

Does online instruction in discourse conventions of literary analysis affect L2 students' critical stance in academic writing? A longitudinal study

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore L2 students' longitudinal development of critical stance patterns in academic writing as a result of their exposure to online instruction in the discourse conventions of literary criticism. The data consisted of a 75661-word longitudinal corpus of 63 essay assignments, collected over 7 weeks' instruction via pre-, during- and post-instruction google classroom submissions. Applying Martin & White's (2005) appraisal taxonomy, the data was analyzed for frequency and wording differences using manual coding of attitude, graduation, and engagement markers through UAM Corpus Tool. The results show a significant longitudinal decrease in the use of linguistic resources which express personal feelings and make the construed evaluative meanings forceful and compelling. This shows that the teaching and the learning methods employed in the online instruction may have impacted L2 students' ability to develop a formal style of academic writing; the results also indicate a less significant longitudinal increase in the use of linguistic resources that construe a register-appropriate critical stance, such as the use of attitude sub-types of judgment and appreciation. This shows that the teaching and learning methods employed in the online instruction may not have impacted L2 students' ability to develop a register-appropriate critical stance. These findings have far-reaching implications for the use of online mode to make explicit the discourse conventions of literary criticism to L2 students. They show the extent to which the integration of certain teaching and learning methods in online instruction has an impact on L2 students' academic writing.

Keywords: Critical stance, discourse conventions of literary criticism, evaluation, longitudinal corpus, online instruction

1. Introduction

Academic writing plays a crucial role in university students' life in academia. Not only is it hard to imagine students' experience in academia without essay assignments, research reports, research papers, etc., but writing is also a key to students' success in a particular discipline. Indeed, the success of students in a particular discipline is partly dependent upon their success in writing different tasks that are given to them (Hyland, 2013). Many studies have shown that writing a successful text requires students to follow the discourse conventions of the discipline in which they write (Lancaster, 2012, 2014, 2016; Wilder, 2002, 2005, 2012; Wilder & Wolfe, 2009, etc.). While it is reasonable for students to adopt disciplinary discourse conventions in writing, it also has been shown that these discourse conventions are challenging for many students, particularly students writing in English as a foreign language (Miller, Mitchell & Pessoa, 2017). This is because of three main factors. First, as Hyland (2013) points out, students'

prior writing experience does not prepare the student for the literacy demands of disciplinary discourse communities. Second, the disciplinary discourse conventions are not often tacitly taught to students even though teachers invoke them when assessing students' written texts (Wilder, 2002). Third, students' writing in English as a foreign language may have difficulties in grammar, structures of arguments due to the fact that different language seems to have different ways of organizing ideas and arguments (Hyland, 2013).

To help students gain access to disciplinary discourse conventions, many researchers working within composition and rhetoric, systemic functional linguistics, critical discourse analysis, etc. have analyzed the nature of these conventions (e.g., Bruce, 2008, 2010, 2016; Crosthwaite & Jiang, 2017; Lee & Deakin, 2016; Wilder & Wolfe, 2009; Wu, 2007, etc.). These researchers demonstrate that these disciplinary discourse conventions are exceedingly associated with construing critical stance in academic text. Construing a critical stance involves adopting a stance toward ideas or the subject matter at hand, toward the status of knowledge, and towards other positions, views, or voices (Hyland, 2005; Lancaster, 2016; White, 2003; etc.). Therefore, many researchers analyze the rhetorical or linguistic features associated with enacting a critical stance in disciplinary writing. For example, Wilder's (2002, 2005, 2012) studies analyze the rhetorical features of literary analyses by university students. The study by Bruce (2016) examines linguistic features associated with enacting critical stances in essays written by students majoring in sociology and English studies.

These analyses of linguistic and rhetorical features associated with critical stance are motivated by pedagogical needs to help students become aware of how these features are realized in academic texts. As a result, these analyses have led to the creation of EAP and WID (Writing In Discipline) courses to demystify to students how critical stance patterns are enacted in disciplinary writing. Pedagogically, it has been shown that the deconstruction of successful academic texts in terms of critical stance features alongside explicit teaching of this feature improves students' success in writing in a particular discipline (Wilder & Wolfe, 2009).

However, while a considerable number of studies deconstruct critical stance patterns in successful academic texts for pedagogical needs (e.g., Bruce, 2016; Humphrey & Economou, 2015; Miller, Mitchell & Pessoa, 2017, etc.), less is known regarding how L2 students develop critical stance in academic writing as a result of online instruction in the discourse conventions of a particular discipline. Addressing this gap would contribute to shedding light on the effectiveness of online instruction in discourse convention of a particular discipline in producing a desired academic genre. Therefore, this study investigates whether online instruction in the discourse conventions of literary analysis over time affects L2 students' development of critical stance in academic writing. It uses students' corpus collected longitudinally to examine whether online instruction in the discourse conventions of literary analysis influence students' development of critical stance in academic writing.

2. Literature Review

2.1. *Critical stance in Disciplinary Writing*

There has been a significant body of studies on the concept of critical stance in disciplinary writing (e.g., Aull & Lancaster, 2014; Bruce, 2014, 2016; Jiang & Hyland, 2015; Lancaster, 2012, 2016; etc.). In these studies, there is an agreement that construing critical stance in academic writing involves different things in different disciplinary contexts. In other words, it involves engaging with the epistemological beliefs or values of a particular discipline. In the discipline of education, it involves, as Humphrey & Economou (2015, p.46) point out, "the challenging of a theoretical notion or aspect of research in an external source, and the

positioning of the reader to accept an authorial alternative/counter position". As Rothery & Stenglin (2000) suggest, literary analysis involves challenging conventional interpretations of literary work under analysis, evaluating the techniques/strategies employed by writers (novelists, poets, etc.), and positioning readers to accept an authorial interpretation of the portrayal of characters. In this regard, many studies conduct a linguistic and rhetorical analysis of critical stance in a published research paper and successful essay assignments by undergraduate and postgraduate students writing in a particular discipline.

For example, in the study by Rothery & Stenglin (2000), an appraisal analysis of a successful response to a literary text is conducted. The analysis reveals that successful responses to literary texts employ linguistic resources of judgement to evaluate characters in terms of behavior and attitude, linguistic resources of appreciation to evaluate the aesthetic qualities of the literary work under analysis, and linguistic resources of engagement to interpret the characterization in the work under analysis from the perspective of a particular literary theory. Another similar study to the study by Rothery & Stenglin (2000) is the study by Bruce (2016). In this study, Bruce conducts a genre and linguistic analysis of successful essays by university students in literature. The analysis shows that successful essays in literature employ critical statements of ground conclusion, concession contra-expectations and reason result, and the linguistic markers of hedging and attitude.

In the study by Wilder (2012), a rhetorical analysis of successful literary analyses by undergraduate students is conducted. The findings reveal that successful literary analyses employ special topoi. Topoi is a term used by Fahnestock & Secor (1988, 1991) and Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) to mean commonly held warrants or unstated premises that seek to connect with an audience's hierarchy of values (in Wilder, 2005). Topoi, as Fahnestock & Secor (1991) argue, invoke the shared assumption of literary scholars, and make literary arguments convincing to their intended audience. Specifically, the results indicate that successful literary analyses predominantly employ appearance/reality topoi to invoke the apparent meaning of the literary text under analysis before arguing for the real meaning. Another similar study to the study by Wilder (2012) is the study by Lancaster (2016). In this study, Lancaster conducts a linguistic deconstruction of critical stance in unsuccessful literary analyses by one upper-level university students and literary analyses from Michigan Corpus of Upper-level Student Corpus (MICUSP). The findings indicate that literary analyses from MICUSP employ more linguistic resources that realize the appearance/reality topoi than unsuccessful literary analysis by one upper-level university student.

In summary, the reviewed studies show how critical stance is linguistically and rhetorically construed in successful literary analysis. It is obvious that these studies adopt different perspective to examine critical stance in successful literary analysis. The study by Wilder (2012) follows a rhetorical approach to the analysis of critical stance in literary analyses, while the study by Rothery & Stenglin (2000) adopt a systemic functional linguistics perspective, particularly appraisal theory by Martin & White (2005) to analyze how critical stance is construed in literary analyses. The objectives of these analyses are to inform pedagogy in English studies. In other words, teachers in the discipline of English studies can draw on these analyses to make explicit the linguistic and rhetorical resources associated with critical stance to students. However, although these analyses are conducted for pedagogical need, they do not inform us on how students majoring in English studies develop the linguistic and rhetorical resources associated with critical stance. In other words, these analyses do not show how students learn to construe critical stance in their literary analyses. Therefore, it is still uncertain the extent to which instruction in the linguistic features associated with critical stance help students develop register-appropriate critical stance in academic writing. Qualitative and

quantitative analyses of the longitudinal impact of online instruction in the discourse conventions of literary criticism on the production of critical stance patterns are important in determining the usefulness of making explicit the linguistic and rhetorical resources associated with the discourse conventions of literary criticism to students over a period of time.

2.2. Online Instruction in Disciplinary Discourse Conventions

Disciplinary discourse conventions concern the ways in which knowledge is built and arguments are developed in a particular discipline. Wilder (2012) points out that these discourse conventions are reflected in the linguistic and rhetorical features of successful academic texts produced by professional academic writers or undergraduate and postgraduate students writing in a particular discipline. Therefore, a number of studies are conducted to explore the ways in which instructions in disciplinary discourse conventions impact students' quality of writing, improve students' critical awareness in academic writing and affect students' ability to construe register-appropriate critical stance (e.g., Crosthwaite & Jiang, 2017, Wilder & Wolfe, 2009; Wingate, 2012, etc.).

For example, the study by Wingate (2012) explores the impact of an online writing course in the discipline of management on students' critical awareness. This online course was guided by the constructionist theory of learning and genre approach to academic writing. In other words, the online writing course in this study exposed students to the discourse conventions of the discipline of management through research papers and successful essays. In this study, Wingate used a questionnaire as a research method to explore the impact of the course on students' critical awareness. The results reveal that the components of the course that exposed students to the ways texts are organized were highly useful, while the components of the course that raised students' critical awareness were not useful. This seems to suggest that the online writing course in the study by Wingate (2012) impacted students' ability to organize an academic text, but it did not raise students' critical awareness. The reason for these results, as Wingate (2012) suggest, is that the online course was detached from regular subject teaching.

The study by Wingate, Andon & Cogo (2011) investigates the usefulness and the impact of a blended (online and offline) instruction in the discourse and epistemological features of the discipline of applied linguistics on undergraduate students' writing quality. This online and offline course was guided by academic literacies and genre approach to academic writing, and it was embedded in the teaching of applied linguistics. In other words, participants in this study were exposed to the ways in which knowledge is built and arguments are developed in the discipline of applied linguistics. The results from holistic assessment of students' submissions and from questionnaire show that students made progress in the quality of writing from the first submissions to the final submissions, and students felt that the writing course helped them improve their academic writing. The results in this study agree with the findings in the study by Wilder & Wolfe (2009). In this study, Wilder & Wolfe employed a quasi-experimental research design to examine whether an offline explicit instruction in the discourse conventions of literary criticism helps students produce rhetorically effective discourse or hampers students' enjoyment, expression, and engagement in literature. The results indicate that students in the experimental group produced essays of higher quality and engaged more effectively with the special topics of literary criticism than students in the control group. This suggests that the offline instructions in the discourse conventions of literary criticism improved students' quality of writing.

In summary, the reviewed studies show the extent to which an online or offline instruction in the discourse conventions of a particular discipline impact students' writing quality. It is clear in these studies that many factors affect the effectiveness of the instructions in disciplinary

discourse. One of these factors is the detachment of the instructions from subject teaching. However, although these studies contribute to understanding the importance of embedding academic writing in the teaching of disciplinary knowledge, they do not inform us on which linguistic features or rhetorical features contribute to the progress in the quality of writing by students. They indicate a holistic progress in the quality of writing as a result of online or offline instruction in disciplinary discourse conventions, but they do not indicate which discourse and epistemological features contribute to this progress. Therefore, this study examines whether there is a progress or a regress in the use of discourse and epistemological features that construe a register-appropriate critical stance as a result of an online academic writing course. To meet this objective, this study draws on appraisal theory from systemic functional linguistics.

2.3. Theoretical Framework: Appraisal Theory

The theoretical framework applied in this study to investigate whether there is a progress or a regress in the use of discourse and epistemological features that construe a register-appropriate critical stance is appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2005). This theory extends SFL account of interpersonal meaning and consists of three linguistic systems: attitude, graduation and engagement.

2.3.1. Attitude system

Attitude system include all the linguistic resources (semantic region) that are used to construe emotions and feelings, to evaluate human character or behavior according to ethical norms, and to assess the value of entity (Martin and White, 2005). According to Martin and White (2005), the system of attitude differentiates three attitude types: *affect*, *judgement*, *appreciation*.

Affect deals with personal emotions/feelings. It groups emotions/feelings into four major sets having to do with dis/inclination, un/happiness, in/security and dis/satisfaction. Dis/inclination covers emotions concerned with intention/desire and fear. Un/happiness covers emotions concerned with “affair of the heart”- sadness, hate, happiness and love. In/security covers our feelings of peace and anxiety in relation to our environment, including of course the people sharing them with us. Dis/satisfaction deals with our feelings of achievement and frustration in relation to the activities in which we are engaged, including our roles as both participants and spectators. All these four sets of emotions have positive and negative polarity.

Judgement deals with meaning construing our attitudes to people, the way they behave- their character. Judgement can be divided between those dealing with social esteem and those oriented to social sanction. Judgements of social esteem have to do with normality (how unusual someone is), capacity (how capable they are), and tenacity (how resolute they are). Judgements of social sanction have to do with veracity (how truthful someone is) and propriety (whether someone behaves according to social-cultural norms). Similarly, all these forms of judgements have positive and negative polarity.

Appreciation deals with meanings construing our evaluations of things, for example, the worth of a literary text and process in a culture. Appreciations can be divided into three sub-systems- reaction, their composition, and their valuation. Rothery & Stenglin (2000) points out that each of these sub-systems corresponds to one of the three metafunctions of language: ideational meaning, interpersonal meaning and textual meaning. Reaction corresponds to interpersonal meaning. It describes an emotional impact of an entity/thing, such as a literary work, message in the literary work, etc. on literary critics/readers. Positive reaction includes linguistic resources such as captivating, interesting, stunning, beautiful, etc. Negative reaction includes linguistic resources such as boring, questionable, debatable, predictable, etc. Composition is aligned with textual meaning. It describes the texture of a thing, such a literary work, in terms

of its complexity and balance. Positive composition includes detailed, rich, etc. Negative composition includes simplistic, irregular, ambiguous, cyclic, etc. Valuation corresponds to ideational meaning. It evaluates the worth of a particular literary work, for example, its social contribution to understanding a particular idea. It also evaluates the message conveyed in a particular literary work. Positive valuation includes linguistic features, such as innovative, significant, important, unique, etc. Negative valuation entails linguistic resources, such as insignificant, overdue, useless, shallow, etc.

2.3.2. Graduation System

Graduation system has to do with linguistic items which intensify meaning or grade values. Martin and White (2005) identifies two graduation types. First, graduation according to prototypicality (focus) involves sharpening or softening the boundaries of a categorical meaning (e.g., He is a **true** friend; It was an apology **of the sort**). Second, graduation according to force involves scaling of intensity (e.g., **very** interesting, **somewhat** interesting) and scaling of amount or extent of entities (e.g., I have **many** worries about your performance; There is a **paucity** of information on the matter). Xie (2016, p.3) argues that graduation “may function to evoke attitudinal reading out of experiential meanings”. For instance, by scaling down an apology given by someone as in “It was an apology **of the sort**.”, the readers are invited to have a negative attitude towards the proposition.

2.3.3. Engagement System

The system of engagement is concerned with the linguistic mechanism by which the writer/speakers incorporate various positions in their texts and take a stance towards those positions. These various positions may be single-voiced (mono-glossic) and multi-voiced (hetero-glossic). Mono-glossic assertions are those, as Martin & White (2005) point out, which do not recognize other voices. On the other hand, hetero-glossic options include linguistic mechanisms by which writers/speakers expand or contract dialogic space for alternative positions or voices (White, 2003).

2.4. Research Question

This study investigates L2 students’ longitudinal development of critical stance patterns in academic writing as a result of their exposure to online instruction in the discourse conventions of literary criticism. It addresses the following research question.

RQ: Is there any variation in the distribution of critical stance patterns in L2 students’ written literary analyses pre-, during- and post-online instruction in the discourse conventions of literary criticism?

3. Research Methods

3.1. Research Context

The present study is situated in the department of English at Maharaja Krishnakumarsinhji Bhavnagar University (MKBU). The department of English at this university offers postgraduate courses in literature studies. These courses generally include those related to world literature (Indian writing in English, British literature, American literature, African literature, etc.) and to literary critical theories (existentialism, feminism, new critical theory, etc.). This postgraduate program requires regular writing activities. The writing activities include written thinking activities, and lengthy essay assignments, which students can present orally in class.

However, although teachers and researchers across disciplines in India acknowledge the difficulties university students face in writing effectively, academic writing courses are not

included on the curriculum of undergraduate and postgraduate level in all disciplines-arts, humanities, social sciences, etc. (e.g., Evangeline & Ganesh, 2016; Vijayakumar, 2018; etc.). In addition, there is no provision of English for academic writing course that helps students transition from general writing to disciplinary-specific writing. Two assumptions may underpin this no provision of English academic writing course in Indian educational context. The first assumption is that students may learn disciplinary-specific way of writing tacitly. The second assumption is that students who have difficulties in academic writing may attend academic writing workshops. Indeed, many universities in India organize academic writing workshops and encourage students to attend them. However, academic writing workshops provide students with knowledge of how to organize an academic text, but they do not help students learn disciplinary-specific way of writing. Therefore, this study explores whether online instructions in the discourse conventions of literary criticism impacts students' ability to produce a register-appropriate critical stance or affect students' quality of writing. This study is relevant as it may inform teachers across disciplines in India the usefulness and the importance of teaching disciplinary-specific way of writing to university students.

3.2. Participants

The participants in the present study were selected as follows. First, after the writing course was designed, the researchers made video recordings that introduced the content of each unit of the course. Second, a google classroom website was created. Third, a video recording that introduced the course was uploaded on the google classroom website. The introduction of the course was intended to explain to students the reasons and the objectives of the course. Fourth, students were requested to watch the video recording and to read the content of the introduction, and if interested, to register for the course. Before registering, students were asked to do a diagnostic writing task which required them to analyze a literary work from a particular literary theory. Therefore, 42 postgraduate students registered for the course. Some of these students were in the first year, and others were in the final year of a two-year program of English studies in the department of English at MKBU. However, all the students who registered did not take or did not comply with all the requirements of the course. Of 42 students, 21 students satisfied all the requirements of the course. This means that only 21 students were able to watch the video recording, to read the content of the course, and to do all the assignments. As a consequence, the data were collected from 21 postgraduate students who complied with all the requirements of the online instruction. It is important to note that students in this study writes in English as a second language. Nevertheless, they are generally considered as competent users of English, having been instructed through it in their three-year undergraduate program and having learned English as a subject in their pre-university studies. In addition, although the researchers did not measure this competence with reliable English texts, Bhavnagar university admits students who have a score of 48% and above on English tests to its postgraduate programs (see on <https://www.mkbhavuni.edu.in>).

3.3. Online Instruction in the Discourse conventions of Literary Criticism

3.3.1. The structure of the Online Instruction

The online instruction was planned as follows. First, it comprised 5 units. The design of the contents of the 5 units was guided by genre approach to teaching academic writing and by academic literacies. In other words, the contents of the online instruction exposed students to the ways in which knowledge is built in the discipline of English studies and to the discourse and epistemological practices of literary criticism. Second, it consisted of video recordings of 5 to 20 minutes, which introduced each unit of the module. These introductory videos were intended to help participants know what is included in each unit, what was expected of them,

and online submissions details. Third, it consisted of assessment rubrics to evaluate each submission. Last, it comprised an individualized online feedback on each online submission. In summary, the intervention comprised the contents of 5 units, 5 introductory videos, assessment rubrics, and individualized feedback.

3.3.2. Implementation of the online instruction

The intervention lasted 7 weeks from 16th January 2021 to 8th March 2021- 5 weeks were for independent learning and individualized online feedback on each online submission and two weeks were for completing the final submission. This self-regulated learning was guided by the integration of the following methods.

Watching introductory videos and reading the contents of the online instruction: upon the weekly upload of the introductory video and the content of each unit on google classroom website, students were asked to watch the video and read the content of the unit. The upload followed a sequential pattern from unit one to unit five. This sequential pattern was followed for two reasons. First, each unit was designed to help students learn specific types of discourse and epistemological practices of literary criticism. Second, it was possible to evaluate whether students have understood the content of the unit through multiple-choice questions and writing task. They were given four days for reading the content of each unit and for doing the above-mentioned tasks. Therefore, the content of the unit contained explanations of the requirements for writing a literary analysis and an excerpt from a successful essay in literature. The explanations were intended to help students understand the ways in which literary critics critically engage with the portrayal of characters and the message conveyed in the literary text under analysis. They were also intended to help students understand how literary critics assess the techniques used by writers to articulate a particular theme and show an understanding of the literary theory in the interpretation of the message articulated in literary work under analysis. Then, students were asked to read the excerpt from successful essay and to comment on the ways in which these explanations were realized in the excerpt. The content of the second and the third unit contained explanations of discourse and epistemological features of literary analyses. In these two units, students were presented with extracts from published paper in literature and successful essays by university students. These extracts were used to demonstrated the linguistic and discourse markers that are usually used to meet the requirements explained in the first unit, as well as the style of citing and referencing. These markers included linguistic markers of critical stance and language used to develop arguments in literary analyses. The contents of the fourth and the fifth units contained explanations of the ways in which arguments in an essay and research paper are organized. In these two units, students were presented with an example of an essay and research paper and were asked to comment on the ways in which the introductions of an essay and research paper provide background information on with the essay or the research paper focuses. Students were also asked to comment on the ways in which arguments are developed and the ways in which critical stance is expressed in the body sections of the two genres. Last, students were asked to comment on the ways in which the conclusions of the two genres summarize the content of the body section, consolidate the position taken in the introduction or answer the research question formulated in the introduction, etc.

Online submission and individualized online feedback: online submission and individualized online feedback were organized in sequential pattern. This was done in order to ensure that the researchers can track a longitudinal development of students' ability to construe a register-appropriate critical stance in their literary analyses. In this regard, in the first unit, students were presented with a short story and were asked to write two paragraphs which demonstrated their

critical engagement with the portrayal of characters and with the message conveyed in the short story. After they submitted the two paragraphs on google classroom, the researchers took two days to evaluate each submission and to give individualized feedback. In the second unit, students were asked to revised the two paragraphs according to the content of the second unit and were given individualized feedback. In the third unit, students were asked to edit the two paragraphs submitted in the first unit according to the content of the third unit and were also given individualized feedback. In the fourth unit, students were asked to extend the two paragraphs submitted in the first unit and to write an essay which included the introduction, the body, and the conclusion and were also given individualized feedback. In the fifth unit, students were asked to add an abstract and a list of references and were also give individualized feedback. Each submission was evaluated on the basis of assessment rubric, which was uploaded on google classroom website. Students were asked to read the assessment rubric before writing each submission.

In summary, the implementation of the online instruction was guided by the integration of the above-outlined methods. Students were independent learners in that they were not told the number of hours a week they should read the content of each unit. They were free to read the content of each unit as many times as they wanted, provided that they complete all the tasks within four days in a week. The introductory videos, the contents of the online instruction and the assessment rubrics can be accessed via the following website: <https://classroom.google.com/c/MjU2NjcxMDk2NDAw>.

3.4. Collection of Data

The data were collected longitudinally at three points- pre-instruction, meaning a diagnostic writing task before students were exposed to the course (point 1), during-instruction, meaning immediately after the fourth unit (point 2), and post-instruction, meaning the final writing task (point 3). The assignments at point two were selected for one reason. It was after the fourth unit that students were asked to write an extended essay which comprised the introduction, the body and the conclusion. Therefore, the assignments at this point were selected in order to match the format of assignments at point 1 and at point 3. At these two points, students were asked to write an extended essay. The written assignments collected at each point were used to constitute three corpora. The first corpus included 21 essay assignments collected at point 1 and this corpus was called “Pre-Instruction Corpus 1 (PIC 1)”. The second corpus included 21 essay assignments collected at point 2 and this corpus was called “During-Instruction Corpus 2 (DIC 2)”. The third corpus included 21essay assignments collected at point 3 and this corpus was called “Post-Instruction Corpus 3 (PIC 3)”. The collection of data at these three points made it possible to fit a developmental line which could shed light on the linear progression, U or reverse-U shaped behavior (Meunier, 2016 cited in Crosthwaite & Jiang, 2017). Table 1 presents the size of each corpus.

Table 1.

Longitudinal Corpora

Longitudinal corpora	Texts	Words	Sentences
PIC 1	21	17582	1025
DIC 2	21	14774	832
PIC 3	21	43305	2401
Total	63	75661	4258

3.5. Analysis of Data

In this study, a discourse analytic research method was employed to examine critical stance patterns in the longitudinal corpus. This analysis of critical stance patterns drew on appraisal system (Martin & White, 2005) through manual coding using UAM corpus tool (O' Donnell, 2007). The appraisal analysis of longitudinal corpus was conducted as follows. First, the researchers converted the corpus into plain text (with extension txt), compatible with UAM Corpus Tool. Second, after uploading the corpus into the application (UAM Corpus Tool), the researchers conducted three layers of appraisal analysis. The first layer involved drawing on the appraisal sub-system of attitude to examine the ways in which students critically evaluated the portrayal of characters, the message conveyed and the techniques used by writers to articulate a particular theme in the literary work under analysis. The second layer entailed drawing on the appraisal sub-system of graduation to explore the ways in which students amplified evaluative meanings in their assignments. The third layer involved drawing on the appraisal sub-system of engagement to examine the ways in which students position readers to accept their interpretations and critically engage with alternative interpretations of the portrayal of characters. These three layers of analysis contributed to understanding the differences in construing critical stance in the longitudinal corpus. By examining the ways in which students selected linguistic and discourse resources to evaluate entity, people's behavior, and to negotiate other positions, the three layers of analysis shed light on the variation in the register-appropriate critical stance in the longitudinal corpus.

3.6. Coding of the Data

The coding of the three layers of appraisal system drew on Martin & White's (2005) taxonomy. It was conducted as follows. First, the researchers coded the attitude types- affect, judgement, appreciation, and their sub-categories, the attitude mode as inscribed or evoked and the attitude polarity as negative or positive. In order to code these resources, the researchers had to read each assignment multiple times in order to interpret accurately the critical stance patterns that occurred in the assignment. The researchers had also to read back-and-forth between clause and text levels and to resort to co-textual relations to examine how one linguistic item could influence the interpretation of another linguistic item or to capture how a particular linguistic item could have different interpretation when it occurred in different co-textual relations. Example [1] presents the coding of attitude, in which "patriarchal" explicitly embodies the writer's negative evaluation of "arrangement of social order. Patriarchal is a descriptive term and therefore does not carries an evaluative meaning. The negative evaluative meaning it inscribes results from the linguistic items it occurs within the same sentence, e.g., "horrific form" and "unsafe position".

[1]: Women were subject to **horrific [Appreciation: reaction -]** forms of sexual violence during partition which suggests the **unsafe [Appreciation: reaction -]** position of women in the **patriarchal [Appreciation: valuation -]** arrangement of social order (PIC 3).

Second, the researchers coded the graduation type as force and focus, the graduation orientation as up-scaling and down-scaling, and the graduation effect as evoking and non-evoking attitude. 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. Examples [2] and [3] illustrate this coding.

[2]: Retelling of a story becomes *very interesting* [**Force: intensity, up-scaling**] to interpret when it is said from a different perspective (PIC 1).

[3]: The River Churning *presents* [**Focus: fulfilment, up-scaling**], [**Appreciation: valuation +, evoked**] how the state intervention on the bodies of women affected their lives (PIC1).

Third, the researchers coded the engagement resources. In order to code these resources, the researchers had to interpret whether propositions in the assignments were mono-glossically or hetero-glossically formulated based on the clausal level. If the propositions were hetero-glossically formulated, the researchers coded the sub-categories of hetero-glossic resources. Example [4] and [5] illustrates this coding.

[4]: Partition violence positioned women as objects of possession and vehicles to carry the burden of hostility of opposed groups of men (PIC 3) [**Mono-glossic proposition**].

[5]: Moreover, the above lines **can** be read as an insightful presentation of Jenny's experience of comprehending reality [**Hetero-glossic proposition, expand: entertain**].

The researchers coded these resources using UAM Corpus Tool. To ensure reliability of the coding, appraisal resources were coded at one-month interval. This involved coding the data manually using UAM Corpus tool and after one month, the researchers coded again the resources manually using UAM Corpus Tool. This was done to make sure that there was an inter-rater agreement at one-month interval.

3.7. Statistical Analysis

After coding the data, the number of occurrences of appraisal resources was calculated per 100 words. Then, the mean and the standard deviation along with the significance of differences in the longitudinal corpus were calculated through SPSS (version 16.0).

4. Results and Discussions

4.1. Longitudinal Variation in Critical Stance Patterns in L2 Students' Written Literary Analyses

Previous studies show that projecting a critical stance is a highly valued features of literary analyses (e.g., Macken-Horarik, 1996, 2003; Rothery & Stenglin, 2000; Wilder, 2012, etc.). Rothery & Stenglin (2000) show that project a critical stance involves the use of attitude markers to critically evaluate the portrayal of characters and the message convey in the literary work under analysis. It also entails the use of graduation and engagement markers to position readers to accept authorial interpretations and to critically engage with alternative interpretations of the message conveyed in the literary work under analysis. In this regard, the results were reported as follows: (1) findings from the analysis of the distribution of attitude markers, (2) results from the analysis of the distribution of graduation resources, and (3) findings from the analysis of the distribution of engagement markers.

4.1.1. Longitudinal Distribution of Attitude Resources in L2 Students' Literary Analysis

Table 2 presents longitudinal distributions of attitude resources in the three corpora collected at three points, namely Pre-Instruction Corpus (PIC 1), During-Instruction Corpus (DIC 2), post-instruction Corpus (PIC 3). The results reveal a longitudinal rise in the use of attitude sub-types of judgement and appreciation and a reverse-U shaped reduction in the use of attitude subtype of affect as seen at PIC 1, DIC 2 and PIC 3. Table 2 shows that the use of judgement resources by students increased at PIC 3 ($M = 1.01$) from PIC 1 ($M = 0.74$, Mean difference = -0.27 , P-value = 0.142), the use of appreciation increased at PIC 3 ($M = 0.82$) from PIC 1 ($M = 0.70$, Mean difference = -0.11 , P-value = 0.272), while the use of affect resources decrease at PIC 3 ($M = 0.44$) from PIC 1 ($M = 0.53$, Mean difference = 0.08 , P-value = 0.319). However, the increase in the use of judgement and appreciation resources from PIC 1 to PIC 3 is not

statistically significant, while the decrease in the use of affect resource from PIC 1 to PIC 3 is statistically significant.

Therefore, the less significant increase in the use of attitude sub-types of judgement and appreciation may not be suggestive of an impact of the online instruction in the discourse convention of literary criticism, and the significant reverse-U shaped decrease in the use of attitude sub-type of affect may be suggestive of the impact of the online instruction. To be more specific, the resources of judgement and appreciation are employed to evaluate the behaviors of characters according to ethical norms, the strategies and techniques used by writers (novelists, poets, etc.) to convey a particular message, and the aesthetic qualities of the literary work under analysis. Rothery & Stenglin (2000) demonstrate that successful literary analyses are characterized by the use of the resources of judgement and appreciation. In addition, the content of the online instruction, the online assessment rubrics and the individualized online feedback focused on the use of these linguistic markers. Therefore, the less significant increase in the use of these resources presumably suggest that the teaching and learning methods employed in the online instruction may not have impacted L2 students' ability to construe a register-appropriate critical stance. The resources of affect are used to articulate an emotional response to the literary work under analysis. Rothery & Stenglin (2000) show that successful literary analyses are characterized by a near absence of the resource of affect. Furthermore, the individualized online feedback emphasized the need to use impersonal style and the need to avoid expressing emotional feelings in academic writing. Therefore, the significant reverse-U shaped decrease in the use of affect suggests that the individualized may have impacted L2 students' ability to avoid expressing emotional feelings in their literary analysis.

Table 2.

Longitudinal distributions of Attitude Resources

Attitude markers	Mean per 100 words	Standard Deviation	Pairwise comparison (Bold = statistically significant, P<0.05)
Affect	(PIC 1) M = 0.53 (DIC 2) M = 0.88 (PIC 3) M = 0.44	(PIC 1) SD = 0.45 (DIC 2) SD = 0.60 (PIC 3) SD = 0.28	PIC 1 < DIC 2 MD = -0.34 P = 0.017 PIC 1 > PIC 3 MD = 0.08 P = 0.319 DIC 2 > PIC 3 MD = 0.43 P = 0.006
Judgement	(PIC 1) M = 0.74 (DIC 2) M = 0.77 (PIC 3) M = 1.01	(PIC 1) SD = 0.60 (DIC 2) SD = 0.45 (PIC 3) SD = 0.50	PIC 1 < DIC 2 MD = -0.03 P = 0.848 PIC 1 < PIC 3 MD = -0.27 P = 0.142 DIC 2 < PIC 3 MD = -0.25 P = 0.106
Appreciation	(PIC 1) M = 0.70 (DIC 2) M = 0.83 (PIC 3) M = 0.82	(PIC 1) SD = 0.42 (DIC 2) SD = 0.40 (PIC 3) SD = 0.36	PIC 1 < DIC 2 MD = -0.12 P = 0.435 PIC 1 < PIC 3 MD = -0.11 P = 0.272 DIC 2 > PIC 3 MD = 0.005 P = 0.958

Within the attitude subcategories of judgement and appreciation, then subcategories that are predominantly used in successful literary analysis are judgement subtypes of capacity and propriety and the appreciation subtype of valuation, composition and reaction. Therefore, it is important to report on the distribution of these subcategories in order to see whether there may be any important variation in the longitudinal corpus.

4.1.1.1. Longitudinal Distribution of Judgement sub-categories in the corpora

Table 3 presents a longitudinal distribution of judgement sub-categories in the three corpora collected at three points. The results show a less significant increase in the use of judgement sub-category of capacity as seen at PIC 3 (M = 0.44) from PIC 1 (0.28, Mean difference = -0.15, P-value = 0.152). The resources of judgement of capacity are predominantly employed to evaluate writers' strategies to convey a particular message in successful literary analysis (Rothery & Stenglin, 2000) as in [6]

[6]: Divakaruni has **skillfully demystified [Judgement: Capacity +]** the story of *Mahabharata* by de-glamorizing the male characters and making it suit the assertion of the female self of the twenty-first century India (PIC 3).

The results also show a less significant increase in the use of judgement sub-category of propriety as seen at PIC 3 (M = 0.46) from PIC 1 (M = 0.23, Mean difference = -0.22, P-value = 0.065). The resources of judgement sub-category of propriety are employed to evaluate the behavior of characters according to ethical norms (Rothery & Stenglin, 2000) as in [7] and [8].

[7]: Velutha, the god of small things, **transgresses [Judgement: Propriety-]** the established norms of society by having an affair with a woman of high caste (PIC 3).

[8]: Government officials were **corrupt, manipulative [Judgement: Propriety-]** of villagers, and could arrest anyone they chose for any reason, more often than not for their own benefit (PIC 1).

Table 3.

Longitudinal Distribution of Judgement Sub-categories

Judgement sub-types	Mean per 100 words	Standard Deviation	Pairwise comparison (Bold = statistically significant, P<0.05)
Capacity	(PIC 1) M = 0.28	(PIC 1) SD = 0.44	PIC 1<DIC 2 MD = -0.09 P = 0.430
	(DIC 2) M = 0.38	(DIC 2) SD = 0.29	PIC 1 <PIC 3 MD = -0.15 P = 0.152
	(PIC 3) M = 0.44	(PIC 3) SD = 0.21	DIC 2<PIC 3 MD = -0.06 P = 0.412
Propriety	(PIC 1) M = 0.23	(PIC 1) SD = 0.27	PIC 1<DIC 2 MD = -0.060 P = 0.421
	(DIC 2) M = 0.29	(DIC 2) SD = 0.28	PIC 1<PIC 3 MD = -0.22 P = 0.065
	(PIC 3) M = 0.46	(PIC 3) SD = 0.38	DIC 3<PIC 3 MD = -0.16 P = 0.122

In addition, Macken-Horarik (2003) shows that the predominant use of the resources of propriety enable literary analysts to recontextualize the characterization in the literary work under analysis in terms of ethical struggle and therefore to construct an ethical stance.

The content of online instruction, the individualized online feedback, and the assessment rubrics emphasized the need for students to critically evaluate the portrayal of characters and the techniques used by writers to convey a particular message in the literary work under analysis. Therefore, it can be inferred that the less significant increase in the use of the resources of capacity and propriety probably suggest that the teaching and the learning methods employed in the online course may not have impacted students' ability to construe a register-appropriate

critical stance in their literary analyses. Two factors may have contributed to these results. First, the online instruction did not include follow-up discussions. These follow-up discussions would have contributed to checking whether students had understood the content of the online course, the assessment rubric, and the individualized online feedback. In addition, the online instruction was detached from regular teaching of English literature. Embedding the online instruction into regular teaching of English literature would have helped students understand the ways in which a critical evaluation of the portrayal of characters and the techniques used by writers to articulate a particular theme is construed in literary analyses. These results seem to agree with the results in the study by Wingate (2012). In this study by Wingate, the results indicated that the online writing course did not impact students' critical awareness in academic writing because the online instruction was not embedded in subject teaching.

4.1.1.2. Longitudinal Distribution of Appreciation Sub-categories in the corpora

Table 4 presents a longitudinal distribution of appreciation sub-categories in the three corpora collected at three points. The results indicate a less significant increase in the use of appreciation sub-category of reaction as seen at PIC 3 (M = 0.23) from PIC 1 (M = 0.16, Mean difference = -0.07, P-value = 0.152). The resources of reaction are predominantly used to express a critical personal response to the portrayal of characters and to the message conveyed in the literary work under analysis (Rothery & Stenglin, 2000). Example [9] illustrates this use.

[9]: It seems that this story is a **good [Appreciation: Reaction +)** example for television represents the world of illusion rather than reality (DIC 2).

Table 4.

Longitudinal Distribution of Appreciation Sub-categories

Appreciation Sub-type	Mean per 100 words	Standard Deviation	Pairwise Comparison (Bold = statistically significant, P<0.05)
Reaction	(PIC 1) M = 0.16 (DIC 2) M = 0.30 (PIC 3) M = 0.23	(PIC 1) SD = 0.14 (DIC 2) SD = 0.19 (PIC 3) SD = 0.17	PIC 1 < DIC 2 MD = -0.13 P = 0.023 PIC 1 < PIC 3 MD = -0.07 P = 0.154 DIC 2 > PIC 3 MD = 0.06 P = 0.284
Composition	(PIC 1) M = 0.13 (DIC 2) M = 0.01 (PIC 3) M = 0.07	(PIC 1) SD = 0.19 (DIC 2) SD = 0.06 (PIC 3) SD = 0.07	PIC 1 > DIC 2 MD = 0.11 P = 0.012 PIC 1 > PIC 3 MD = 0.06 P = 0.212 DIC 2 < PIC 3 MD = 0.05 P = 0.016
Valuation	(PIC 1) M = 0.41 (DIC 2) M = 0.51 (PIC 3) M = 0.50	(PIC 1) SD = 0.30 (DIC 2) SD = 0.37 (PIC 3) SD = 0.30	PIC 1 < DIC 2 MD = -0.10 P = 0.436 PIC 1 < PIC 3 MD = -0.09 P = 0.264 DIC 2 > PIC 3 MD = 0.001 P = 0.984

The results also indicate a less significant increase in the use of the resources of valuation as seen at PIC (M = 50) from PIC 1 (M = 41, Mean difference = -0.09, P-value = 0.264). The resources of valuation are predominantly employed to evaluate the strategies and techniques

employed by the writers to convey a particular message or to explore a particular theme as in [10] (Rotheter & Stenglin, 2000).

[10]: In the play, the chorus is an **expedient [Appreciation: Valuation +]** device used brilliantly to provide the commentary on the way communal provocation instigates mindless mob violence (PIC 3).

In addition, the results show a significant decrease in the use of the resources of composition as seen at PIC 3 (M = 0.07) from PIC 1 (M = 0.13, mean difference = 0.06, P-value = 0.212). The resources of composition are also predominantly used to explore the strategies used by the writers to convey a particular theme and to evaluate the aesthetic qualities of the literary work under analysis as in [11]

[11]: Their sexual attraction and relation are **beautifully woven [Appreciation: Composition +]** in more than one level, it represents a union that openly defies all society constructed restrictions and leads to a sense of fulfilment and contentment [PIC 3].

The content of the online instruction, the individualized online feedback, and the online assessment rubrics focused on the linguistic features that are used to critically evaluate the strategies used by writers to articulate a particular message in their literary work and on the linguistic resources that used to critically engage with the message conveyed in the literary work under analysis. Therefore, the less significant increase in the use of the resources of reaction and valuation and the significant decrease in the use of the resources of composition probably suggest that the teaching and the learning methods employed in the online instruction may not have impacted students' ability to evaluate the strategies and techniques employed by the writers to convey a particular message or to explore a particular theme. The two factors outlined earlier (in 4.1.1.1) may have contributed to these results.

4.1.2. Longitudinal Distribution of Graduation Resources in L2 Students' Literary Analysis

Table 5 presents a longitudinal distribution of graduation resources in the three corpora collected at three points. The results show a significant decrease in the use of graduation resources of force as seen at PIC 3 (M = 0.91) from PIC 1 (M = 1.18, Mean difference = 0.266, P-value = 0.046).

Table 5.

Longitudinal Distribution of Graduation Resources in the corpora

Graduation type	Mean per 100 words	Standard Deviation	Pairwise Comparison (Bold= statistically significant, P<0.05)
Force	(PIC 1) M = 1.18	(PIC 1) SD = 0.56	PIC 1<DIC 2 MD = -0.032 P = 0.859 PIC 1>PIC 3 MD = 0.266 P = 0.046 DIC 2>PIC 3 MD = 0.270 P = 0.022
	(DIC 2) M = 1.21	(DIC 2) SD = 0.50	
	(PIC 3) M = 0.91	(PIC 3) SD = 0.27	
Focus	(PIC 1) M = 0.044	(PIC 1) SD = 0.11	PIC 1>DIC 2 MD = 0.038 P = 0.146 PIC 1>PIC 3 MD = 0.027 P = 0.374 DIC 2<PIC 3 MD = -0.010 P = 0.449
	(DIC 2) M = 0.006	(DIC 2) SD = 0.03	
	(PIC 3) M = 0.017	(PIC 3) SD = 0.05	

The results also show a less significant decrease in the use of graduation resources of focus as seen at PIC 3 (M = 0.017) from PIC 1 (M = 0.044, Mean difference = 0.027, P-value = 0.374). The resources of graduation are employed to make the construed evaluative meaning compelling, forceful (Hood, 2004, 2010; Lancaster, 2012, 2014, 2016, etc.) as in [12].

[12]: Retelling of a story becomes *very* [**Graduation: Force**] **interesting** [**Appreciation: reaction+**] to interpret when it is said from a different perspective (PIC 1).

The content of the online course, the individualized online feedback, and the online assessment rubrics emphasized the need for students to tone down evaluative meanings in their literary analysis. Therefore, the significant decrease in the use of graduation resources of force presumably suggest that the teaching and learning methods employed in the online instruction impacted students' ability to construe a less compelling and forceful evaluative meaning.

4.1.3. Longitudinal Distribution of Engagement Resources in L2 Students' Literary Analysis

Table 6 presents longitudinal distributions of single-voiced (monoglossia) and multi-voiced (heteroglossia) statement in the corpora collected at three points. The results indicate a less significant decrease of single-voiced statements in the corpora as seen at PIC 3 (M = 3.35) from PIC 1 (M = 3.64, Mean difference = 0.29, P-value = 0.142). Single-voiced statements are those, as Martin & White (2005) point out, which do not recognize other voices. They are presented as facts (Lyon, 1977, p.794). In addition, single-voiced statements function to make the construed evaluative meanings assertive and are less valued in academic writing (Xie, 2016). The individualized online feedback insisted on the need for students to avoid making unwarranted interpretations. Therefore, the less significant decrease of single-voiced statement from PIC 1 to PIC 3 presumably suggest that the teaching and learning methods in the online instruction may not have impacted students' ability to avoid making literary interpretations within single-voices formulations.

Table 6:

Longitudinal distributions of voices in the corpora

Voices	Mean per 100 words	Standard Deviation	Pairwise Comparison (Bold = statistically significant, P<0.05)
Monoglossia	(PIC 1) M = 3.64 (DIC 2) M = 3.49 (PIC 3) M = 3.35	(PIC 1) SD = 1.03 (DIC 2) SD = 1.37 (PIC 3) SD = 0.71	PIC 1>DIC 2 MD = 0.15 P = 0.655 PIC 1>PIC 3 MD = 0.29 P = 0.142 DIC 2>PIC 3 MD = 0.14 P = 0.403
Heteroglossia	(PIC 1) M = 1.68 (DIC 2) M = 2.38 (PIC 3) M = 1.96	(PIC 1) SD = 0.94 (DIC 2) SD = 0.72 (PIC 3) SD = 0.63	PIC 1<DIC 2 MD = -0.699 P = 0.004 PIC 1<PIC 3 MD = -0.286 P = 0.096 DIC 2>PIC 3 MD = 0.412 P = 0.048

The results also show a significant reverse-U shaped increase of multi-voiced statements across the corpus as seen at DIC 2 (M = 2.38) from PIC 1 (M = 1.68, Mean difference = -0.699, P-value = 0.004), at PIC 3 (M = 1.96) from DIC 2 (Mean difference = 0.412, P-value = 0.048) and at PIC 3 from PIC 1 (Mean difference = -0.286, P-value = 0.096). Multi-voiced statements are those which are employed to make readers accept authorial interpretations and to critically engage with alternative interpretations (Martin & White, 2005). The content of the online

course, the individualized online feedback, and the online assessment rubrics focused on the importance of the use of linguistic resources to make multi-voiced statements. Therefore, the reverse U-shaped increase of multi-voiced formulations from PIC 1, DIC 2 to PIC 3 seem to suggest that the teaching and learning methods employed in the online instruction may have impacted students' ability to recognize multiple literary interpretations. However, multi-voiced statements are divided into different categories. Therefore, it is important to report the results on the distributions of those categories in order to see whether there is a significant variation in the longitudinal corpus. Table 7 presents longitudinal distributions of multi-voiced statements in the corpora collected at three points. The results indicate a less significant increase in the use of dialogic contractions as seen at DIC 2 (M = 1.20) from PIC 1 (M = 0.95, Mean difference = -0.253, P-value = 0.208), at PIC 3 (M = 1.11) from DIC 2 (Mean difference = 0.082, P-value = 0.662) and at PIC 3 from PIC 1 (Mean difference = -0.162, P-Value = 0.333). Dialogic contractions include linguistic mechanisms by which writers/speakers use to contract dialogic space for alternative viewpoints and therefore to show confidence and authoritativeness in the construed meanings or interpretations (Lancaster, 2012). Example [13] and [14] illustrate this use.

[13]: **Although** higher-class female characters like Rahel, Ammu and Mammachi are physically healthy, they are **not** the decision-makers in the family or society [**Contract, disclaim: counter**] (PIC 3).

[14]: It is **obvious** that communal unrest arises from highlighting the differences between these two religious groups [**Contract, proclaim: concur**] (PIC 3).

Table 7.

Longitudinal Distributions of multi-voiced statements in the corpora

Multi-voiced statements	Mean per 100 words	Standard Deviation	Pairwise Comparison (Bold = statistically significant, P<0.05)
Contract	(PIC 1) M = 0.95	(PIC 1) SD = 0.81	PIC 1<DIC 2 MD = -0.253 P = 0.208 PIC 1<PIC 3 MD = -0.162 P = 0.333 DIC 2>PIC 3 MD = 0.082 P = 0.662
	(DIC 2) M = 1.20	(DIC 2) SD = 0.62	
	(PIC 3) M = 1.11	(PIC 3) SD = 0.34	
Expand	(PIC 1) M = 0.72	(PIC 1) SD = 0.44	PIC 1<DIC 2 MD = -0.442 P = 0.011 PIC 1<PIC 3 MD = -0.066 P = 0.544 DIC 2>PIC 3 MD = 0.375 P = 0.063
	(DIC 2) M = 1.16	(DIC 2) SD = 0.60	
	(PIC 3) M = 0.79	(PIC 3) SD = 0.45	

The less significant increase in the use of dialogic contractions seem to indicate that the teaching and learning methods employed in the online instruction may not have impacted students' abilities to construe evaluative meaning in a confident and authoritative manner.

The results also show a significant reverse-U shaped increase in the use of dialogic expansions as seen at DIC 2 (M = 1.16) from PIC 1 (M = 0.72, Mean difference = -0.441, P-value = 0.011), at PIC 3 (M = 0.79) from DIC 2 (Mean difference = 0.375, P-Value = 0.063) and at PIC 3 from PIC 1 (Mean difference = -0.066, P-value = 0.544). Dialogic expansions include linguistic

resources that writers/speakers use to expand dialogic space for alternative positions (Martin & White, 2005). In addition, dialogic expansions are linguistic mechanism by which speakers/writers avoid construing an empty or descriptive critical stance (Xie, 2016). In literary analysis, some dialogic expansions, such as entertainment options, are used to signal that the interpretation of the portrayal of characters or events in the literary work under analysis is one among multiple interpretations and, therefore to make allowance for those alternative interpretations (Bruce, 2016). In addition, Lancaster (2016) shows that entertainment options are found within the rhetorical strategies that Wilder (2012) calls "appearance/reality topoi". Wilder argues that this rhetorical strategy is employed to invoke the apparent meaning of the literary text under analysis before arguing for the real meaning. She also says that this rhetorical strategy is an important characteristic of the discourse practices of literary criticism because her analysis of students' successful assignments and published research papers reveals that appearance/reality topoi is the most frequently used rhetorical strategies in those texts. Example [15] illustrates this use.

[15]: Ramnik and Javed confess their actions, the hesitation of Javed and Ramnik **suggest** that each individual survives with a human identity that is beyond externally imposed communal identity [**Expand: entertain**] (PIC 3).

Therefore, the significant reverse-U shaped increase in the use of dialogic expansions probably suggest that the teaching and learning methods employed in the online instruction may have impacted students' ability to recognize alternative multiple interpretations in their literary analysis.

5. Conclusion

The analysis of variation in the distribution of critical stance patterns in the longitudinal corpus show the extent to which teaching and learning methods employed in the online instruction have impacted students' ability to construe a register-appropriate critical stance in their literary analysis. The results show a less significant increase in the use of attitude sub-categories of judgement and appreciation to evaluate the behaviors of characters and the strategies used by writers to convey a particular theme. Since the content of the online instruction, the individualized online feedback, and the assessment rubric emphasized on the importance of the use of linguistic resources of judgement and appreciation, it was expected a significant increase in the use of these resources. Therefore, it can be concluded that the teaching and learning methods employed in the online instruction may not have impacted students' ability to develop a more register-appropriate critical stance. The findings also show a significant reverse-U shaped decrease in the use of attitude sub-category of affect. Since the content of the online instruction and the individualized online feedback insisted on the use of impersonal style, it can be inferred that the teaching and learning methods may have affected students' ability to avoid expressing personal feelings in their literary analyses. Moreover, the findings show a significant decrease in the use of graduation sub-type of force, which includes linguistic mechanism by which writers/speakers make their construed evaluative meanings forceful and compelling (Xie, 2016). Since the individualized online feedback insisted on the need for students to tone down evaluative meanings in their literary analyses, the decrease in the use of graduation sub-type of force suggests that the individualized feedback have impacted students' ability to construe a more register-appropriate critical stance.

The findings also show a less significant decrease in the use of single-voiced statements and a significant reverse-U shaped increase in the use of multi-voiced formulations. Since the individualized online feedback insisted on the need for students to avoid making unwarranted interpretations, it may be concluded that the less significant decrease in the use of single-voiced

statements presumably suggest that the individualized feedback may not have affected students' abilities to develop an avoidance of making assertive interpretations. In addition, since the content of the online instruction, the individualized online feedback and online assessment rubrics focused on the linguistic resources that are employed to engage with alternative interpretations, the significant increase in the use of multi-voiced statements seems to suggest that the online instruction may have affected students' ability to make appropriate literary analyses.

In summary, the results paint the following picture of the impact of the online instruction on students' ability to construe a register-appropriate critical stance in their literary analysis. First, the individualized online feedback may have affected students' ability to avoid using features that are not valued in literary analyses, such as expressing personal feelings in the interpretation of literary work and making construed evaluative meanings forceful and compelling. Second, the content of the online instruction, the individualized online feedback, and the online assessment rubrics may not have impacted students' ability to construe critical stance in their literary analysis, for example, the use of attitude sub-categories of judgement and appreciation to construe a register-appropriate critical stance. Third, the teaching and learning methods employed in the online instruction may have impacted students' ability to engage with alternative interpretations. These results seem to suggest that the teaching and learning methods employed in the online instruction may have improved students' formal writing style, but they may not have developed students' ability to construe critical stance in their literary analyses. Two main factors may have contributed to these results. First, the online instruction did not include follow-up discussions. These follow-up discussions would have contributed to checking whether students had understood the content of the online course, the assessment rubric, and the individualized online feedback. In addition, the online instruction was detached from regular teaching of English literature. Embedding the online instruction into regular teaching of English literature would have helped students understand the ways in which a critical evaluation of the portrayal of characters and the techniques used by writers to articulate a particular theme is construed in literary analyses. Nevertheless, these results have far-reaching implications for the effectiveness of online instruction. This study shows that online instructions guided by the integration of a set of teaching and learning methods has an impact on students' writing style. It shows that self-regulated learning, individualized online feedback, and online assessment rubrics may affect students' ability to develop a formal style of academic writing. Therefore, future studies may explore the effectiveness of online instruction in the discourse conventions of a particular discipline by integrating others methods, such as the use of follow-up online discussions, the embedding of the online instruction into regular subject teaching, and peer feedback. They may also employ blended teaching and learning methods where offline classroom discussions are held and online feedback are given.

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