how units of meanings at the level of lexicogrammar and discourse are created to achieve a particular social purpose, for example, to achieve critical thinking, to argue for a position, etc.

2.2 Critical Stance in Disciplinary Writing

There has been a significant body of research on the concept of critical stance (e.g., Aull & Lancaster, 2014; Bruce, 2016; Jiang & Hyland, 2015; Lancaster, 2012, 2016). As explained earlier, critical stance is defined as writer's stance towards ideas (attitudinal stance), towards the status of knowledge (epistemological stance) and towards others' views or voices (interpersonal stance) (Lancaster, 2016). However, Jian and Hyland (2015) rightly observe that speakers/writers do not construe critical stance in discourse in vacuum. Instead, they construe critical stance in ways which agree with the epistemological value of a particular discipline. Indeed, Jiang and Hyland (2015) point out that "any stance represents the writer's own individual position, but it is also a position, which reflects the epistemological belief and values of the community" (p.2). For example, the way in which writers in business construe critical stance in texts they produce is different from the way in which writers in political science construe critical stance in texts they produce.

One way in which researchers set out to examine the differences in construing critical stance by writers from different disciplines is by looking at the linguistic and discourse resources writers use to construe critical thinking (e.g., Charles, 2007; Jiang & Hyland, 2015; Lancaster, 2012, 2016). It is shown that the linguistic resources that writers often use to construe critical stance include boosters (e.g., of course, certainly), hedges (e.g., perhaps, it seems that…, may), attitude markers (e.g., surprisingly, debatable), self-mention (e.g., I, we), disclaimer markers (e.g., however, but, although), etc. In this regard, researchers analyze how and for which social purpose writers writing in different discipline use these linguistic and discourse resources. For example, Bruce (2016) examines the use of these linguistic and discourse resources in successful essays in sociology and English literature. The findings reveal that writers in these two disciplines construe critical stance by using these linguistic and discourse resources within units of meanings which express ground conclusion, concession contra-expectation, reason result, etc.

Similarly, other researchers (e.g., Lancaster, 2016; Szenes, 2017; Woodward-Kron, 2002) analyze the linguistic and discourse resources writers writing in different disciplines use to construe critical stance. Woodward-Kron (2002) examines critical stance patterns in successful essays in the discipline of education. The results reveal that writers in the discipline of education construe critical stance within units of meaning which express a connection between theory

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and practice. Szenes (2017) analyzes critical stance patterns in successful business case reports. The findings reveal that writers in the discipline of business construe critical stance within units of meaning which express cause-effect, problem-solution, etc. Other researchers investigate disciplinary variation in the distribution of linguistic and discourse resources which construe critical stance. For example, Hyland (1999) has found that writers in humanities/social sciences use more expression of stance than those in sciences and engineering. Lancaster (2016) has found that writers in economics use more stance markers than those in political sciences.

In summary, the concept of critical stance in disciplinary writing has attracted the attention of many researchers in applied linguistics, discourse analysis, etc. Researchers are interested in this concept mainly for two reasons. First, critical thinking is one of the 21st century skills that people working in academic and professional contexts need to develop. Second, it is a desirable characteristic of disciplinary writing (Woodward-Kron, 2002). Therefore, they analyze the linguistic and discourse resources that successful member of a particular disciplinary community, such economics, biology, business, etc. employ to construe critical stance. These analyses have shown that there are disciplinary differences in the use of linguistic and discourse resources to construe critical stance and that writers construe critical stance in a manner that agrees with the epistemological beliefs and values of the discipline in which they write. It is believed that teachers can draw on these analyses to help students develop critical thinking skills.

2.3 Related Studies

There has been a heated debated among researchers over the implementation of genre-based approach to teaching writing (e.g., Carstens, 2009; El-Dakhs, Yahya, & Pawlak, 2022; Huang, 2014; Karimpour, 2021; Ramos, 2015). Some researchers support implicit genre instruction (e.g., Freedman, 1993) while other support explicit genre instruction (e.g., Henry & Roseberry, 1998). The former argue that the acquisition of genre knowledge is tacit and unconscious and that explicit teaching of the features of the genres is harmful if teachers are not members of the community that uses the genres. The latter contend that explicit genre instruction has the potentiality to improve students' academic writing. However, some researchers attempt to go beyond this debate to test the effectiveness of genre-based pedagogy in teaching and learning academic writing.

For example, Ramos (2015) investigated the effectiveness of genre-based pedagogy to teach academic writing persuasive essays to adolescent English learners. The results in this study showed a significant increase from pretest to posttest in the participants' use of key academic linguistic resources that function to create persuasion in academic text. These findings in Ramos' study concur with the findings in the study by El-Dakhs, Yahya, and Pawlak (2022). In this study, El-Dakhs, Yahya, and Pawlak investigate the impact of implicit and explicit genre-based instruction on the use of metadiscourse. The findings revealed a positive variation in the participants' use of key metadiscourse marker: self-mention, appeal to shared knowledge, directives, and questions.

Carstens (2009) explored the effectiveness of genre-based approach in teaching subject-specific writing and cross-disciplinary writing. The results indicated that genre-based instruction was effective in improving students' performance in academic writing. The comparison of subject-specific writing and cross-disciplinary writing indicated that subject-specific group performed significantly better than cross-disciplinary group overall. However, the cross-disciplinary group performed better in terms of the use of stance and engagement that subject-specific group. Similar findings were obtained in the study by Karimpour (2021). Karimpour investigates the impact of implicit and explicit genre-based instruction on medical students' writing quality with different language proficiency levels. The results revealed that both implicit and explicit genre-based instruction impacted the quality of writing of students with high proficiency level while explicit writing impacted the quality of writing of students with low proficiency level.

Other studies investigate students' genre knowledge development as a result of genre-based pedagogy. For example, the study by Huang (2014) examined a Taiwanese PhD student's development of genre knowledge in a genre-research writing course. The findings indicated that explicit genre instruction on rhetorical moves and linguistic features improved the student's formal knowledge, process knowledge, and rhetorical knowledge. These results concur with the results in the study by (Yasuda, 2011). In this study, Yasuda investigates the effectiveness of genre-based tasks in the development of L2 students' genre awareness, linguistic knowledge and writing competence. The results showed that the students made progress in their genre knowledge and perceptions, and that changes in their awareness were apparent in their written production.

In summary, previous studies show the extent to which genre-based pedagogy improves students' academic writing skills. It is clear from these studies that genre-based pedagogy is effective in developing students' awareness of genre,

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genre knowledge and competence in writing. The present study builds on these studies to examine the effectiveness of genre-based pedagogy in developing MBA students' critical stance in their writing.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Context

This study was conducted at Bujumbura International University (BIU). Bujumbura International University is a private university in Burundi. It is a bilingual-medium university, that is, the languages of instruction are French and English. It offers bachelor and master's program in management and Information Communication Technology (ICT). Students who enrol in these programs are offered English courses. These courses are designed to help students develop linguistic and communication skills in English language. Therefore, these courses focus on academic and professional English so that students are better prepared to meet the demands of the bachelor and master's programs and the communication demands of the professional world. This means that these English courses are designed to help students develop cultural and linguistic capital to become member of academic and professional community.

3.2 Participants

Participants who contributed data in this study were first year MBA students at Bujumbura International University. They were following an English for written academic and professional communication course. This course involved writing and reading activities. In this regard, the contributors were selected as follow. First, students were given a pre-writing task which required them to analyze a business case or examine the cause and effect of, for example, government tax reform on business. Second, they were required to attend the English for written academic and professional communication course regularly. Third, after the course, students were given a post-writing task which required them to draw on what they had seen in the course to write an analysis of a business case or an examination of the cause and effect of, for example, government tax reform on business. Of the sixty-five (65) students who were enrolled as first year MBA students at Bujumbura International University, only 31 submitted the pre-writing task and 20 submitted the post-writing task. Therefore, twenty (20) essay assignments were selected from the pre-writing task and twenty (20) assignments were selected from post-writing task. This means that 20 students contributed data in this study.

3.3 The Written Academic and Professional Communication Course

The course was taught by one of the researchers at the beginning of the first semester in July-August of 2022. It lasted four weeks. The class met three times a week, on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. On Tuesday and Thursday, the class met for 2 hours and 30 minutes and on Saturday, it met for 6 hours. It was a genre-based course. This means the researchers followed genre-based pedagogy to select and teach the content of the course. The genres which were selected in the course were research papers written by scholars in business and business case reports. In this regard, the content of the course was based the linguistic and rhetorical features of research papers and business case reports.

The course consisted of four units. The first unit concerned the linguistic and rhetorical features of research paper in the discipline of business and business case reports. Therefore, the implementation of the content of the first unit involved showing to students the language that writers use for discussion, for counter-argument, for cause-effect, for comparisons, for elaboration, and for problem-solution. It also involved showing to students the language writers' use for general and specific description. The second unit was about critical reading. Therefore, the teaching of the content of this unit involved students reading and analyzing critically published research papers and business case report. In this unit, students were required to analyze the linguistic and rhetorical features of these genres. They focused on the language that was used in these genres to move from general to specific description, to compare two markets or businesses, to discuss about the benefits or the drawbacks of a particular business decision, to talk about problem-solution or cause-effect of a business case, etc. The third unit concerned writing exercises and feedback from the teacher. In this unit, students were required to write a paragraph in which the rhetorical features of, for example, cause-effect, counter-argument, problem-solution, etc. were present. The last unit was about writing a research papers and business case reports. The implementation of the content of this unit involved showing to students the structure of research paper and business report. After, students were asked to write the introduction to research paper and to write a business case report.

3.4 Collection of Data

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In order to investigate the effect of genre-based pedagogy on MBA students' critical stance in their writing, the data were collected as follows. First, students were given pre- and post- writing tasks. The pre-writing task took place before students were exposed to the genre-based course and the post-writing task took place after students were exposed to the genre-based course. These tasks required students to write an introduction, a body and a conclusion on a topic related to business. Second, the assignments which were submitted in pre- and post- writing tasks were used to constitute two corpora. The first corpus included 20 written assignments collected from students who did the pre-writing task. This corpus was called Pre-course corpus. The second corpus included 20 written assignments collected from students who did the post-writing task. This corpus was called post-course corpus. Table 1 shows the size of each corpus.

Table 1. Corpora

Corpora	Texts	Words
Pre-course corpus	20	9866
Post-course corpus	20	18353
Total	40	28219

3.5 Analysis of Data

In this study, a discourse analytical research design was used to analyze critical stance patterns in pre- and post- course corpora. To analyze critical stance, the researchers borrowed Lancaster's (2016) postulation of how critical stance is realized in discourse. According to Lancaster, critical stance is realized along three related dimensions: writers' attitude toward ideas (attitudinal stance), toward the status of knowledge (epistemic stance) and toward others' views or voices (interactional stance). All these three dimensions are evident in the following excerpts from the corpora, as seen in the boldened wordings.

[1]: Enhancing transparency and accountability are **central** to the improvement of corporate governance mechanisms (pre-course corpus).

[2]: **Indeed**, whether it is the internal or external audit, it has a great advantage especially for the strengthening of the improvement of the internal control system, which **very clearly** reduces the risks, and for the strengthening of transparency in all the activities carried out in a company (post-course corpus).

[3]: **It is true that** two companies with similar products or/ and services **may** be found near to each other (post-course corpus).

In [1], the writer expresses an attitudinal stance toward 'enhancing transparency and accountability, which is 'central' to the improvement of corporate governance mechanisms. This suggests that enhancing transparency and accountability is evaluated positively. In [2], the writer expresses an epistemological stance, which is committed ('indeed' and 'very clearly'). This means that the writer is committed to the knowledge that internal or external audit has a great advantage in the improvement of the internal control system and in the reduction of risks. In [3], the writer expresses an interactional stance, which is dialogic and engaged by the use of concessive statement ('it is true that…').

To examine these stance patterns, the researchers drew on Hyland's (2005) model of intersubjective positioning and on Martin & White's (2005) model of evaluation in discourse through manual coding using UAM corpus tool (O' Donnell, 2007). From Hyland's model, the researchers analyzed writer-oriented features which include hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and self-mention. Hedges and boosters, although in certain instances project an interactional stance, mainly express epistemic stance (Lancaster, 2016). Hedges are linguistic elements writers/speakers use to reduce epistemic commitment to claims, in doing so, they open up discursive spaces for alternative views (Hyland, 2005; White, 2003). Boosters are linguistic elements writers/speakers use to increase epistemic commitment to propositions, in doing so, they reduce discursive space for alternative views and express certainty with regard to what they say (Hyland, 2005; Lancaster, 2016; White, 3003). Attitude markers express attitudinal stance (Lancaster, 2016). Attitude markers are linguistic elements writers/speakers use to appraise things

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(ideas, concepts, arguments, etc), for example, as important, justifiable, debatable, etc. Self-mention refers to linguistic mechanism by which writers/speakers insert themselves in the discourse by the use of first-person pronouns and possessive adjectives (Hyland, 2005). The analysis of self-mention was excluded because it was use so infrequently in the two corpora.

From Martin and White's (2005) model, the researchers examined disclaim markers which include counter-expectancy (however, but, despite, nevertheless, etc) concession (it is true that…, certainly…that…, etc), denial (it is not that). Lancaster (2016) shows that disclaim markers project an interpersonal stance in discourse. Table 2 offers illustration of these four linguistic features.

Table 2. Four critical stance features analyzed

Critical stance features	Examples
Hedges	In conclusion, according to what has been said above, I **may assume** that high taxes kill business…
Boosters	Indeed, whether it is the internal or external audit, it has a great advantage…, which **very clearly** reduces the risks, and….
Attitude markers	Mobile banking plays **an important** role in the economic and social field of a country
Disclaim markers	**However**, a series of regulatory issues hamper the development of a more effective Mobile Banking in Burundi.

The researchers drew on the two models for one reason. The writer-oriented features in Hyland's model are found in Martin & White's model, but Hyland' model does not include disclaim markers. As Lancaster (2016) points out, disclaim markers, which are linguistic mechanism whereby the textual voice positions itself as at odd with contrary position, have been shown to be important for negotiating meaning with the reader.

3.6 Analytic Procedures

The analysis of the corpora was conducted as follows. First, the researchers read the assignments submitted by students multiple times in order to familiarize themselves with the rhetorical and genres features of the assignments. Second, the assignments were converted into plain text (txt) and were uploaded on UAM corpus tool. After uploading the assignments on UAM corpus tool, the researchers proceeded with the manual coding of the corpora. They coded the linguistic features which express attitudinal stance, epistemic stance and interactional stance. Third, after coding the corpora, the distribution of critical stance features was calculated per 1000 words. Last, the results from the analysis of distribution of critical stance features were used to compute the mean, the standard deviation and the differences in distribution of stance features in the two corpora using SPSS 22.

4. Results

4.1 Variation in the Distribution of Critical Stance Patterns the two Corpora

Table 2 presents the distribution of critical stance patterns in pre- course corpus and post- course corpus. The results reveal that hedges, which are features of epistemic stance, occur 3.14 times per 1000 words in pre-course corpus and 4.80 times per 1000 words in post-course corpus. Boosters, which are also features of epistemic stance, occur 1.88 times per 1000 words in pre-course corpus and 1.57 times per 1000 words. The findings also indicate that attitude markers, which are features of attitudinal stance, occur 12.19 times per 1000 words in pre-course corpus and 5.89 times per 1000 words in post-course corpus. Further, the results show that disclaim markers, which are features of interactional stance, occur 4.21 times per 1000 words and 3.37 times per 1000 words.

These results seem to suggest a variation in the distribution of critical stance patterns in the two corpora. The findings show an increase in the use of hedges (from 3.14 times to 4.80 times per 1000 words) and a very small decrease in the use of boosters (from 1.88 times to 1.57 times per 1000 words). Previous study show that hedges and boosters are

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important rhetorical features of disciplinary writing (e.g., Hyland, 2005; Lancaster, 2016). They are used by writers to persuade the reader to accept cautious judgement informed by rigorous analysis. Close reading of the assignments in pre-course corpus and post-course corpus, these rhetorical devices occur in particular schematic stages to make a particular critical statement. Hedges often occur in the interpretation or judgement stages, while boosters occur in the analysis states. Examples [1] and [2] illustrate this use of hedges and boosters.

[1]. With regard to the topic under discussion, it is **clear (booster)** that social media has what to do with today's society. Traders have been using more social media because they are sure that they are most read today.

[2]. In conclusion, according to what has been said above, I **may assume (hedge)** that high taxes kill business while good tax regulation can therefore influence investors and the national economy, while the lack of a good regulatory policy discourages them.

From these examples, it clear that hedge and boosters were used to make a critical statement of ground conclusion. This use of hedges and boosters in pre-course corpus and in post-course corpus is in line with the findings in previous studies (e.g., Bruce, 2016; Lancaster, 2016). In Lancaster's study, the findings revealed that writers in soft sciences- economics and political sciences- use hedges in judgement and recommendation stages and boosters in analysis stages to make cautious judgement informed by rigorous analysis. In Bruce' s study, hedges and boosters are often employed within critical statement of ground conclusion, reason results, mean results, means purpose, simple comparison, etc.

Table 3. Frequency of critical stance expression per 1000 words in pre- and post-course corpora

Category	pre-course corpus	post-course corpus
	Frequency per 1000 words	Frequency per 1000 words
Hedges	3.14	4.80
Boosters	1.88	1.57
Attitude markers	12.19	5.89
Disclaimers	4.21	3.37
Total		

The genre-based course involved an analysis of schematic states of research papers where hedges and booster occurred. These schematic stages included those in which ground conclusion, cause-effect, comparison, etc. were construed. Therefore, the increase in the use of hedges suggest that the genre-based course may have affected students' ability to make cautious judgement informed by rigorous analysis and to construe a critical statement of ground conclusion.

The results also show a sharp decrease in the use of attitude markers (from 12.19 times to 5.89 times per 1000 words) and a slight decrease in the use of disclaimers (from 4.21 times to 3.37 times per 1000 words). Previous studies show that attitude markers, which are used to evaluate concepts, ideas, theories, etc., are important features of disciplinary writing (e.g., Hood, 2010; Macken-Horarik, 2003). Close reading of assignments in pre- and post- course corpus, attitudes markers were used to evaluate positively assignment's concepts and were used in the schematic stages of introduction as in [3]

[3]. Mobile banking plays an **important (attitude marker)** role in the economic and social field of a country because customer satisfaction is the **key (attitude marker)** for the growth of a country in General and a company in particular. This use of attitudes markers partly concurs with the findings in previous studies (e.g., Hood, 2010). In Hood' s study, the findings show that attitude markers are employed to describe the object of study as important and to engage with theorists and other researches' ideas.

The genre-based course emphasized on the means writers use to make reasoned and cautious engagement with concepts and other researchers' ideas. Therefore, the sharp decrease in the use of attitude markers suggest that the

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genre-based course may have caused students to avoid making assertive evaluation of concepts and consequently to develop a formal style of writing. Furthermore, previous studies show that successful disciplinary writing is characterized by the use of disclaim markers (e.g., Bruce, 2016; Lancaster, 2016). Close reading of the assignments in pre- and post- course corpora, disclaim markers were used to transition from one point to another as in [4]

[4]. With globalization, developing countries are entering into bilateral tax treaties with rich countries with the aim of attracting foreign investment and multinational companies to their countries. **However (disclaim markers)**, due to the lack of international rules and unfair negotiations, developing countries are often forced to give up their rights to tax the activity of companies operating on their soil and to collect the revenues from these taxes.

The use of disclaim markers in pre- and post-course corpora partly agree with the findings in the study by Lancaster (2016). In this study, Lancaster found that disclaim markers are used by successful writers as an organization strategy to transition from one point to another, from one author to another and from one concept to another. However, disclaim markers do not only perform this function. In Bruce's (2016) study, it was found that disclaim markers are employed within an inter-propositional relation termed "concession contraexpectation" to achieve critical analysis in successful essay. In Lancaster's (2016) study, the findings revealed that disclaim markers are used to problematize other views, and to negotiate with the reader's anticipated question or challenges. In pre- and post-course corpora, disclaim markers were not used as an organizational strategy to achieve critical analysis. This suggests the slight decrease in the use disclaim markers show that the genre-based course did not affect students' ability to make critical analysis.

4.2 Statistical Significance of the Variation of the Distribution of Critical Stance Patterns in the Two Corpora

As shown on table 2, there is an increase in the use of hedges, a very small decrease in the use of boosters, a sharp decrease in the use of attitude markers, and a slight decrease in the use of disclaimers. However, table 3 shows that the increase in the use of hedges is not statistically significance (P = .36), the decrease in the use of boosters (P = .71) and disclaimers (P = .79) is not statistically significant, and the decrease in the use of attitude markers is statistically significant (P = .0001).

Table 4. Statistical significance of distribution differences in the two corpora

Category	pre-course corpus		post-course corpus		pre- v. post-course corpus	
	M	SD	M	SD	MD	P-value
Hedges	.35	.52	.53	.55	-.17	.36
Boosters	.20	.20	.22	.21	-.021	.71
Attitude markers	1.14	.78	.67	.46	.77	.0001
Disclaimers	.53	.28	.50	.39	.026	.79

M = mean, SD = Standard deviation, MD = Mean Difference, P < 0.05

These results suggest that the genre-based course did not have an impact on MBA students' ability to construe critical stance in their writing.

5. Discussion of the Findings

This study was set out to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. To what extent do genre-based instruction affect the distribution of critical stance patterns in MBA students' written essay assignments?

2. Is there any significant variation in the distribution of critical stance features in MBA students' written essay assignments pre-and post-genre-based instruction?

The results for the first research question showed that genre-based instruction impacted MBA students' use of particular critical stance markers. The findings showed an increase in students use of hedges to construe a critical

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statement of ground conclusion and a decrease in the use of disclaim markers to make critical analysis and in the use of attitude markers to evaluate concepts, theorists' ideas, etc. This variation in the use of key linguistic markers of critical stance concur with the findings in the study by El-Dakhs, Yahya, and Pawlak (2022). In their study, El-Dakhs, Yahya, and Pawlak investigate the impact of genre-based instruction on students' use of metadiscourse markers. The findings showed a positive variation in students' use of key metadiscourse markers.

The findings for the second research question showed a statistically significant variation in the use of key linguistic resources that function to make a text formal. For example, the results showed a statistically significant decrease in the use of attitude markers to make assertive evaluation of topic concepts. Xie's (2016) study shows that assertive evaluations are not valued in disciplinary writing. Therefore, the significant decrease in the use of attitude makers to make an assertive evaluation of topic concepts showed an improvement of students' quality of writing. These results concur with the results in the study by Karimpour (2021). Karimpour investigates the impact of implicit and explicit genre-based instruction on medical students' writing quality with different language proficiency levels. The results revealed that both implicit and explicit genre-based instruction impacted the quality of writing of students with high proficiency level while explicit writing impacted the quality of writing of students with low proficiency level.

However, the findings for the second research questions showed a less statistically significant variation in the use of key linguistic resources that function to construe critical stance. For example, the increase in the use of hedges to make a critical statement of ground conclusion and the decrease in the use of disclaim markers to make a critical statement of concession contra-expectation were not statistically significant. These results run counter to the findings in the study by Ramos (2015). Ramos (2015) investigated the effectiveness of genre-based pedagogy to teach academic writing persuasive essays to adolescent English learners. The results in this study showed a significant increase from pretest to posttest in the participants' use of key academic linguistic resources that function to create persuasion in academic text. The differences in results between the present study and the study by Ramos may be due to the fact that in Ramos study the participants were adolescents and were learning in the context where English was a native language while participants in the present study were MBA students demonstrating disciplinary knowledge in English as a foreign language at a bilingual university.

6. Conclusion

This study was conducted to investigate the extent to which genre-based pedagogy impacts MBA students' development of critical stance in their writing. It also measures the statistical significance of the impact of genre-based pedagogy on MBA students' development of critical stance in their writing. The results for the first objective showed that there was an increase in the students' use of hedges to construe a critical statement of ground conclusion. The results also showed a decrease in the students' use of disclaim markers to make critical analysis and a decrease in the students' use of attitude markers to evaluate concepts, theorists' ideas, etc. However, the findings indicated that the increase in the participants use of hedges and the decrease in the use of disclaim markers were not statistically significant. These results suggest that the genre-based pedagogy employed to teach MBA students written academic and professional communication did not impact students' ability to create units of meaning of critical stance in their writing. The results indicated the decrease in the participants' use of attitude markers was statistically significant. The participants used these linguistic features to make an assertive evaluation of topic concepts. Therefore, it can be concluded that the genre-based pedagogy impacted MBA students' ability to avoid making assertive evaluation and consequently to develop a formal style of writing. These results seem to suggest that genre-based pedagogy, which involved showing to students how units of meaning are created in research papers and business case report to achieve critical stance, improved students' formal style of writing, but did not develop students' ability to construe critical stance in their writing. One factor may have contributed to these results. The genre-based course was taught to students at the beginning of a two-year program in business administration. They may not have developed enough knowledge in the discipline of business administration which would help them to construe attitudinal stance, epistemic stance and interactional stance in their writing.

6.1 Implications of the Study

These results have implications for the use of genre-based pedagogy in developing MBA students' critical stance. They show the extent to which genre-based pedagogy impact students' ability to construe critical stance in their writing. In this regard, the results in this study are of practical value for academic writing teachers and MBA students. They provide academic writing teachers insights into the ways in which valued genres by member of a particular

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discourse community can be used as major components of instruction to develop students' ability to create valued meaning in their writing. Moreover, they offer MBA students insights into the ways in which academic and professional interactions are structured in business, management, marketing, etc.

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