

INTRODUCTION

A student is doing practice teaching for his classmates, and has them do work in groups. After each group presents their work, he says, "You are very smart."

Giving feedback in the classroom is not intuitive, although it may seem so to those of us who have spent a long time in educational institutions. The undergraduate non-native speaker quoted above had the best of intentions, but his praise might be seen as patronizing, inappropriate, or just strange. To explain to this student exactly what was wrong with his praise, we need to take a closer look at what positive and negative feedback are and how they fit into the broader context of academic English.

It is easy to forget that even native speakers of English have to learn academic English as an additional language. This can be challenging, but it is also a large part of the student's success in a university. The more students move up through the ranks of academia, the more they need to be comfortable using academic English as a means of communication.

With an increasing focus on initiating novices into academic discourse, there is realization that there are still many things to be discovered about academic English. Researchers are looking more into different aspects of academic English, including the interpersonal aspects. Where to the uninitiated it may look as though written academic English is entirely impersonal, it has been found that writers are expressing opinions and politeness, and interacting in subtle ways with colleagues. It is vital to acquaint students with this aspect of academic English. Not only could they cause offense by not being familiar with it, but it is possible that they will miss key points when reading research.

Delving more deeply into the characteristics of academic English, therefore, can have real benefits for students and instructors.

Written academic English has occupied a “special place” in academia (Lindemann and Mauranen 2001: 459). The reasons for this are fairly obvious. Decisions on grading, hiring, tenure, and the conferring of degrees are made on the basis of the written word. In addition, materials written by instructors and students are more readily available. Now, however, the development of several corpora recorded on college campuses has made it more feasible to study spoken academic English. Studies done using the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE) from the US (Simpson et. al. 2002) , and the British Academic Spoken English (BASE) corpus from Britain have considerably added to the general study of academic discourse.¹

At this point we still do not have a clear picture of the characteristics of academic spoken discourse. Swales (2001) has set as one of the main objectives of research the question of whether spoken academic discourse resembles more closely ordinary conversation² or written academic discourse. In answering this question, it has become clear that there are a large number of variables that might have an effect on academic spoken English. Academic spoken discourse can be defined very broadly. MICASE defines it as any speech that takes place on an academic campus, not including speech that would be the same if it occurred in a different setting (Simpson et. al. 2002). T2K SWAL also includes a number of different kinds of speech, excluding only what is not “university

¹ The TOEFL 2000 Spoken and Written Academic Language (T2K SWAL) Corpus has also been used, but is not available to the public and was not used for this project.

² This term is used by Drew and Heritage (1992), to mean speech outside of the category of institutional discourse.

specific” (Biber et al. 2006a: 23). It might be expected that a speech event which had not been prepared beforehand, such as a discussion contribution, might be more like ordinary speech. A prepared lecture, on the other hand, might resemble written academic English more closely. The amount of information to be conveyed might also influence this characteristic. Disciplinary area has been observed to correlate with some variations in academic spoken English, with more hedging and pause fillers being used in the humanities (Poos & Simpson 2002, Schachter et. al. 1991, 1994). More research is needed on this point to bring a clearer picture of the nature of academic spoken English.

Another aspect which has been studied in depth is the ways in which academic spoken English is used to support novices (Rudolph 1994; Swales 2001; Mauranen 2003, 2002b; Fortanet 2004). This differs from the usual image of academic discourse. The ideas of Elbow (1991) are still popular enough to be available on the Internet in animated form and may be familiar to teachers of English for academic purposes. Elbow uses a definition of “academic discourse” that includes only the written form (as was common in 1991). He expresses several ideas that later found more support through such things as corpus studies of academic discourse (such as the fact that it actually includes many diverse types, and that it differs according to discipline). The point that may have been more salient to teachers, however, was his opinion of the message sent by the use of written academic discourse: “We don’t want to talk to you or hear from you unless you use our language” (p.147). This may to some extent be true of written discourse, but spoken academic discourse in the classroom does not seem to be sending this message (Rudolph 1994, Swales 2001, Poos and Simpson 2002, Swales and Burke 2003, Fortanet 2004, Mauranen 2002b, 2003). Although in the popular imagination academic English is used to

confuse and alienate those outside the ivory tower, in reality the spoken form is often used to show solidarity with students or to help them understand difficult concepts.

This study looks at the supportive nature of academic spoken English, and also explores the relationship between academic spoken discourse, academic written discourse, and conversation, by examining praise and criticism in the classroom. Although not found in all types of academic discourse, feedback is a basic part of instructor-student interaction, and has been found in classroom speech at all disciplines and levels. It also is given great import by the students themselves (Murray & Renaud 1995) who may not be familiar with all aspects of academic discourse but understand the effect that praise has on their motivation. Many teachers probably give feedback without thinking very much about it, but the ability to do this effectively does not come automatically to everyone. The impetus for this study grew from the researcher's non-native-speaking trainee teachers, who needed explicit instructions on how to praise students in English. An exhaustive search revealed that, although praise has been studied from a pedagogical point of view, there were few if any studies of praise from the perspective of pragmatics. From there it was expanded to look at negative feedback as well. This study will look at the use and structure of praise as a speech act. Drawing on previous studies of academic spoken English, it will examine praise in light of ordinary conversation and written academic English. Since differences in discipline seem to be a factor sometimes in academic discourse, it will look at these as well. It will then examine negative feedback as part of the discourse of the interactive classroom

1.1 OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION

Chapter 2 of the dissertation describes the research background for the project. It presents a rationale for using corpora and gives a description of the corpora used. It also explains how praise was identified and tagged, and discusses the difficulties in identifying criticism. The third chapter reviews the literature used in the thesis. Since the use of a corpus situates the research within academic spoken English, the review starts with an overview of academic English, and the main foci of research for academic spoken English. This includes an examination of the Initiation Response Follow-up (IRF) pattern, since it is largely in this type of classroom exchange that feedback is given. It then reviews the literature on compliments, institutional speech, academic written English, and disciplinary differences. Finally it deals with repair, disagreement and criticism, and issues of face that may play a large part in the realization of negative feedback.

The first aspect to be examined is the comparison of academic spoken English with ordinary conversation. In the case of praise, this involves exploring similarities and differences that exist with the speech act of compliments, which have been extensively researched. Compliments share an evaluative aspect with praise, although they differ in other respects. Previous research has made clear that one of the key characteristics of compliments is their quality of being limited syntactically and semantically, and has postulated reasons why they might be so limited: because compliments are used for solidarity and their formulaic nature helps to avoid the threat of creating distance (Knapp, Hopper & Bell 1984, Manes & Wolfson 1981, Manes 1983, Wolfson 1983, 1984). This project examines praise for the same characteristics, and shows how they might differ in light of how the use of praise differs from that of compliments. As with other studies (Hartford & Bardovi-Harlig 1992, Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford 1993, Thonus 1999) it was

found that the institutional agenda of the classroom contributed to the difference between academic spoken English and ordinary conversation.

Secondly, a comparison between spoken and written academic English was made. Here the written equivalent of praise was less clear-cut. In written academic discourse positive evaluation is possible in several different contexts, but it seems to be more limited in spoken academic English. Although praise between academic peers is theoretically possible, examples were not found in the spoken corpora. Situations in which praise might be expected to be given to peers, such as professional presentations, do not occur in either of the spoken corpora used. Peer to peer praise was not found also in student interactions such as meetings, possibly due to status factors. However, evaluation of professional peers is common in such written contexts as book reviews, and these have been studied (Hyland 2000). In addition to this, three other studies were selected for comparison, two of which consider peer to peer praise in very different contexts: students' evaluations of their classmates' essays (Johnson 1992) and peer comments made on research articles prior to publication (Fortanet 2008). The last of the four surveys evaluative comments by teachers on students' papers (Hyland & Hyland 2001). This is probably the form of evaluative language in written academic discourse which is most comparable to spoken classroom praise, because it is given by an instructor to a student, on the subject of the student's performance. However, the addition of the other three studies makes it possible to examine more closely the role of status in praise.

The third project compares praise use across disciplinary boundaries. Disciplinary differences have been shown to have an effect on the comparison among academic spoken English, ordinary conversation, and academic written English. Comprehending such

differences seems to be an important part of identifying the characteristics of academic spoken English. In addition to studies which use corpora, a typology created by Biglan (1973a, 1973b) and Becher (1994) has been widely used to compare disciplines. It has been shown that the disciplines differ in terms of the language used, as well as by commonly used classroom activities and goals for study. The current study will attempt to show what, if any, influence these differences have on praise in the classroom.

Finally, attention was turned to criticism in the classroom. Although this has been examined as part of a general study of feedback in written academic English (Hyland 2000), studies of negative oral feedback have largely concentrated on primary and secondary classrooms (Edwards & Mercer 1987) or on language learning classrooms (Kasper 1985, Lyster & Ranta 1997, Cullen 2002, Waring 2002, Lee 2007). While these have added much to our understanding of feedback as a whole, the type of negative feedback being given to an ESL learner who makes a linguistic mistake can be expected to be quite different from that of an undergraduate student who answers a question incorrectly or makes an off-topic contribution to a discussion and needs to be redirected. Therefore, types of negative feedback are still an open context for study. It was found that criticism is much less obvious than praise for various reasons, and so this section uses a more discourse-focused analysis to take a close look at ways instructors might be giving negative feedback.

Although this project was initially undertaken with non-native-speaking trainee teachers in mind, an examination of feedback might be helpful to many teachers and students. It seems curious that something that is such a key point in what teachers do in the classroom has received so little attention thus far. Although this study looks at how praise

and criticism are realized and the actual semantic and syntactic forms that are used in different contexts, it also raises other questions about feedback: how can we make it more clear, motivating, or sensitive? What type do students prefer? How do they understand it? It is hoped that this study will form a base for a discussion of these issues, and also yield new insights into academic spoken English and interaction in the classroom.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Evaluation of students is a key part of the instructor's job. Indeed, as what Mehan called a "distinguishing feature of classroom conversation," evaluation may define the role of the teacher (1979: 194). While others may give instruction as part of their professional duties—doctors, personal trainers, flight attendants—teachers are those who have to constantly assess performance, with attendant interpersonal and pedagogical concerns.

Evaluation of students by teachers has been addressed in the scholarly literature, but there are two aspects which deserve further attention. The first is on the pragmatics of classroom evaluation. Although there have been many studies of the pedagogical aspect of giving feedback, or giving feedback as a part of classroom discourse (for example, van Lier 1996, Lyster & Ranta 1997, Wells 1993, Cazden 2001, Clifton 2006, Barnes 2008, Wright 2005, Walsh 2006, Ellis 2009), less attention has been paid to the interpersonal concerns. Notable exceptions are Hyland and Hyland (2001, 2006) which will be considered in more detail in Chapters 5 and 7. There have also been a few studies that focus on pragmatics as part of a general pedagogical focus, which show that pragmatic considerations are an essential part of the pedagogical efficacy of feedback. Baker and Hansen-Bricker (2009) for example, have examined how well students understand written feedback when, as often happens, it is hedged. An understanding of what is happening pragmatically in classroom feedback can provide new insight into its use as a tool of learning.

The second aspect of evaluation that may need more study is its place in a non-ESOL, post-secondary context. While evaluation, mostly as the third turn in an Initiation-

Response-Follow up (IRF) exchange pattern (Sinclair & Coulthard 1975) has been examined in English as a second or foreign language classroom, or in elementary and secondary classrooms, not so much has been done on the tertiary level. Walsh (2006) has suggested that his Self-Evaluation of Teacher Talk framework, developed to describe second or foreign language classrooms might work at the level of college and above, although he does not develop this idea extensively. The relative lack of research in the tertiary context is perhaps attributable to the belief that feedback does not occupy an important place in such classrooms, or that it does not differ enough from the other contexts to be worthy of particular study. It may also be true that in language classrooms as well as pre-tertiary classrooms, participation and socialization respectively are a more crucial element of the pedagogical process. In language classrooms instructor feedback can take many different forms as there are several aspects of student speech to be evaluated, while the instructor simultaneously attempts to create an atmosphere where students feel free to talk. In elementary and secondary classroom, teachers have more classroom management issues. Elementary and secondary schools can be easier to research also because teacher-student discourse tends to conform fairly strictly to the IRF pattern (van Lier 1996), whereas this is less frequent in tertiary classrooms. However, examining evaluation at the college, university, and graduate school level adds a new dimension to the study of academic discourse and may add to understanding of best practices in that context.

These two aspects, pragmatics and the tertiary classroom, when examined together constitute a fruitful site for exploration. University students, who are usually adults, may have more complex face wants than children do—they may feel more need to present themselves as competent students or thinkers. They may have differing face wants

in interaction with instructors and with their peers. The status difference between them and the instructors may not be as large, which may be a complicating factor in the instructor's giving feedback. In addition, younger university students are being socialized into the academic world, and because of this the issue of evaluation becomes pertinent not only as part of the pedagogy of the classroom but also because in being evaluated students are also learning to evaluate, a difficult and problematic aspect of academic thought. Tracy (1997) brings up a key issue. "Intellectual discussion requires disagreement and criticism; discussion is not intellectual without these features. Yet at the same time, criticism of an idea carries a potential to destroy the discussion by wounding the person who offered the idea" (p.110). Tracy is referring specifically to a colloquium of faculty and graduate students, but evaluation, both positive and negative, is an essential part of academic discourse at all levels. It may be problematic at any of these levels because of the fact that the pedagogical or institutional goals compete against face goals. Tracy is considering only negative evaluation in this case, but positive evaluation has its challenges and face threats as well. Tannen's discussion of "agonism," the word she gives to "ritualized adversaritiveness" in academic discourse (2002:1652) might at least partially answer the question of why students need to learn to evaluate. She points out that, while necessary, agonism can be detrimental to intellectual work: it may cause academics to focus on fault-finding rather than understanding, and it can intimidate people away from intellectual work who are not suited to this type of discourse. She also mentions that, although criticism in academic discourse is supposed to be objective, it can be very personal, hostile, and sarcastic. This can be compared with the findings of Mauranen (2002b) in a study of undergraduate and graduate level classes: that assessment in academic discourse is overwhelmingly positive. Mauranen found very few negative adjectives used in any context (not just in evaluating student work) and raises the question of how students are

learning to evaluate. It seems that undergraduate and graduate students are hearing evaluation that tends to be positive, while those of them that go on to academic careers will be expected to give negative criticism in a collegial, constructive manner. The fact that students are not being provided with models of negative criticism may in fact lead to the phenomenon of established academics giving criticism in a way that is less than optimal.

This would suggest that instructors at the tertiary level need to pay attention to the feedback that they are giving, perhaps as much as ESOL or K-12 instructors do. To begin doing this, and perhaps to build an idea of what sort of evaluation tertiary-level instructors should be giving in order to teach students this skill, it is necessary to first examine what sort of evaluation is happening in the classroom now. Although assessment in general has been examined in academic contexts, a closer look needs to be taken at the classroom, to see how students' answers and discussion contributions are actually being evaluated by the instructor as they happen.

2.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In planning the research questions, the research agenda made by Swales (2001) was consulted. Swales lists several questions that he hopes MICASE can answer:

- Which register does academic speech resemble more, ordinary conversation or written academic prose?
- How does students' use of academic speech change as they move through the ranks of academia?
- What, if any, gender differences are present?
- What are the relative effects of genre and discipline?

- What more can we learn about different genres that frequently occur in the corpus?
- What are differences and similarities between British and American academic speech? (2001: 37)

Several of these are very difficult to study with the BASE corpus. It does not contain an even number of men and women, for example, so it would be difficult to study gender differences. Since it, unlike MICASE, has no data on academic rank, it is also not possible to study how individuals develop academic speech. The current research only deals with one genre, seminars, and the number of examples of these in the American (MICASE) and British (BASE) corpora are not comparable, so it would be difficult to examine these also. However, the current research will attempt to discuss the first question, on register, in depth. It is hoped through this to add to the understanding of the characteristics of the academic discussion genre.

One of the main concerns of the study of spoken academic English is to compare it with both ordinary conversation and written academic English. To explore this question with respect to praise, samples from the corpora were compared to compliments in ordinary conversation and praise in written academic English. The research questions which will be explored are as follows:

- How does praise compare syntactically and semantically with compliments in ordinary conversation? Specifically, does it show the same limited range of semantics and syntax that Manes and Wolfson (1981) found?
- How is the discourse function of praise different from that of compliments?
- How does spoken praise compare syntactically and semantically with written academic praise?

- Written academic discourse has been shown to have more variation (Dudley-Evans & Johns 1981, Swales 2001, Lindemann & Mauranen 2001) than spoken academic discourse in general. Is the same true with respect to praise?

In addition to these, it has been shown that the question of spoken academic discourse in comparison with everyday conversation and written academic discourse is sometimes complicated by disciplinary differences, which affects the number of words used in both spoken and written discourse, and the amount of variation in the language. Therefore, two further research questions were formed:

- Does the disciplinary area of the class in which praise is given affect the actual number of words used in praising?
- Does disciplinary area correlate with variation in praise?

Regarding criticism, as Mauranen (2002b, 2003) has pointed out, evaluative speech in academic discourse tends to be positive, with negative evaluation strongly hedged. This raises the question of what is happening in classrooms when a student gives an answer that is incorrect or inappropriate to the discussion. An examination of the literature on the Initiation Response Feedback exchange reveals that such exchanges, or the Feedback move of the exchange, have been categorized according to pedagogical goal (van Lier 1996, Cullen 2002, Wright 2005), and according to type of elicitation (Mehan 1979a). It was felt that pedagogical focus might lead to differing forms of negative feedback being used. From this, the final research questions were formulated:

- How do teachers indicate that a student's answer is, for whatever reason, not adequate?

- Does this negative feedback differ according to the IRF orientation and pedagogical goal?

2.2 RESEARCH METHOD

As will be shown below, praise and criticism, while they may seem to be two sides of the same coin, are realized in quite different ways. When the subject was explored with some depth, it was found that different approaches had to be taken to the study of praise and criticism as well. Praise being relatively easily identifiable, almost all examples could be found by such methods as searching for positive adjectives in instructor speech. However, criticism of a student containing a negative adjective was extremely rare, and criticism containing the word “no” was almost as seldom found. Therefore, it was difficult to identify individual words or phrases that could be searched in a corpus or counted, which meant that praise and criticism had to be examined through different methods. Although praise is examined through approaches such as word counts, criticism is shown through a more discourse-analytical approach. Even identifying feedback that is negative proved problematic, as will be explored below.

2.2.1 Using naturally-occurring sources of data

It was decided that the best way of researching spoken feedback was to use naturally-occurring data. There are many other ways of investigating speech-act data (cf. Beebe & Takahashi 1989; Beebe, Takahashi & Uliss-Weitz 1990). In one type of study, a speech act is elicited through some means, frequently a discourse completion task (DCT), and then either compared with some other set of DCT data (for example, that of native or non-native speakers) or analyzed on its own. This approach was rejected for several reasons.

One of the aims of this research is to investigate the way in which instructors use feedback spontaneously as a response to events that are unfolding in real time in the classroom. Therefore, providing them with an isolated hypothetical situation, as might be done in a DCT, would not be a valid research approach. Among other reasons, instructors might not all think the same things are worthy of praise or criticism, so it would be virtually impossible to invent a context which would be interpreted in an adequately similar way by all participants. In addition, since there is very little literature on the subject, we could not be confident that an invented situation would reflect the way feedback is actually used. It could have been feasible to ask instructors about situations in which they use praise, but problems with memory and related issues meant that it was likely that this would not yield data as useful as might be obtained naturally. Using naturally-occurring data meant that the research was able to investigate what people actually say, rather than what they think they would say in a given situation (Cohen 1996, p. 391).

The decision was made to use one or more corpora now available of academic spoken English. Using a corpus carries with it several advantages besides being able to avoid the problems of the DCT. In addition to reducing researcher bias and being easy to combine with other methods (Baker 2006), it obviates the necessity to collect a large amount of data. Given the fact that a very small amount of classroom talk is devoted to praise, and probably less to criticism, it is very important to get a large sample of such talk, probably more than could be transcribed by a single researcher.

One rather large disadvantage of using a corpus is that the participants are anonymous and therefore not available to the researcher for interviews or further information. Interviewing an instructor after a class to find his or her policy for giving

feedback to students, or asking students which sorts of feedback they find most encouraging or useful, would be very interesting but is impossible here. There was also a further problem with regard to praise: there are parts of the transcript in which it is not possible to say definitely whether a certain statement which semantically or syntactically resembles praise was actually intended as praise. This point will be explained in greater detail later in this chapter. This is also related to the other disadvantage of a transcribed corpus: in many cases only the written word is available, and it is not possible to see facial expression, or hear tone or intonation, which would have clarified this question considerably.

The praise research was initially started with the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE) (Poos & Simpson 2002). When this was found not to contain enough praise data, the British Academic Spoken English (BASE) corpus was also used. It was thought that there might be some significant differences between British and American styles of praise, although the paucity of praise in MICASE would make this impossible to fully investigate. For this reason, BASE alone provides the data for the three research projects which deal with praise, although MICASE was used for some specific supporting examples and background information. When the research turned to criticism, different issues became important. It was found that a study of negative feedback needs a corpus which is very carefully transcribed. If all of the student responses, however brief, are not transcribed, the researcher will miss examples of uptake, for example. This is more true of MICASE than of BASE, so MICASE was used for that study. The smaller size of MICASE was also appropriate for the closer reading needed in the criticism project.

2.2.2 Using corpora to examine speech acts: General methodological issues

Pragmatic studies using corpora have been limited, which has been attributed to the fact that speech functions cannot be easily searched on a computer as is done in many corpus linguistics studies (Jucker, Schreier & Hundt 2008: 4). The past few years, however, have seen an increase in the use of corpora to study pragmatic and discourse features, although the challenge remains to find search terms which will yield useful data (Ädel & Reppen 2008). Another fundamental problem is that corpus analysis is intended to look broadly at a text, not make a close reading as may be necessary for a study of pragmatics (Baker 2006). Such methods as combining a search with Conversation Analysis techniques (eg. Walsh, O’Keefe & McCarthy 2008) or with discourse analysis (Bondi 2008) have been used to explore various pragmatic issues. In some cases, however, it is impossible to select a word or words to search in a corpus. When examining praise, one of the main research questions was to see which words are most likely to occur, so searches of individual words would not be suitable. For this, the example of a corpus-based diachronic study on speech acts was used, since there were similar methodological issues. For the three projects on praise, a variation on genre-based bottom-up methodology was used (Kohnen 2008). In this type of study, a genre which seems likely to yield many examples of the speech act under investigation is selected. Discussion sections were chosen for the study of praise after a survey of different types of speech events in MICASE. The analysis then proceeds “by hand,” and all of the relevant parts of the corpus are read (p.296). In Kohnen’s description of this type of research, the next step is to expand the initial analysis into different genres. This would be necessary in the diachronic study which he undertakes, but for the purposes of this research the findings were compared with other research on different genres.

Thus, the transcripts of the discussion sections were all read, with particular attention paid to instructor responses to student answers. . A search of the words “good” and “right,” the most common words used in praising, was done to be reasonably sure that all examples had been collected. The instances of praise were then categorized and analyzed.

The study of criticism required a different approach. For this chapter it was soon found lists of words and their frequencies would not shed any light on the main research question of how instructors indicate to students that their responses are wanting. Criticism or negative feedback proved to be much harder to identify in the transcripts than praise. Hunston (2010) has pointed out the consensus among researchers that evaluation in general is “both contextual and cumulative” (p. 12). This seems to be the case for negative evaluation by instructors in the classroom, where the actual words used to criticize are difficult to distinguish from the co-text. For reasons which will be explored in depth in Chapter 7, negative feedback is rarely given as openly as praise, and is sometimes disguised so well as to be almost unrecognizable. Also, as Swales (2001) has pointed out, corpus study is not “conducive to attending what is not there” (p.52). Overt expressions of dissatisfaction with the students’ performance are extremely rare. The word “no” is occasionally used, but very few examples of negative adjectives directed toward students or their work were found. Even in cases in which some critical comment about student behavior is given relatively directly, the criticism cannot be condensed into a single word. From this it could be seen that searches for adjectives or other negative words in a corpus would yield very few, if any, critical examples.

Therefore in this section, discourse analysis techniques were preferred, with reference to previous work on the organization of classroom discourse, particularly the Initiation-Response-Feedback exchange. Reference was also made to work on face concerns, particularly face concerns in the academy.

2.2.3 MICASE and BASE

MICASE is a two-million word corpus compiled at the University of Michigan, transcribed, and available on the Internet at <http://lsa.umich.edu/eli/micase/index.htm>. MICASE comprises transcriptions of many different types of speech events. The compilers take a very broad definition of an academic speech event, defining it as all speech events that happen on the campus except those, such as ordering food, that would be the same if they were to take place outside of the campus. In addition to lectures, seminars, and colloquia, it also includes committee meetings, dissertation defenses, and service encounters. This diversity actually makes the amount of usable data for this research much smaller, since some types of speech event, like a service encounter, might be expected not to contain any feedback. Initially, one transcript from each type of speech event was surveyed to find out which types contained the most praise. It was found that praise was most frequent in discussion sections. Many of the speech events on MICASE—meetings, dissertation defenses, and colloquia, for example—contained no praise at all in the transcript sampled. However, MICASE only contains ten discussion sections, and of these three contained no praise, generally because they consisted only of instructor speech. Although some of the remaining transcripts did have quite a bit of praise, it was not sufficient for the type of research which the praise data suggested. For the projects involving praise, the aim was to use frequency counts to get an idea of the words used in praise and make comparisons. It was felt that MICASE did not contain enough praise for

this. However, with the study of negative feedback, different methods were used in which it was not so necessary to find as many samples, but a transcript which included all student responses, however brief, was more crucial. MICASE was thus the more suitable corpus for studying criticism.

For the study of praise, the BASE corpus was used. BASE was compiled at the Universities of Reading and Warwick and available at <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/research/collect/base/>. BASE is smaller than MICASE, with only 1.6 million tokens, but contains 160 lectures and 40 seminars³ and thus has much more usable data. BASE, however, did have a few significant disadvantages. One is that not as much information is available on the participants. MICASE has information on each person's gender, age range, academic rank, and native speaker status. BASE only includes information on the gender of participants, and in fact does not identify instructors—participants are designated either students or non-students. For a more thorough look at the role of status in praise-giving, information on age and rank would have been helpful. Another problem is that the quality of transcription seems to vary. In some cases, it is evident that every utterance, including backchannels, was transcribed, but in some it is clear from context that some utterance is missing from the transcription, although this is not indicated. In addition, speakers in MICASE were divided equally in terms of gender. No mention of this is made for BASE, and it does not seem to be the case.

³ MICASE distinguishes between “discussion sections” (undergraduate classes) and “seminars” (generally, graduate classes). BASE has only a “seminar” category, which includes both undergraduate and graduate classes.

Having identified two corpora which would be most appropriate for a study of feedback, definitions of praise and criticism which would allow for it to be identified in the corpus were attempted.

2.2.4 Praise: A working definition

The word “praise” is rarely distinguished from “compliment” in pragmatics literature. However, in ordinary conversation the word “praise” usually carries a slightly different connotation. “Praise” differs from “compliments” usually in that it is used to mean a positive statement given to a student, a child, or a pet for the purpose of teaching appropriate behavior. The word “praise,” therefore seems to carry connotations of status or a didactic purpose.

The literature on praise seems to support this. Brophy (1981) conducted a survey of several studies having to do with praise as it is given by teachers of primary and secondary school children. He defined praise as “to commend the work of or to express approval or admiration[. . .] [P]raise statements express positive teacher affect (surprise, delight, excitement) and/or place the students’ behavior in context by giving information about it value or its implications about the student’s status” (p.5-6). He also points out that praise and criticism are “specific teacher responses to student behavior” and not the teacher’s generally positive or negative feelings about the student (p.6). It is significant that praise is connected to the recipient’s behavior and not just to general qualities (as a compliment might be). He notes that praise implies a difference in status, and that some teachers do not like to use it for this reason.

Junevelt and Tulviste (1997) in a study of praise in interactions between mothers and children from America, Estonia and Sweden, define praise rather tautologically as: “an utterance containing laudatory terms such as ‘good,’ ‘good job,’ ‘that is not bad,’ and so forth.” Moreover, they mention that the praise must have a verbal element; smiling, for example, was not counted in their research (p.27). Although they do not specifically include this element in their definition, Junevelt and Tulviste were specifically looking for performance-directed praise, by recording mothers and children once when they were doing a puzzle activity and once when they were eating. Junevelt and Tulviste found that American mothers tend to praise more throughout the two activities, which they felt supported their thesis that American mothers are more concerned with socializing their children. This reinforces the idea that praise can be given for the purpose of training.

The literature on compliments also deals with the question of status. Manes (1983) delineated the topics of compliments: appearance, possessions, and things that stem from the hearer’s skill or effort. Wolfson (1983) finds that status is a factor in compliments on skill or effort. These compliments tend to be given by people of higher status to people of lower status, but not vice versa or to people of the same status. In the other two categories, appearance and possessions, status was not a factor. Since praise has a didactic component, praise and performance-related compliments may not be the same thing. However, it may be that people tend not to give performance-related compliments to those of higher status because performance-related compliments resemble praise, and praise is connected to status.

Hyland (2000) in his study of evaluative language in published book reviews, characterizes praise, following Holmes (1988b) as “an act which attributes credit to

another for some characteristic, attribute, skill, etc., which is positively valued by the writer” (p. 44). Hyland’s definition here contains no reference to status differences, although elsewhere he writes that “conveying praise implies an authority to appraise and make public one’s judgments” (p. 45).

In this research, it was decided to only count as praise utterances which occupied the third turn in the discourse. That is, in an Initiation-Response-Feedback pattern, the third turn consists of feedback (Sinclair & Coulthard 1975; Mehan 1979 calls this turn “evaluation.”) This was done to avoid confusion with agreement, as described below. The third turn in academic spoken English has been the focus of some interest, since it is a key place for various functions—not only praise but also expanding or clarifying a student’s answer, or various classroom management functions. Lee (2007) examines the contingencies around the teacher’s third turn which of course is contingent upon the student’s answer. He points out many functions of a third turn, including evaluating and simultaneously questioning further (also discussed in van Lier 1988), for classroom management, or to make a language point. He makes the point that the third turn does not have a single purpose. Therefore, caution had to be used when determining whether the third turn was praise, or even if it constituted evaluation at all.

From these studies it is possible to extract three important elements of praise that can be used as a working definition for this research:

- Praise is a positive statement given on the topic of performance, effort, or skill, and the results thereof, not on such things as appearance.
- It may carry implications of status, as it tends to be given by higher status people to those of lower status

- It is usually carried out, at least ostensibly, for the purpose of teaching or training.

This allows the identification of praise, and its investigation in the context of academic spoken discourse.

2.2.5 Collecting and Identifying Praise

To begin, the transcript was examined for instances of students' making some sort of contribution to the class—answering a question, adding to a discussion, making a presentation, etc. Then, the way that the contribution was acknowledged, by either the instructor or a fellow student, was marked if it had a positive word such as “good” “right” or “excellent.” If the statement had no positive word but could have been interpreted in the context to be positive (e.g. “you’ve got it”) it was also marked. At this stage, instances in which an instructor repeated the student’s answer were also marked, since it was felt this could constitute an acknowledgement that the student’s contribution was correct. At a later stage, it was felt that this did not add anything to an understanding of the semantics and syntax of praise, so these examples were not included in the final analysis. After this, a search was done for the terms “good” and “right.” Then, as the research progressed this way of discerning praise was refined, because in some cases it was difficult to tell whether the instructor’s intention was to praise the student. These are discussed below.

Positive evaluations were only counted as praise if they were addressed to someone within the speaker’s hearing. Thus, an utterance such as the following is not counted as praise, since the author of the book in question is not within earshot:

nm5000: oh well Selvon he's someone er who er h-, er
who who amazes me er so few people really celebrate

him i mean which Selvon did you read The Lonely
Londoners fantastic book (**ah001**)

Praise was usually addressed to the student or group of students who had performed well, but sometimes positive assessments were addressed to a third party or to the class at large and these were included in the definition of praise.

Even if praise is able to be satisfactorily defined, it is still harder to delineate a single unit of praise. For the purpose of calculating the total amount of praise in the corpus, the entire semantic unit containing the praise was counted. For example, in this excerpt:

mm-hmm it's good it's good it's a good it's a good
it's a good poetic the wider though the public
though is the reason that i that i i give you and
the writers that you're working with give you
particular exercises which are restrictive is that
is to help teach you and develop a facility that's
that's the important thing a facility so that you
can actually fulfil that poetic of of yours
(ah004)[emphasis added]

“[M]mm-hmm it’s good it’s good it’s a good it’s a good it’s a good poetic” was all part of the total count of praise, although these were not counted as five separate uses of “good” when doing the semantic analysis. Where it was not clear where the praise ended and another subject began, the decision was made to err on the side of caution and not count the unclear parts as praise. Since calculating the total percentage of the corpus taken up by praise is designed to give a very rough idea of the amount of time a university instructor spends praising his students, this seems to be the logical method of determining a percentage.

When doing the semantic analysis, a slightly different way of counting was employed. For the semantic analysis, the word carrying the positive semantic load of the utterance was determined, and the frequency of each such word was counted. In the example above, it seems clear that the instructor did not intend to praise the student five separate times. Therefore, it seems wrong to count this word as if the instructor had chosen it five times over other possible words. The above example, however, is the only case in which counting the positive words is problematic.

2.2.5.1 Praise and agreement

Praise sometimes resembles agreement, but differs from it in that agreement does not have a didactic purpose. Hyland (2000) mentions that praise in written evaluations, “suggests a more intense or detailed response than simple agreement” (p. 44). Since they are at times equivalent semantically (e.g. “that’s right” could be either), praise was limited to an utterance that occurred in the feedback slot of an Initiation-Response-Feedback pattern (Sinclair & Coulthard 1975). That is, only an evaluation of a student’s response to a question or topic that had been proposed by the instructor was counted as praise. The question or discussion topic did not have to have been raised immediately before the student’s response; in some cases a discussion was set by the instructor at the beginning of class, and responses were praised throughout the class. However, this restriction on the meaning of praise meant that exchanges taking the form of this (hypothetical) example were not counted as praise:

Student: Today’s the tenth?

Teacher: That’s right.

This seems reasonable, since the utterance is not intended to encourage the student or demonstrate desirable behavior to other students. Likewise, the pattern: “I (completely) agree” when used to acknowledge a student’s response to an instructor-generated discussion topic was counted as praise, but when used in response to a topic that the student generated it was counted as simply agreement. For example in the excerpt below:

sf5286: because do we not do this anyway in sort
of a in an informal way you say like in this one
you've done this good and that bad over all the
consultations

nm5285: yeah you do yeah you do absolutely yeah
no you do and i i i mentioned that in a bit i
mentioned the fact that it's formalising what
you're already doing there's no this is i don't
think this is a change to what you're doing

(1s010)

The student sf5286 is asking the instructor nm5285 for clarification about new teaching duties. In the instructor’s response “yeah [. . .]absolutely” is used. In many places in BASE these words are used to respond to a student’s correct answer or desirable contribution to a discussion. However, in this case the student has generated the question and so it is counted as agreement, and not praise.

2.2.5.2 “Thank you”

“Thank you” and its variations were not counted as praise. It is used several times after presentations, but since it does not specifically offer positive evaluation it was not thought

to be praise. The instructors seem to share this feeling, since at times they specifically offer praise after having thanked the student(s):

OK well done thank you the pre-operative assessment
that was excellent the pre-operative assessment . . .

Well thanks very much guys that was an excellent
presentation well done . . . [both **1s004**]

2.2.5.3 “Okay” “Right,” and “Yeah”

The words “okay” “right” and “yeah” were problematic in the transcripts because they can serve a purpose besides praising a student. Sinclair and Coulthard mention these (along with “well” “good” and “now”) as being used as a frame which indicates a boundary between two activities (1992). Farr (2002) in her study of engaged listenership in student-tutor meetings, dealt with extended turns—that is, turns longer than a back-channel (or minimal response token). She found that “yeah” serves an “I am listening” function, as opposed to “yes” which indicates strong approval or agreement. “Right” and “okay” have been identified as discourse markers (eg., Mauranen 2002a). It is at times clear from the context that “right” or “okay” are not intended as praise in a certain utterance. In MICASE, for example, “okay” even precedes the instructor’s acknowledgement of an incorrect answer:

S1: anybody know what Orion is hunting?

S2: a bear?

S1: kay [sic] not hunting a bear [**S2:** dang] no good
good guess uh, (**MICASE, Astronomy**)

It is at times impossible to identify whether the word is intended as a discourse marker or as praise. Although attempts have been made to define precisely what constitutes a discourse marker, they are not useful in this context. Fuller (2003) believes that a discourse marker can be identified by the fact that discourse markers do not affect the semantic relations between the words in the sentence, and that the syntax will not change if the discourse marker is omitted. However, in the case of an interjection such as, “right,” the same things are true of praise. Therefore, the decision was made not to count “okay” or “yeah” as praise.

The word “right” is more problematic. Although this is frequently used to acknowledge a correct answer—it is, in fact, the most common way—it can also be used as a pause filler, particularly in the British corpus as opposed to the American one:

nm5361: [. . .]i've expanded them in size enough to
be readable **right** er and i said that this time i'd do
the two-thousand-two paper last year's paper and i
suggested some selected questions one four and six in
the email which you may or may have not got **right** er
so let's have a go the first question who has tried
which questions who tried question one who tried
question four and who tried question six **right** so one
four and some watchers of the performance it's not a
very valuable experience better than nothing maybe
right (ps005) [emphasis added]

There are many places in the text where the instructor seems to be marking a change of subject, rather than evaluating a student’s answer:

sf5329: i was zero so

sf5337: i think we were in the right order

sf5329: they're in order i think he ordered up them but we
were kind of stuck

nm5326: so **right** okay so a few of you were in the right order
okay Charles

Karen do you want to rejoin them

sf5337: he was probably looking for er [ps003]

And there are places where it is not clear what is intended:

sm5369: so it's two-hundred metres

nm5361: its two-hundred metres **right** twenty bars quite heavy
stuff **right** er which you probably wouldn't want when its
flowing you don't get that because much of the head is used up
in overcoming the friction in the pipe [ps005]

Therefore, “right” was not counted as praise, either in the total count of praise or in the semantic or syntactic analyses, unless it is followed by a repetition or rewording of the student’s response or other words of praise.

2.2.5.4 Repetition

Repeating a student’s answer with a falling intonation is a common way of showing that the answer is correct or desirable (Sinclair & Coulthard 1975). This sometimes precedes actual praise, but not always. It was thought best to adopt the policy of not counting the repetition of a statement as praise, because the MICASE transcript does not indicate prosodic features well enough to distinguish a repetition made with an emphatic intonation from one with a questioning intonation, and thus would not be able to say with confidence what the repetition was supposed to mean.

2.2.6 Identifying negative feedback

Criticism has been explored through comments on student written work, and in that context criticism has been defined as “an expression of dissatisfaction or negative comment” (Hyland and Hyland 2001, p. 186). As has been seen in written work and other contexts, criticism is frequently couched as something else, such as suggestion or personal opinion (Vasquez 2004, Crossouard & Pryor 2009). In a few cases, mostly when students are giving answers on previously learned material, instructors may use a negative response sometimes including the word “no” to clearly indicate that a response is incorrect.

However, in a discussion section not only is the criticism less clear, the fact of the student’s response not being what the instructor wanted is not clear as well. This has to do with pedagogical issues, as well as issues of who is the Primary Knower (Berry 1987), which will be discussed in more detail later. Because of this, different means had to be used to find negative feedback in the transcript and a different, looser definition of negative feedback was made. Where other speech acts, such as agreement, were excluded from the praise data, for example, it is acknowledged that negative feedback frequently takes the form of other speech acts. This was done first for the reason that, if everything except direct criticism were excluded from study there would be virtually no data. It was also felt that, in the interests of pursuing the main research question of the way in which students are being given feedback, it was best to be flexible.

In order to identify negative feedback, as was described above the transcripts were closely read with particular attention paid to instructor speech after a student response. Various clues were used to identify feedback that might be negative. One way of identifying negative feedback comes from the observation (by Waring 2008) that while

positive feedback ends an IRF exchange and returns the floor to the teacher, negative feedback does not do this necessarily. By finding instances in which students responded to feedback, many examples of feedback that might be negative were found. It was found that, except in a few special cases, negative feedback is followed by a student response, even if extremely brief, such as, “uh-huh.” (A full discussion of types of student uptake is found in Chapter 7). Students almost never respond to praise. Only two responses to praise were found in both corpora. One important characteristic of praise might be feedback that is not followed by a response on the part of the student. Therefore, feedback that was followed by another utterance by the same student was carefully considered. Other clues included the teacher’s use of the word “but” which may signal disagreement.

When not followed by some sort of comment or acknowledgement from the student, other examples of feedback that is not positive are ones in which the instructor directly asks the student a question. Although at times such questions may be seen as a positive expression of interest, in many cases they seem to indicate that the student’s answer is wanting in some way—either because it is incomplete or because the student’s response does not connect well enough to the subject. At times it also seems that the teacher is trying to redirect the student with a counter-argument, either to indicate that the student’s answer is not well-thought out enough or to obliquely show that it is wrong.

From this examination of feedback, a definition of negative feedback was made:

- It is on a student’s performance, usually an answer to a question or contribution to a discussion, not on a student’s behavior.
- It is not positive

- It indicates that the students response was in some way insufficient, either by being mistaken, not tied to the topic, not showing enough thought, or for some other reason. It may show this by correcting the mistaken information, by such words as “no” to indicate that information is mistaken, by posing the question again, to the same student or different students, or by asking a different question which requires some sort of expansion on the student’s part.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The current research will examine several questions about the nature of feedback in the tertiary classroom, drawing on research themes that have been identified. The study of these aspects of spoken academic discourse is relatively new, and these themes are just beginning to be explored. However, considerable work has been done already on various aspects of academic spoken discourse in general terms, and we will start by reviewing some of the studies which are of relevance to the research questions listed above.

To establish an idea of the nature of academic spoken English, first the literature on how it supports novices, and its relationship with metadiscourse, will be reviewed. Although the topic of praise as supportive language has not been directly examined in this thesis, a review of the work that has been done on this topic nevertheless serves an important purpose. The literature establishes that for most university instructors, face-to-face interaction is used to support students. The stereotype of academic language holds that it is used for purposely muddying a point, confusing novices, and keeping out the uninitiated. Of course, there are many examples of exactly this purpose in written academic language. However, so far research has shown that in its spoken form academic language shows a marked tendency to be positive and supportive (Mauranen 2002b, 2003; Rudolph 1994; Swales 2001, Fortanet 2004, Poos & Simpson 2002, Hyland 1999). Much of its supportive nature is found in ways that instructors make concepts clearer and establish unity with their students—precisely the opposite of confusing them and shutting them out. Therefore, it was concluded that in most cases instructors are praising students for the purpose of being supportive, not being sarcastic or using praise for some other reason.

The current research addresses one question that Swales (2001) hopes MICASE can answer—whether spoken academic discourse resembles written academic discourse or ordinary conversation more closely. Institutional constraints frequently have an effect on the way that academic discourse differs from casual conversation (Hartford & Bardovi-Harlig 1992, Thonus 1999, Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford 1993). This research, also, finds that institutional constraints influence praise and criticism in several ways.

The first research questions deal specifically with this issue by comparing praise in academic spoken English with compliments in social situations. To do this, the literature on compliments will be examined. After this, the literature on praise or compliments in written academic discourse will be reviewed, so that this can be compared with praise in spoken academic discourse. Disciplinary differences in academic discourse will be examined through two points of view. The first is presented in studies which examine corpora and determine differences in language use by members of different disciplinary areas. The second uses a typology created by Biglan (1973a, 1973b) and further developed by Becher (1994) to describe cultural differences between four major disciplinary areas.

Finally, the literature pertaining to criticism in academic discourse will be surveyed. First, this will review the Initiation-Response-Follow up (IRF) exchange. Developed by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) and, as Initiation Response Evaluation, by Mehan (1979a), this pattern provides a usual framework to examine the discourse of the classroom, particularly the final, Follow up or Evaluation move in which criticism is likely to occur. The different uses to which the IRF formula or the Follow-up move or F-move may be put, with respect to how much freedom the student has in his answer, are also examined here

(van Lier 1996, 2001; Cullen 2002; Barnes 2008, Scott 2008). Repair in conversation (Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks 1977) and its application in the classroom (Kasper 1985, McHoul 1990, MacBeth 2004) will also be considered. Politeness and face concerns are examined in this section as well (Brown and Levinson 1987, Culpepper 1996, Scollon & Scollon 1997, Tracy 1998, Spencer-Oatey 2006).

3.1 METADISCOURSE

Several aspects of academic discourse which will be examined later were studied in the context of metadiscourse (Swales 2001; Swales & Malczewski 2001; Lindemann & Mauranen 2001; Mauranen 2003; Swales & Burke 2003; Fortanet 2004). The definition of metadiscourse is the subject of some controversy, with some researchers defining it more narrowly than others. In Ädel's (2010) terminology, the broader definition is the "interactive model." In this definition, metadiscourse is discourse which constitutes interaction between the speaker and the hearer, or between the writer and the reader. Hyland (2010) who takes this approach, defines metadiscourse as "a set of features which together help explain the working of interactions between text producers and their texts and between text producers and users" (p.125). Ädel calls the narrower view the "reflexive model," and in this model metadiscourse is discourse which refers to itself. Ädel, who prefers this model, defines it as "reflexive linguistic expression referring to the evolving discourse itself or its linguistic form, including references to the writer-speaker *qua* writer-speaker and the (imagined or actual) audience *qua* audience of the current discourse" (p.75). Mauranen (2007, 2010) also calls this "discourse reflexivity." Mauranen (2010) points out that reflexive language is interactive, because it helps interlocutors construct a shared understanding of the discourse. "In this way, it contributes to the two fundamental uses that language has: sharing experience and negotiating interaction" (p.16). In addition

to the differences in opinion about the definition, Ädel and Mauranen (2010) point out that there are two main ways of approaching metadiscourse: what they term the “thin” way, which is quantitative, and the “thick” approach which is mostly qualitative.

An older controversy has to do with the non-propositional nature of metadiscourse. Hyland (1998b, 1999), discussing metadiscourse in written contexts, mentions its non-propositional nature as one of its essential aspects (1998b:438). Writing about metadiscourse in research articles he points out that it serves an interpersonal function in helping situate the writer as part of the academic discourse community. In his conception, writers use metadiscourse to achieve the two main goals of the research article: to have the reader understand it and to have them accept its premise (1998b:440). Ifantidou (2005) disagrees with some of Hyland’s (1988b, 1999) characterizations of metadiscourse, particularly that metadiscourse is non-propositional. Using the framework of relevance theory (Sperber & Wilson 1986), Ifantidou shows that some items which would be characterized by researchers such as Hyland as metadiscourse do in fact contribute to the truth condition of the utterance and as such are propositional.

The present study will adopt the broader, interactional, definition of metadiscourse, as discourse which helps to show the interaction between the speaker and the hearer or the speaker and the subject. This is done to be able to place different studies of metadiscourse done at different times and with different foci into the same category. As will be shown in this review, different forms of metadiscourse make up the bulk of studies done on corpora of academic spoken English. The present study could be considered one of them.

It is easy to see why metadiscourse is of such interest in understanding academic discourse. Not only do studies show that it is used quite frequently in spoken academic English, but it is used for many interpersonal functions. For example, it serves as signposts throughout a lecture, to help students understand. It tells the students where they are in the lecture, summarizes points already made, and prepares them for what is to come. It should also be pointed out that metadiscourse does not solely consist of lexical items, but can also include prosodic features, such as phonological paragraphs (Thompson, 2003). This is obviously supportive in that it helps the student to comprehend better what is going on, but there other ways in which certain forms or lexical choices are used to minimize distance, or establish unity, between teacher and student. These will be considered in the following section.

3.2 ACADEMIC SPOKEN ENGLISH AS SUPPORTIVE DISCOURSE

One of the main features of academic discourse emerging in the literature is that it supports novices, defined in different ways by different researchers, in their socialization into the academic speech community. Several studies using corpora have shown how this is done, and there seems to be agreement that academic spoken discourse is generally supportive in several ways. It is so supportive, in fact, that it has been suggested that this may actually be detrimental to students (Mauranen 2003, 2002b).

Rudolph (1994) shows that academic discourse is used by experts (professors) to socialize apprentices (graduate students, in her view) and she compares this with a Vygotskian perspective on child language development. Academic discourse, she feels, is used to create an important bond of trust between the expert and the novice. In her study of conversations during office hours she found that students and teachers construct a

“positive affect bond” by several means. Teachers use confirmation checks to, at least theoretically, invite a contribution by the student into the conversation. Students, in turn, echo the professor’s use of language.

Other studies reaching similar conclusions have dealt with single lexical items. Swales (2001) in his study of the words “point” and “thing” as used to refer to discourse produced during academic encounters shows that they are most frequently found in supportive rather than antagonistic speech. Positive adjectives, most commonly “good” or “important” were used in the overwhelming majority of cases, even if the person they were discussing was not in the room. He found almost no instances of negative adjectives such as “poor” or “weak” used to modify these words, although he also notes that these words are only modified by adjectives about 15% of the time. “Good point” was found in the current research to be a common way of praising students, so it may constitute a fixed expression and thereby account for some of the occurrences. However, this is further evidence that academic spoken discourse tends to be positive, not only to student-interlocutors but in general.

Fortanet (2004) studied the use of the lexical item “we” in university lectures, and also found ways of use that could be considered supportive. First, the use of “we” serves to suggest some sort of bond between the speaker (the lecturer), and the hearer (students). It can suggest that the hearer is somehow involved in the action, as in, “Today we’re going to talk about” Also, she believes that “we” has a metadiscoursal function. Fortanet found the “we” clusters very frequently with “know that,” and this cluster is used often in metadiscourse as a summarizing device (p. 61).

The previous studies show the positive nature of academic spoken discourse, but it has been shown to support novices in other ways. Two studies in particular deal with reducing the distance between instructor and student by mitigating jargon used by the former. Swales and Burke (2003) studied the use of adjectives in academic speech. They hypothesized that academic speech would show more polarized adjectives than academic writing, thereby making it more like ordinary conversation. Polarized adjectives are more extreme, for example “huge” rather than the more centralized “big.” They did not find that speech in academic contexts showed more polarized adjectives than writing to a significant degree. However, they did find that one of the polarized adjectives with the highest frequency was “weird,” and other adjectives expressing deviance, which Swales and Burke felt could be used to decrease the power differential in the professor-student relationship (p. 12).

Poos and Simpson (2002), show that hedges can be used as a way of mitigating jargon to avoid sounding pretentious and create rapport with students (p. 17). Poos and Simpson performed a pragmatic analysis on the data and noticed that they were often used in mitigating negative feedback. Another finding was that “kind of” and “sort of” are also frequently employed when using difficult vocabulary or jargon, as way of the instructor distancing herself from the material and demonstrating solidarity with the students (p. 17). They also found, in a close analysis of one speaker, that “kind of” and “sort of” when used in front of metaphors, have a metadiscoursal function in that they signal the student that the utterance is not being used literally (p. 17).

Academic spoken discourse is often evaluated as supportive, and it has been pointed out that, for this very reason, it may fail to properly socialize students into certain

aspects of academic communication. Hyland makes a related point in his work on metadiscourse in writing for novices in the community (1999). Hyland claims that metadiscourse in introductory textbooks serves the function of making the writing easier to understand, but, as the texts tend to deal with established facts in the field, does not show the persuasive function as much as research articles do. Hyland also points out that the metadiscourse in introductory textbooks tends to position the author as the expert, in contrast to research articles which are more egalitarian (1999:20). He believes that this might fail to properly initiate novices into the discourse community.

Mauranen (2002b, 2003) feels that spoken academic discourse is used to socialize novices more than written. In a study in which she again analyzed samples from MICASE, she found that metadiscourse in academic discourse is often linked to evaluative speech, which tends to be positive. Negative evaluations in metadiscourse were found, but they were usually hedged and less repetitive than positive evaluations. In a study specifically dealing with the way criticism is marked, she found the markers to be “so banal as to escape notice” where positive criticism is explicitly stated (2002b:9). She wonders how novices can become accustomed to more negative evaluation if they have so few chances to be exposed to it (2002a, 2003).

Although, as will be seen, praise constitutes only a tiny fraction of classroom discourse, these studies show that students are in fact exposed to a great deal of positive evaluation, so much so that at times it might work to their detriment. This opinion does not seem to be unusual in the academy, even among people who do not study academic

discourse⁴. This raises questions about the negative evaluation of students, which will be further discussed in Chapter 7.

3.3 ACADEMIC SPOKEN ENGLISH: WHAT IS IT “LIKE”?

In the current research the subject of the extent to which academic spoken discourse resembles ordinary conversation or resembles written academic English will be dealt with separately, conversation in Chapter 4 and written academic English in Chapter 5. However, several researchers have explored both questions at the same time in an attempt to characterize academic spoken English. These studies point out several differences among the three registers that have emerged from comparing them.

Biber (1988, 1995), Biber and Conrad (2001), and Biber and Jones (2005) have taken what they call a “multidimensional” approach to studying differences in register. This approach involves applying multivariate analysis to computer corpora. By doing this, Biber was able to find clusters of linguistic features which tend to occur together (or tend rarely to occur together). He then analyzed the functions that these dimensions serve in various registers. For example, one group of features which occur together includes private verbs (such as “think” and “know”) personal pronouns, and contractions, among many others. These features constitute the dimension which Biber calls “involved production,” often found in conversations (Biber & Conrad 2001: 185). Each register might contain a number of different dimensions. Analysis of conversations shows the interactive dimension as well as the dimension of production under time constraints.

⁴ In an article in the Chronicle of Higher Education advising professors to discourage students from entering graduate school in the humanities, Benson (2010) writes: “The follow-up letters I receive from those prospective Ph.D.’s are often quite angry and incoherent; they’ve been praised their whole lives, and no one has ever told them that they may not become what they want to be [. . .]”

Csomay (2002) used some parameters from Biber's (1998) initial study to compare low-interactive and high-interactive⁵ undergraduate lower division (first and second year), undergraduate upper division (third and fourth year), and postgraduate classes to find grammatical features associated with academic writing and conversation. She found a great deal of variation depending on the level of interactivity, with highly interactive classes, unsurprisingly, exhibiting more features typical of conversational style. However, she also found that level of instruction and also, in some cases, discipline, have an influence on these differences. (Similar results were found by Poos & Simpson 2002). Graduate classes demonstrated a high level of features from the on-line production set, which might indicate that in the graduate classes participants in discussions are transmitting information under on-line circumstances, without preparation. This contrasts with undergraduate classes where participants are not required to transmit as much information.

The studies show that academic spoken discourse in many respects tends to resemble ordinary conversation, although other factors—gender, level, and disciplinary area—must be taken into account. The studies reviewed above have used corpora to examine this question, but another dimension can be added by looking at it from within the context of institutional discourse. Studies which do this will be reviewed now.

3.4 ACADEMIC SPOKEN ENGLISH AS INSTITUTIONAL DISCOURSE

Institutional discourse carries a number of purposes and constraints that non-institutional discourse does not. Drew and Heritage (1992) define institutional discourse as that which

⁵ This was judged by counting the frequency of turn-taking.

is oriented to a “core goal, task or identity” which is connected with the institution. They specified that there is sometimes no clear distinction between it and what they term “ordinary conversation.” It orients to institutional goals, has specific constraints on what is allowed in the discourse, and it may have particular institutional frameworks of inference. Another aspect that characterizes institutional discourse is asymmetry between the participants. In previous research, institutional discourse has been treated as one of the things that distinguishes spoken academic discourse and ordinary conversation, so institutional discourse is included in this section. However, in the current research, institutional constraints, mostly having to do with time, were most noticeable when comparing spoken and written academic discourse.

Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1992) show that conversational closings tend to be different in academic speech and ordinary speech because of institutional constraints in this case, time constraints. In their study, they tape-recorded a number of advising sessions and analyzed the closings. They also interviewed the advisors involved. They found that closing sequences in this situation tend to be different from those of ordinary conversation, as described by Schegloff and Sacks (1973). In an ordinary conversation, a previous topic can be felicitously reintroduced during the closing sequence. However, in academic conversations it is precisely this sort of topic which is infelicitous, although other topics, which orient the speakers to other, non-institutional identities, were allowed. Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig determine infelicity by looking at subsequent turns as well as by interviewing the advisors.

Thonus (1999) refers to Agar’s (1985) idea of discourse ecology to interpret conversations between tutors and native-speaking or non-native-speaking tutees (both are

university students) in a writing center. Agar defines discourse ecology as the “circumstances around the institutional discourse over which neither the institutional representative nor the client have any control” and they include time constraints and differing levels of background knowledge (p. 156). The tutoring session must be conducted efficiently, requiring the tutors to choose sometimes between politeness and the institutional goal of being a good tutor. “Being a good tutor” is defined by the guide for tutors as not giving direct advice on the paper but instead encouraging the tutee to find it. Thonus finds that establishing a balance between institutional time constraints on one hand and time-consuming teaching techniques on the other is a common dilemma in institutional settings.

Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993) have looked at a different effect of institutional speech on spoken discourse, which they term congruence (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford 1990). Congruence describes the extent to which participants act according to their own and their interlocutor’s relative status during an encounter. In another study looking at conversations between advisors and native-speaking or non-native-speaking advisees, they find that sometimes it is necessary for the participants in this sort of encounter to act in a non-congruent manner. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford examine how non-native-speaking advisees’ pragmatic competence develops by showing the extent to which they are able to mitigate non-congruent speech acts in a native-like manner. Making a suggestion, for example, is a non-congruent speech act for a lower status person in an institutional encounter, but it can be necessary in the advising session as a way of the student to control his own class schedule. Native speakers are able to mitigate this by such measures as forming the suggestion as a question, but non-natives experienced difficulties in expressing themselves in ways that could be considered context appropriate.

From looking at these studies it seems that a great deal of the effect of institutional constraints on academic spoken discourse has to do with time, specifically the difficulty of conveying necessary information about a subject within a set amount of time. Other effects, such as in the Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993) study, have to do with status. Both of these have an effect on praise and how it differs from both compliments and written praise, as will be seen. Although the current research is not able to go into the pedagogical implications of giving praise in a certain way, the effect of time constraints on praising behavior, and its subsequent effect on student performance, would be an interesting subject of study.

3.5 COMPLIMENTS

As the differences and similarities between praise in spoken academic discourse and compliments in ordinary conversation will be examined, it is important to review current work on the characteristics of the latter. These have been examined extensively (Manes & Wolfson 1981, Manes 1983, Wolfson 1983) and shown to be quite formulaic. Wolfson (1983) found that the form of compliments in American English is limited both syntactically and semantically. In terms of syntax, the majority of compliments have one of three forms: *[NP] is/looks [ADJ]* (more than fifty per cent of Wolfson's data showed this form); *I like [NP]*; and *[PRO] is [ADJ] [NP]*. Semantically, the adjectives used were also quite limited, with the most frequently used adjectives being *nice* or *good*. Three other adjectives, *beautiful*, *pretty* and *great* were also frequently used. This of course raises the question of why compliments would be so markedly formulaic. Wolfson believes that it is due to the importance of compliments' discourse function, which in her opinion is to increase solidarity between the person giving the compliment and the interlocutor.

Manes (1983), however, points out that compliments are put to several uses, not all having to do with solidarity. She believes that, especially in a teaching context, they are used to give encouragement, as in this example, given by a teacher to a student (p. 84).

John found out what the homework was, somehow, I don't know how. But that's great, John.

Wolfson (1983) mentions other uses, such as to soften criticism, and, when used sarcastically, to actually criticize.

I really like the way you went through that stop sign.

(Wolfson 1983: 92).

Knapp, Hopper and Bell (1984), in a study influenced by those above, asked subjects to recall the last compliment they had received and give some information about the circumstances and the giver. Although this obviously has the problem of depending on the subjects' power of recall, which they acknowledge, they believe that the fact that the compliments tend to mirror the form found by Wolfson (1983) suggests that the subjects were fairly accurate in their recollection. Knapp, Hopper and Bell also asked the subjects what they felt the motive for the compliment was, and whether they thought it was deserved. They found that their subjects felt that compliments were sincere and deserved and were generally pleased with them. This gives support to the contention that compliments are used for solidarity, and further shows that to some extent they succeed in this purpose.

Unfortunately, one of the most fascinating and extensively-studied aspects of compliments is not able to be examined in the present research. This is the effect of the

compliment giver or receiver's gender, and it cannot be directly examined because there are very few female instructors in the BASE corpus. However, this is an important aspect to look at when determining the purpose of compliments.

It is still not clear which gender gives or gets the most compliments. Manes (1983) and Wolfson (1983) found that women tend to give, and get, more compliments than men. Manes (1983) believes that compliments are used to encourage the hearer to repeat desired behavior and Wolfson (1983) calls this "so obvious to a native speaker that it hardly deserves to be mentioned" (p. 84). Manes therefore concludes that the fact that women are more likely to be complimented on their appearance indicates that in our society it is valued for women to take an interest in their personal appearance, and that compliments are intended to reinforce this behavior. Wolfson (1984) reiterates this opinion with a collection of appearance-related compliments given to professional women in circumstances that could be considered inappropriate. She concludes that, "A feminist interpretation would certainly hold that the constraint against complimenting adult males is but another indication that male behavior is taken to be normative and requires little comment or judgment while females must be constantly reminded to behave in socially approved ways" (p. 15). Holmes (1988b) also has noted that women tend to give and receive more compliments than men do, although she acknowledges that methodological factors may have had an effect on her data—specifically the fact that most of the data collectors were women. However, even after the data are adjusted for this fact, compliments are most common in women's interactions. Holmes believes that the prevalence of compliments to and from women is not due to "patronising linguistic strategies" (p. 425), but because these are regarded as positively affective speech acts,

which mark solidarity in women's speech. She believes that they may not serve the same function in men's speech, which would explain their relative paucity.

The conclusion that women get and give more compliments has not, however, been unanimously shown. Knapp, Hopper and Bell (1984) find that compliments flow between members of the same sex, whether men or women. Tatsuki and Nishizawa (2005) found some evidence of men getting more compliments, and Rees-Miller (2011) found that men receive more in certain settings. Whether women are more often givers and recipients of compliments or not, this highlights an important question: Are compliments for reinforcement of desired behavior or for solidarity or both? Brophy's (1981) data seems to suggest that even classroom compliments in the lower grades are not unproblematically used for reinforcement. He points out that if praise were mainly given for this purpose, then we would find praise being given to the students who most need their behavior reinforced, that is, low-performing students. Instead, Brophy found that high-performing students are the ones who get the most praise. In fact, rather than the teachers reinforcing student behavior, Brophy finds that students seem to reinforce the teacher's praising behavior, by being visibly pleased.

Besides the gender question, the differences or similarities between compliments in ordinary conversation and praise in academic spoken discourse would seem to lie in their syntax and semantics, and whether these are as limited as those of compliments; and their pragmatic function.

The set of questions for the second research project in this dissertation (Chapter 5) deals with the other major question of academic spoken English: whether it resembles academic written English.

3.6 ACADEMIC SPOKEN DISCOURSE AND ACADEMIC WRITTEN DISCOURSE

In this section we will examine some aspects of comparisons between academic spoken and written discourse. First, the interpersonal side of academic written discourse will be reviewed. This includes hedging and boosting, which may be considered a part of metadiscourse as described above. Then, the idea of contingency, which in some respects sets academic spoken English apart from academic written English, will be reviewed. Lastly we will briefly review the studies of written feedback that are being used for comparison with praise in academic spoken discourse.

Some of the things that may lead to variation between academic spoken discourse and academic written discourse can be easily imagined. Academic spoken language may be produced with less preparation and may, depending on the context, have less of an information load. Speech produced during a meeting in the instructor's office or even during a lecture may contain a certain amount of phatic communication, for example. However, despite the fact that the information load is more dense than in spoken discourse, the written form also contains an interpersonal element. Hyland (2010) introduces the idea of "proximity," which indicates "the writer's control of rhetorical features which display both authority as an expert and a personal position towards issues in an unfolding text" (p.117). This includes the interpersonal, as well as evaluative language toward the subject of the writing. Although there are many different ways that proximity can be shown, one of those most mentioned is hedging and boosting.

Hedging and boosting are ways of showing a writer's or lecturer's attitude toward either the subject matter or the reader or listener (Holmes 1984) and these have been extensively studied in the context of written academic discourse. Holmes (1984, 1988a) has shown how hedging and boosting are used in ordinary conversation for politeness, as well as to make a statement stronger or more hesitant. Hyland (1996, 1998a) points out that hedging and boosting, are quite necessary in academic writing. He shows that, in addition to expressing the amount of confidence the writer has in the ideas he or she expresses, they also allow the expression of solidarity with and membership in a group of scholars. Thus, they have the same interpersonal functions that they have in conversation. Poos and Simpson (2002) found similar results. However, academic speech and academic writing do seem to have some general differences. One important aspect in which differences are found is the amount of variation shown in the discourse. Swales (2001) has pointed out following Dudley-Evans and Johns (1981) that academic speech shows more variety than writing, in structure, function and style (p. 34). He also points out that academic speech is more "contingent," applying Gilbert and Mulkay's (1984) term (Swales 2001:35). Under the definition of metadiscourse that considers it to be non-propositional content, hedging and boosting are part of metadiscourse. Mauranen (2010) does not take this view and thus does not put hedging in the category of metadiscourse, but she does note that hedging and metadiscourse tend to occur together. She attributes this to the fact that metadiscourse imposes the speaker's or writer's meaning on the discourse, where hedging opens it up to negotiation.

The concept of contingency is important in examining the differences between academic speech and academic writing. Gilbert and Mulkay (1984) in a study of scientists' written and spoken discourse, contrast what they call the "empiricist repertoire" with the

“contingent repertoire.” The empiricist repertoire “portrays scientists’ actions and beliefs as following unproblematically and inescapably from the empirical characteristics of the impersonal natural world” (p. 56). The contingent repertoire, in contrast, represents things as being more dependent on outside events; that is, it tends to show the steps leading up to the finished paper, lecture, etc. The empiricist repertoire, Gilbert & Mulkay find, tends to be used in writing scientific articles, where the contingent repertoire is used when scientists talk about their professional actions.

Lindemann and Mauranen (2001) echo Swales’s evaluation of academic speech as contingent, describing it as more “heterogeneous, contradictory, and varied” than written academic prose (p. 460). They point out, however, that written academic discourse has a privileged place in academia, because it is used for so many evaluative functions, such as hiring faculty and assigning grades to students.

From these studies we can see that, for various reasons, one of the main things which distinguish academic spoken discourse from academic written discourse is the greater amount of variation in the spoken form. This therefore is the main aspect that will be treated in this research when praise in academic spoken English is compared with written praise.

In comparing praise in spoken academic discourse with praise in written academic discourse, which will be done in Chapter 5, the results of several studies will be used. Johnson (1992) did a study of peer-reviewed texts, in which the peers were graduate students. In this case, she uses the word “compliment” to describe the positive comments on the papers. She finds that compliments in written academic English are similar to

compliments in spoken English in that they are limited syntactically, although they do not have the same syntactic patterns as spoken compliments. Hyland and Hyland (2001) examined teachers' written feedback on students' writing by conducting case studies of such feedback in a writing class and subsequently interviewing the teachers and students. They reiterate the idea that praise has a didactic purpose. "Teachers are usually not simply appraising writing, but are often hoping to use the opportunity for teaching and reinforcing writing behaviors" (p. 187). Hyland and Hyland found that praise is most often used in writing to mitigate criticism, and characterized it as "cursory" and less pedagogically useful than criticism (p.196). They further found that students are aware of this function of praise in their feedback, and may view it as merely an insincere way to mitigate criticism.

Generally it could be said, therefore, that academic English shows more variation in its spoken form than in its written form. However, a major qualifier in this assertion is disciplinary differences. As will be explored below, in many contexts, these appear to have a large effect on the amount of variation used in discourse, as well as the actual number of words used in both speaking and writing for academic discourse.

3.7 DISCIPLINARY DIFFERENCES EXAMINED THROUGH CORPORA

Disciplinary differences have been examined as a source of variation in academic discourse, in both the spoken and written form. There are different ways of dividing academic subject according to discipline (cf. Mauranen 2006). However, when they are categorized into humanities and "hard" sciences, or along the Biglan (1973a, 1973b) and Becher (1994) axes described below, some clear differences can be seen.

Poos and Simpson (2002), in the study mentioned above, have the intention not specifically to show differences between academic and ordinary speech, but to counter the idea that hedging is a characteristic of women's speech. This idea has been reported mainly in studies using data from ordinary speech (particularly Lakoff 1975, and Holmes 1986, 1988b). Poos & Simpson (2002) concentrated on two of the most common hedges: "kind of" and "sort of." They developed a subcorpus of monologic speech events in MICASE, representing several different academic disciplines (although they note that the corpus is not large enough to represent each discipline equally for both genders). They then counted the occasions of "kind of" and "sort of" that they found, first subtracting those instances in which those expressions meant "a type of." They found that hedges in academic speech do not depend so much on gender but rather on academic discipline. There are two reasons for this, having to do with two functions of hedges. In addition to the function of showing a speaker's attitude toward the speakers and the subject, hedges can serve as pause fillers, as Poos and Simpson point out (p. 13). Speech events in the hard sciences use less hedging overall than those in the humanities and social sciences, regardless of the speaker's gender. The authors postulate that this may be because the language of those disciplines is less precise than that used in the hard sciences, thereby more often necessitating the use of a pause filler. Instructors who use less precise words, and thus have more occasion to pause to think of the right word, are more likely to use a pause filler. They also put forth the related idea that in the humanities and social sciences, "there is more to hedge about." Because the humanities are less precise they also offer more opportunities for stating different opinions and points of view, necessitating the use of a hedge to show either that they are not completely sure of something or to show respect for someone else's opinion (2002:14). They support this with evidence from Schachter et. al. (1991, 1994), who studied pause fillers such as "um." In these studies the number of

vocabulary items and the number of times the lecturer used a filled pause were compared across different academic disciplines. It was found that lecturers in the humanities use more filled pauses than those in the sciences, and that a higher number of vocabulary items were used in humanities lectures. This supports Poos and Simpson's contention that in the humanities there is more occasion to use such hedges.

Csomay (2007) has done a corpus-based study, mentioned above, of teacher versus student talk and finds significant differences between the way teachers and students talk in terms of turn frequency and length and linguistic features (as in Biber 1998). Teachers also talk differently to older undergraduates and graduate students than they do to young undergraduates. Speech differs substantially according to discipline, and Csomay postulates that this is because of the different ways that knowledge is transmitted. In her view, education classes demonstrate a more collaborative way of transmitting knowledge, as both instructors and students show linguistic evidence of involved, on-line discourse. These features are lacking in Engineering classes, suggesting that there is more of a one-way transmission of knowledge. In the Business classes, teachers' speech does not show personalized framing features, where student speech does, which may mean that teachers take a more passive role. (p. 353). This study provides linguistic evidence that different disciplines may not share the same way of thinking about the roles of teacher and student. This could have a bearing on the amount of praise given and the form which it takes.

Mauranen (2010) in a study of discourse reflexivity in an English as a lingua franca context, notes some differences among the disciplines in its use. In a medical seminar, the focus was on understanding facts as part of professional development.

Discourse reflexivity was thus used frequently for clarification. In a Women's Studies seminar, the participants focused on synthesizing the text they had read with personal experiences, opinions and previous discussions. They used more discourse reflexivity here for more purposes: to bring order to the discourse and in evaluative remarks to mark the difficulty of expressing certain concepts. In a political science seminar, discourse reflexivity was used for the participants to co-construct arguments, which was the main activity of the class.

There have been a number of studies further investigating the differing cultures of different disciplines, not just by means of linguistic features. Disciplines have been shown to differ in terms of the mode of classroom teaching, the time given over to research as opposed to teaching or service, and the ultimate goals of the discipline in terms of what they teach students. Since these may also prove to be influential in praise, these studies will be examined next.

3.8 CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN DISCIPLINE

Biglan (1973a, 1973b,) devised an important framework for thinking about broad disciplinary categories, which was later built upon by Becher (1994). This framework divides the disciplines along two lines: a hard/soft division, dealing with the strength of the paradigm for choosing appropriate objects and methods of study; and a pure/applied division which has to do with the extent to which the discipline is concerned with practical application. Biglan also deals with a life/nonlife division, concerning whether or not the discipline deals with life systems, but this will not be used in the current research because its characteristics are not as well developed as the other two divisions. There are thus four categories in this framework: hard-pure (for example, astronomy, physics, and

mathematics), soft-pure (literature and other humanities, anthropology, sociology, and other pure social sciences), hard-applied (engineering, medicine, computer science), and soft-applied (education, applied linguistics).

One of the main differences is social connectedness: the amount that a researcher involves others in his or her research. Social connections, as Biglan defines them, involve not only actually doing research with another person but also being influenced by others (1973b: 205). Biglan found that the hard disciplines, in general, show more social connectedness than the soft ones, and scholars in the applied disciplines show more social connectedness than those in the pure disciplines. This, Biglan believes, is due to the relative strength of the research paradigm in these disciplines—if the paradigm is strong then scholars’ “attempts to work together will not be hindered by differences in orientation” (1973b:210). This in turn leads to the observation that the soft disciplines are more likely to encourage idiosyncrasy and independence in scholarship, where in the hard disciplines young scholars are frequently mentored (Biglan 1973a, 1973b Becher, 1994)

The differing focus on independence among the disciplines means a corresponding difference in the types of classes taught and in the goals of learning. This can be seen in both the curricula and syllabi which would be found in certain departments, as well as in classroom activities planned by individual teachers. Neumann, Parry and Becher (2002) show that curricula in hard-pure fields tend to be “linear and hierarchical, building up brick by brick towards contemporary knowledge.” (p. 407), where soft-pure curricula “[return] with increasing levels of subtlety and insight into already familiar areas of content.” (p. 407). Becher (1994) points out that certain types of classes, such as engineering and medicine, may have more of a “didactic” focus. Handal et. al. (1990)

reiterate that in the natural sciences, teaching is considered to be information transmission, with students relegated to taking notes (p. 321). Languages and creative arts tend to be more participatory. In terms of the types of activities that might take place, although all disciplines use lecture (Neumann 2001) soft and hard disciplines tend to differ in other activities and the way they require students to deal with new knowledge. Lectures, seminars and tutorials are the preferred method of teaching for the humanities. Natural sciences, technology, and medicine prefer laboratories, exercises and field trips, and technological disciplines favor lectures (Neumann 2001). It has also been found that the hard disciplines emphasize learning facts and concepts and preparing for a career, where soft disciplines focus on such things as general knowledge, critical thinking, and character development (Neumann 2001:138, Braxton 1995, Smart and Ethington 1995, Neumann, Parry & Becher 2002). Hard applied knowledge is concerned with “mastery of the physical environment” and yields products and techniques. Soft applied knowledge is concerned with the development of professional practice. Its products are protocols and procedures (Neumann, Parry & Becher 2002: 406). In terms of assessment, hard disciplines tend to favor memorization and application of course material and soft disciplines require more analysis and synthesis (Braxton 1995, Neumann 2001). Lueddeke (2003), examines disciplinary differences with respect to Trigwell and Prosser’s (1997) typography of teaching styles: Information Transfer/Teaching Focus (ITTF) practiced by teachers who focus on transmitting information or concepts, and Conceptual Change/Student Focus (CCSF) in which teachers try to help students’ development. Lueddeke finds that the hard disciplines show more of an ITTF orientation, and the soft disciplines tend toward CCSF. Similar results were found by Linblom-Ylänne et.al. (2006). Although previous research does seem to show a divide between the more transmission-based hard disciplines and participatory soft disciplines, it should be mentioned that some

of these studies were done as much as 20 years ago, and the differences may not be as clear cut today. Fortanet-Gomez and Bellés-Fortuño (2005) point out also that even lecture classes are changing to become more interactive and egalitarian. Even if a certain discipline is identified as having a lecture-based style of education, we must remember that actual classes at the present time may not be so clearly based on a transmission model. Indeed, classes which required student participation in many imaginative ways were found in both MICASE and BASE transcripts of hard discipline classes.

Ylijoki (2000) used Becher's (1990, 1994) framework to explore the "moral order" of several departments in a university in Finland, or what "defines the basic beliefs, values, norms, and aspirations prevailing in the culture," with each department here defined as a separate culture. What she found in her interview data reiterates other research about these disciplinary areas. Soft pure areas, represented by sociology, value learning for its own sake, dedication to study and corresponding willingness to spend many years mastering the subject, independence and originality in research, and using the subject to help others. The soft applied discipline, public administration, in contrast focused on obtaining skills for the job market, completing studies quickly, status, and prestige. Ordinariness and conformity seem to be prized in this culture. The hard applied discipline of computer science also focuses on learning by doing and practical training. Looking at these moral orders and their influence on the praise that is given in class might be useful, but it should be remembered that the moral order of one soft-pure class, for example, might not be able to be generalized into other soft-pure classes. Although Ylijoki found status and prestige to be important in the soft-applied discipline of public administration, they are unlikely to be important in the field of education, also a soft-applied field.

3.9 CRITICISM

This section provides a review of the literature that forms a background to the study of criticism in Chapter 7. Criticism is a fairly complex phenomenon, so this section of the literature review is broader in scope. Negative feedback in the context of a university discussion section can take many forms, as will be explored later. Many studies of the Initiation Response Follow-up (IRF) pattern explore the different forms that the F-move can take, particularly in an ESOL context, to provide background for the categories of criticism discussed in Chapter 7. Since in criticism we find a variety of options for the F-move, these studies are included here. The study of repair, both in conversation and in the classroom, provides some background. Also, although face wants may be involved in positive feedback, it is in criticism that they become more apparent. Therefore, a discussion of face has been included here as well.

3.9.1 The Initiation-Response-Follow-up pattern

One of the most important concepts when discussing the discourse of classrooms is the Initiation-Response-Evaluation pattern, or IRE (Mehan 1979), also called Initiation-Response-Feedback or Follow-up pattern (Sinclair & Coulthard 1975). This is the most familiar type of discourse in classrooms at all levels and in many different cultures. Children have been shown to use it even when there is no teacher present (Seedhouse 2004). There has been a great deal of debate on this pattern and its effect on the classroom and the students' learning. Most of the studies done on IRF (the more commonly-used term) have to do with pre-tertiary classrooms, with others also dealing with IRF formulations in the English as a second or foreign language classroom. Since most researchers are dealing with the extent to which IRF formulations stifle students' expressions or thinking, the studies are most

concerned with these two contexts in which it is very important that students have a certain amount of autonomy and are able to think freely and creatively, in the case of K-12 classrooms, or produce a great deal of language, in the case of ESOL classrooms. Therefore, the vast majority of the studies do not have to do with the tertiary context. However, IRF exchanges occur there as well, although not exclusively, and as students prior educational experiences have primed them to equate the IRF exchange with the classroom, they are quite likely to have an effect on the type of discourse that students produce. Since praise and criticism will be examined in these studies, and since these frequently constitute the F (Feedback or Follow-up) move of an IRF exchange, the research on the IRF pattern will be examined here.

The term Initiation-Response-Feedback (later changed to Follow-up to reflect the broader use of this slot) was coined by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). Later, Mehan (1979b) postulated the similar IRE or Initiation-Response-Evaluation. As the name shows, Mehan tended to see the third move as being purely evaluative, where Sinclair and Coulthard see more possibilities. In this type of pattern, the teacher asks a question or poses a problem (Initiation), the pupil answers (Response), and then there is some sort of third move by the teacher, often comprising some sort of feedback (Follow-up). The canonical example is provided by Sinclair and Coulthard:

“What time is it, Susan?

Three o’clock.” (p.37)

It is the third turn, “Good girl” which distinguishes this classroom discourse from the type of conversation one would hear outside the classroom. Although three-part exchanges can be used in ordinary conversation (Tsui 1994), an evaluative move like this one is usually only given by a teacher to a student (although there are exceptions, cf. Berry 1987). According to

Sinclair and Coulthard, the follow-up move could consist of various acts: evaluate, comment, or accept, or a reinitiation. Sinclair and Coulthard characterized the act of “evaluate” as “realized by statements and tag questions including words and phrases such as ‘good,’ ‘interesting,’ ‘team point,’ commenting on the quality of the reply [. . .]also by ‘yes,’ ‘n,’ ‘good,’ ‘fine,’ with a high fall intonation, and repetition of the pupils’ reply with either a high fall (positive), or a rise of any kind (negative evaluation)” (p.43). Outside of this situation, the more appropriate response would probably be “thank you” (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975, 37).

Although Drew and Heritage (1992) called Sinclair and Coulthard’s (1975) categories “fatally general and imprecise,” the IRF exchanges have provided a useful point for examining classroom discourse for many researchers. There has been some debate about whether this pattern of classroom discourse is advantageous for students’ learning. Van Lier (1996) has pointed out some of the advantages: students can immediately receive feedback from the teacher, students answer in turns and not all at once, and the teacher can easily guide the discussion in the way she chooses (p.150). His view is not entirely positive, however, as he feels that “the student’s response is hemmed in, squeezed between a demand to display knowledge and a judgment on its competence” (p. 151), which he believes is not motivating for the student. He notes that in his data, he only finds four statements made outside the IRF pattern: three requests to be excused from the room and one statement, “Hacksaw isn’t used for wood.” This last is the only time he finds a student disagreeing with a teacher, and it is whispered. This, he feels, shows the IRF structure as a manifestation of the teacher’s power. It should, however, be noted that other researchers have found classrooms, even in the lower grades, which do not adhere strictly to the IRF pattern (eg. Clifton 2006), and have found university classrooms where students disagree freely with the professor, although IRF structure is used at times (Rees-Miller 1999).

Although as will be seen much of the research on IRF exchanges has been done in the classroom, it should also be remembered that IRF exchanges do not only occur there. Seedhouse (1996) has pointed out that it is of course common in parent-child interaction, and he believes that this should recommend IRF exchanges to ESL professionals who believe that students can acquire language in the same way children do. Tsui believes that the three-part exchange should be considered a basic unit of ordinary conversation (1989). A key point is assessment in the third turn, which seems to be a feature of institutional if not necessarily classroom discourse. Berry (1987) has found a similar three-move exchange in a doctor's office, where doctors will repeat the patient's answer in a falling tone to indicate positive evaluation. However, unlike in the classroom, this is not taken by the patient to be a terminal move. To explain this she postulates the existence of a "Primary Knower" who is performing the I-move. In the case of the classroom, the teacher is the Primary Knower of the information, so she terminates the exchange. In the case of a doctor with a patient, however, the doctor is the Primary Knower of the medical field, but the patient is the Primary Knower of such things as his symptoms and habits, meaning that the doctor does not terminate the exchange. A study by Antaki et. al. (2000) illustrates some of the difficulties of interpreting a third-turn assessment. In examining transcripts of "quality of life" interviews—one set between persons with learning disabilities and psychologists, one set between cancer survivors and a psychologist, they find occasions in which the interviewer uses "high grade assessments" such as "brilliant" or "jolly good." They find that these usually do not orient to the content of the interviewee's answer (for example, an assessment of "brilliant" might occur after the client has given a piece of bad news). These high grade assessments seem to serve to mark the successful conclusion of one part of the interview, before moving on to the next part. Their impersonality and the fact that they are not connected to previous content seems to underscore

their institutional use, and in fact the researchers did not find such assessments used when they surveyed corpora of non-institutional discourse.

While some research has been done on the IRF exchange outside of the classroom, IRF is a particular point of interest in classroom contexts. Besides the fact that it could be considered the typical pattern of discourse in the classroom, pedagogical concerns have also made it a focus of study. Certain features of the IRF pattern tend to limit the students' participation, a fact that has led some to the conclusion that it is not appropriate in some contexts, such as a communicative language classroom (e.g. Nunan 1987). McHoul (1978), in his study of turn allocation in the classroom, concurs with the belief that the usual way that turns are allocated does contribute to a teacher's control. In contrast with informal situations such as conversation in which turns are not previously allocated, in the classroom the teacher controls all the turns. Since the floor automatically reverts back to her after another person finishes a turn, she may speak as long as she likes without fear of interruption. Similarly, Skidmore (2000) believes that F-move assessment means that the teacher takes most of the turns, making it counterproductive for a classroom in which students are encouraged to speak. Mercer and Dawes (2008), in a similar vein, point out the implicit rules of the classroom: only teachers can nominate, ask questions without permission, and evaluate; student answers should be relevant and brief, and students should wait to be nominated after a teacher asks a question (p. 58). Despite acknowledging the power that this gives instructors, they do think that IRF exchanges can be put to good use and serve a variety of purposes (p. 59). Barnes (2008) has pointed out that IRF may not give students sufficient time and freedom to discuss their ideas. However, Alexander (2008) believes that although children are being given a little more freedom in British schools, they are still expected to come up with the answer the teacher wants. “. . .in the end, though there is now more time to think, and space to provide a

fuller answer, the answers which count are still those that the teacher expects, and extended thinking time is not so much for thinking from first principles as for deducing even more accurately than thitherto what it is that the teacher wishes to hear” (p.99) .

Despite these opinions, some have found good points in using IRF exchanges. Musumeci (1996) believes that the IRF pattern is an effective way of using limited class time. Wells (1993) points out that IRFs can be used to unify the class’s idea of what they have learned, and consolidate their ideas. Seedhouse (2004) has asserted that the IRF patterns have different interactional and pedagogical purposes, depending on the context of the classroom (p.64). Many other researchers have categorized different types of classroom and uses of IRF.

Several studies have pointed out that there are several different types of IRF pattern, with different types of pedagogical use. These are sometimes conceived as some type of dichotomy, in which teachers can move from an authoritative, monologic mode to one with more pupil involvement (while always remaining in control). Van Lier (1996) believes that the IRF exchange in the classroom has two orientations: a display or assessment orientation, in which the instructor is asking questions to determine how well the students have learned previously, and a participation orientation, in which the instructor is encouraging the students to participate and contribute more to a discussion. These two orientations are more of a continuum than a dichotomy, and they can both occur at the same time. Although in the participation mode students are more free to contribute to a discussion, van Lier points out that the differences in power between teachers and students are usually apparent in the IRF pattern (2001). Cullen (2002) distinguishes between “evaluative” and “discoursal” functions of the F-move. The evaluative function is probably the stereotypical use of the F-move. The latter is used “in order to sustain and

develop a dialogue between the teacher and the class” and the focus is on content rather than form. (p.120). This occurs with referential, rather than display, questions used in the I-move. It can be used to make a students’ contribution “more closely aligned with what has already been said [to] act as a platform on which to build and extend the discussion” (p. 122). Similarly, Wright (2005, p. 231) notes that the F-move has two main purposes, one of which is to evaluate and the other of which is “to provide help to learners in reformulating their response.” Wells (1993) does not tie the fact of a more evaluative F-move so clearly to display questions in the I-move. In his classroom descriptions, he shows a teacher eliciting accounts of the students’ group activities not to show what they have learned but to establish an “agreed account” of the activity (p. 27). A more specific framework of classroom discourse was made by Nassaji and Wells (2000), who categorize I-moves into Assumed Known Information, Personal Information, and Negotiatory Information, and match these with F-moves. The I-moves are categorized with respect to who the Primary Knower is expected to be. In the first category, the Primary Knower is the instructor, and students are being asked display questions to check previously known information. For an I-move demanding Personal Information, the Primary Knower is the student. In the last category, there is no Primary Knower, and students and instructor are negotiating the discussion together. Evaluation is expected when the teacher is the Primary Knower, but not needed elsewhere (p. 380). Nassaji and Wells found that in fact negotiatory questions are evaluated more frequently than known information questions (p. 391).

Other researchers divide classroom discourse into IRF exchanges and different, usually more participatory, forms of discourse. Van Lier (1996, 2001), although he does acknowledge a more participatory orientation of IRF exchanges, believes there are forms of

classroom discourse in which students can have more freedom and be more active. What he calls “transaction” involves more symmetry and two-way exchanges of information, but instructors and students are still subject to some sort of institutional agenda. In “transformation” the instructor and students are shaping the agenda together and “it is possible to speak of a true co-construction of meanings and events” (p.180). (Van Lier postulates another form, transmission, which involves one-way delivery of information from teacher to student and is more restrictive than IRF exchanges). Clifton (2006), speaking of ESL classes, places “facilitative” interaction in contrast with interaction that occurs in the IRF exchange. In the facilitative classroom the students are more free to choose topics and act outside of what Clifton calls “the teacher’s web of power” (p. 142). Although in an ESL/EFL context these two orientations of the F-move could be equated with focus on form and focus on meaning (cf. Seedhouse 1996), the distinctions occur in other subjects as well. Barnes (2008) has divided classroom discourse into exploratory talk and presentational talk—the first used when students are “trying out ideas” and so less polished than the second which is used to present a finished answer. This resembles Gilbert and Mulkay’s (1984) ideas of the contingent repertoire and the scientific repertoire, except that where they are describing differences in discourse, Barnes’s purpose is more pedagogical. He believes that both types of talk are necessary in the classroom, but teachers tend to move the students into a presentational mode too soon (p.7). In order to make good use of exploratory talk, instructors need to make students feel safe enough to express their ideas. Barnes seems to feel that the presentational style is the only one that occurs during IRF exchanges. Scott (2008), in a study of science classrooms, divided classroom speech into dialogic and authoritative, with the first involving teachers’ asking for more opinions or details from students. This is actually part of a four-dimension framework, with interactive/non-interactive being the other dimension.

Cazden (2001) contrasts “traditional” classrooms, meaning those which use IRF exchanges, with more participatory, non-traditional classes and concludes that both have merit.

Besides specific reference to IRFs, there are other ways of interpreting discourse that contribute to our understanding of the power differential which seems to be inherent in classroom discourse. Several researchers have offered different frameworks which allow us to look at classroom discourse more closely. This could be seen as evidence that, since teacher questions and student responses are given in different contexts for different pedagogical purposes and involve different patterns of interaction, IRF may not be an adequate means of describing classroom discourse for some purposes.

Wright (2005) distinguishes between horizontal—everyday knowledge which is acquired in a variety of situations—and vertical discourse, which is more specialized knowledge acquired in more specialized circumstances. Both of these can occur in the classroom, but vertical discourse is more common. This fact leads to the teacher’s inherent power and authority (p. 48).

Walsh (2006) also sets up a framework that goes beyond IRF to interpret classroom discourse. His is called Self Evaluation of Teacher Talk (SETT) and consists of four modes. They are managerial mode, involving more teacher talk; materials mode, which tends to be form focused and use more IRF exchanges; skills and systems mode, which deals with specific language skills, and classroom context mode, which is more content focused and involves longer learner turns. These modes, particularly skills and systems mode, seem to be mainly applicable to the language classroom, although Walsh claims they could be applied to the tertiary classroom as well (p. 105). This allows longer pieces of discourse to be examined

than by IRF exchanges. The purpose of this framework is for teachers to be able to look at their own interactional patterns.

Although some authors have developed other frameworks or expanded on the IRF framework, IRF still remains a useful way to categorize classroom discourse. Building on this idea, several authors have categorized the F-move of such exchanges. Since this paper will explore criticism, which, although rare in tertiary contexts can be a part of the F-slot in such exchanges, we will examine these here. Most of these have to do with foreign language classrooms. This is probably because correction is more of a concern in the ESL classroom, and there is also more emphasis on whether or not students speak. While some of these categories do not apply to tertiary L1 classrooms, they can give us an idea of the possibilities of the F-move.

One thing that is has been categorized in the language classroom, and is also common in tertiary classrooms is what is called recasts (Lyster & Ranta 1997), or reformulation (Cullen 2002). In the language classroom this indicates an F-move in which the teacher restates a student's utterance with repair, but does not interrupt the discourse to do so. This is a frequent occurrence in discussion sections, although the reasons for it are probably more complex than repairing a student's language. Edwards and Mercer (1987), writing about classrooms in the lower grades, believed that restatement and paraphrase served to restate a student's answer in a more academically appropriate manner, or to bring it more in line with a teacher's lesson plan (P. 146). This may also be seen in the discussion sections in MICASE, although repetition and restatement can be used for several pedagogical purposes, including making sure that all students heard the answer.

Lyster and Ranta's (1997) other categories may not be limited to language classrooms, but they do reflect a concern with linguistic accuracy that may not be present in other contexts. They are explicit correction, clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation and repetition of error. Cullen (2002), also deals with ESL classes but is concerned with the discursial role of the F-move. Besides reformulation, there is *elaboration*, in his view a way that instructors have of making sure that other students understand the response, providing more input for the class, and letting students know that she is listening to their responses. A *comment* is the instructor's own spontaneous utterance related to the student's response. *Repetition* can be used for a variety of purposes. Finally, *responsiveness* means "the general quality the teacher exhibits of listening and responding meaningfully, and with genuine interest, to the content of what the student is saying" (p. 125). These types could be imagined in a discussion section and reflect the focus on meaning that the discursial role of the IRF pattern seems to correspond with.

It should be noted that certain features that have been identified as possibilities for filling the F-slot may also be used in a non-evaluative way by a fellow discussion participant. Waring (2002) has found several ways of showing "substantive reciprocity" used by participants in a seminar which can also be seen used by instructors in addition to, or in place of, evaluation in the F-move slot. The first is "reformulation," which differs from Cullen's (2002) definition above in that there need not be repair. In Waring's study of native and non-native English speaking graduate students, reformulation is used to show understanding of a fellow participant's contribution, but beyond that it can allow a third party to "pinpoint the heart of a diametrically opposed disagreement" or to solve the disagreement (p. 463). Waring also mentions that this move is often "a premove to negative assessment" (p. 463). It should be remembered that she is speaking here of peers who are co-participants in a discussion; it does not seem to have this function when used

by an instructor. What Waring calls “extending” is another way for participants to demonstrate understanding, by adding something such as an analogy or an example. It is similar to what Cullen calls a “comment,” but the purpose in this case is to “move the discussion forward to a level of heightened understanding” (p. 471). Unlike reformulation, extending is an affiliative move that preserves the previous speaker’s stance. (p. 471). The last form of substantive reciprocity that Waring finds is called jargonizing, in which the hearer gives an “in-group characterization to invoke the shared context that defines the group” (472). She believes that jargonizing is related to Jefferson’s (1987) idea of embedded correction. Waring claims that this is a way of “displaying knowledge and claiming shared expertise” (p. 474).

Lee (2007) has elucidated the idea that formal categorization of the third-turn in these exchanges can obscure the range of ways that instructors respond to local contingencies. He believes that categories may not “do justice to the multiple layers of interpretive work the third turn displays” whether the second turn is correct or incorrect (p. 181). His concern is to show how the teacher responds to the student’s second turn. He offers several examples of what can be found when the third-turn is examined in this light. One is *parsing* in which a teacher uses various means to make a question more manageable for students, in response to the students’ second turn of silence. The second example is *steering the sequences*, where the instructor has a preferred direction in which she wants the sequence to go, and uses questions in the third turn to guide it in this direction. The third way the teacher responds is by *intimating answers* or giving the students hints to guide them. In each example, Lee shows the many various ways that teachers respond to students and makes clear the “practical details of teaching that are contingent and ad hoc” (p. 202).

We should also examine the question of how teachers avoid giving any sort of feedback at all during the F-move. Although this may apply mostly to negative evaluation, and perhaps mostly to EFL/ESL contexts, it may be seen in university classrooms as well. Seedhouse (2004) has pointed out that the F-move is often left out, even when the focus is on form and accuracy rather than negotiating new knowledge. If there is an F-move in the exchange, it is usually positive. Seedhouse believes that, in an EFL/ESL classroom, if repair is not initiated the turn is understood to be acceptable. Teachers have other strategies for avoiding a negative F-move in this context, including asking a student to repeat the answer, repeating the error with a rising intonation, giving a reason that the answer is incorrect without saying explicitly that it is wrong, and supplying the correct form after accepting the incorrect form (p. 165). As we can see, most of these are specific to the ESL/EFL context, and depend on there being a single, easily identified trouble source in the student's response. In the case of university classrooms, where a student's contribution to a discussion section might be not what the teacher wanted for more complex reasons, most of these are not used. One exception is that instructors may be supplying a correct or more desirable answer after accepting an undesirable answer, but in most cases it is difficult to tell whether the instructor actually feels the response is undesirable, or is just adding a slightly different response to the discussion herself. Zemel and Koschmann (2010) looked extensively at reinitiating an IRF sequence with an initiation move in the feedback slot in order to avoid evaluating the students answer. Wright (2005:375) and Mercer (2001) also point out that instructors frequently ignore student errors, which Wright feels is done in order to encourage participation. Kramsch (1985: 178) identifies ignoring an answer and repeating the question as a form of negative assessment. Edwards and Mercer (1987) agree with this, listing, "Repeated questions

imply wrong answers” as one of the underlying understandings that teachers and students must have in order to participate in classroom discourse (p. 45). They point out that the IRF exchange indicates that the teacher’s move after the student’s response, being in the Feedback position, will naturally be seen as evaluative. If the move is to repeat the question, then the student’s Response move is understood to be not satisfactory (p. 46). Another method that has been identified is asking a series of different, easier questions to get the student to arrive at the answer herself. (Kasper, 1985).

It is evident from the attention paid to IRF patterns in the classroom that they are an important part in discovering the different roles and responsibilities that teachers and students have, and that examining them is frequently considered the first step in conceiving of a type of class in which students would participate more and have more control. Since one of the aspects of the IRF pattern that contributes most to the power differential is the F, or Follow-up move, a greater understanding of praise and criticism can add to a discussion of power in the classroom. As was mentioned before most of the studies quoted above were done in either a pre-college or ESOL context, in which more import is given to student participation and students are considered to need more encouragement in order to participate. Because of this, some aspects of the studies do not apply to the tertiary context. However, seminar instructors are definitely thinking about the interactional side of their classroom discourse and the balance of power. Evaluation is a significant part of this.

3.9.2 Repair and its application in the classroom

Just as compliments were used to compare ordinary speech with academic discourse in the case of praise, it may be useful to find an approximate equivalent in conversation for negative feedback in the classroom. This is not so easy, however, because of the different

forms that negative feedback can take. The idea of “repair” in conversation (Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks 1977) has been taken up by researchers into the discourse of the classroom (eg. Kasper 1985, McHoul 1990, MacBeth 2004), but they are generally speaking of correction as it occurs in the foreign language classroom. In that context, repair consists in a large part of pointing out linguistic errors, which was not found in the corpus data for seminars and discussion sections and which might be assumed to be a very small part of negative feedback in the university. We can gain insight also from criticism in other academic contexts (Hyland & Hyland 2001, Vasquez 2004),

Sacks (1973) noted a preference for agreement in conversation, and Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977) explored the organization of repair in conversation. Of the four types noted: self-initiated self-repair, self-initiated other-repair, other-initiated self-repair and other-initiated other-repair, Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks found a preference for self-repair, in both self-initiated and other-initiated forms. The “repair” which they speak of is not “contingent upon error, nor limited to replacement,” unlike what might usually be understood to be correction (p.363), and what might be meant by correction in a classroom. The repairs can follow any trouble with speaking, hearing or understanding. Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks themselves felt that this pattern probably only holds for a conversation in which the participants are relatively equal; they thought that other-correction might be more prevalent in such contexts as parent-child and teacher-student. Jefferson (1987) found two different patterns for repair—exposed and embedded. In the former the repair becomes the subject of the conversation while in the latter it does not, but the repair is adopted by the speaker. Exposed repair is often accompanied by an accounting by one interactant—apologizing, explaining, admitting, etc. While it the phenomenon of repair in

conversation may be different from correction in the classrooms, Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks's work has been applied to that context.

Kasper (1985) applied Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks's (1977) categories to the foreign language classroom, expanding their four categories to eight to account for the fact that there are two "others" who might repair a student's utterance: the teacher and another student (p.203). In examining two types of foreign language classroom, focused on form and focused on content, she finds differing results. In the form-focused classroom she finds the most common pattern is other-initiated other-repair, with the teacher frequently asking another student to complete the repair. In the content-focused phase, as in Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks, self-initiated self-repair was preferred. Unlike in the conversational data, other-initiated other repair was also "strongly represented" (p. 213). Rehbein points out that in ordinary conversation the speaker confirms the repair, where in educational discourse this is always done by the teacher (1984, quoted in Kasper 1985, p. 203).

McHoul (1990) examines repair with reference to Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977) in the classroom using data from a geography class. McHoul found a similar preference for self-repair, but with a great deal of other-initiation (by the teacher). Teachers, he found, use a variety of methods to show students where repair is needed, but leave actual repair to the students. MacBeth (2004) responds to McHoul by asserting that classroom correction and repair in natural conversation are not comparable: "whereas classroom correction seems tied to a normative order of correct and correctable replies, repair in conversation—and classrooms—is tied to the practical achievement of common understanding [. . .]" (p. 729). Hall (2007) makes a similar claim: that unlike repair sequences as they are described in the Conversation Analysis literature, correction in the

foreign language classroom does not interrupt the discourse but is instead part of it.

Norrick (1991), differs from Schegloff et. al.'s preference for self-correction by postulating that in any conversation, it is the participant who knows more about the subject who is the preferred one to correct. This would be an adult when speaking to a child and a teacher when speaking to a student. When the participants are relatively equal, however, then the one who knows most about the subject will be the speaker, and thus the preference is for him to correct.

Razfar (2005) points out that in Schegloff et. al's (1977) and other Conversational Analysis conceptions of repair, it is assumed that self- and other- repair are "neutral discourse practices used by speakers to maintain conversational equilibrium" (p.406). However, classroom repair takes place for instructional purposes rather than conversational ones. Teachers, Razfar finds, do not just use repair to show proper linguistic form, but also for a variety of "disciplinary and ideological purposes" (p.407).

In the area of academic English, there have been several analyses of criticism in the context of written discourse, and usually these are criticisms of writing, either of students (Hyland & Hyland 2001) or peers (Hyland 2000, Fortanet 2008, Itakura & Tsui 2009). While, criticism in spoken academic discourse can be hard to identify, criticism in its written form seems fairly clear, although it can be misinterpreted by students (Hyland & Hyland 2001). It has also been found to be less common in written discourse than praise is (Hyland 2000, Hyland & Hyland 2001). Criticism tends to be mitigated (Hyland 2000, Hyland & Hyland 2001, Fortanet 2008, Itakura & Tsui 2011) showing that there is a tension between interpersonal aspects and pedagogical (or institutional) goals in written

discourse as well. The forms of this mitigation have been shown to be culturally influenced (Itakura & Tsui 2011).

3.9.3 Face

Academia is sometimes ideally conceived of as a context in which criticism is freely exchanged because it is about ideas and not personal, and because criticism furthers the intellectual work of the academy (Tracy 1997, Tannen 2002). However, in reality interactional concerns are of course quite important. Even written academic discourse has been shown to include an interactional element (cf. Thompson 2003, Hyland 2005). When an instructor passes judgment on a student's response, even if positive judgement, in front of other students, interactional facets of discourse become very important. Giving and receiving feedback, both negative and positive, must therefore involve face concerns of some kind.

Several different interpretations of the concept of face have been developed since Goffman's (1967) explication of the term. One of the more influential studies on face was done by Brown and Levinson (1987), who develop their theory of politeness on the basis of face. They conceived of face as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" and further describe it as, "something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction" (p. 61). They defined face in terms of wants, positive and negative, which they claimed were universal. Negative face can be defined as the wish not to have others interfere with one's wants. Positive politeness Brown and Levinson define as the wish to have our wants desired by others, with "wants" very broadly defined. It might also be termed the desire to be liked or admired, or to be accepted as part of a group.

Brown and Levinson (1987) believe that some speech acts are intrinsically threatening to the speaker's or hearer's positive or negative face. These are called face-threatening acts (FTAs). Acts threatening the hearer's negative face are things, such as advice or requests, which suggest that the speaker will impinge upon the hearer's freedom. Those which threaten the hearer's positive face, such as criticism or disagreement, give evidence that the speaker does not think well of the hearer or care about his feelings. Acts which threaten the speaker's negative face are such acts as thanking and accepting an offer, both of which involve incurring a debt to the hearer which may cause the speaker's freedom to be impeded. Finally, acts which are threatening to the speaker's positive face include apologies and compliment responses, which may cause the speaker to disparage his own positive face.

Brown and Levinson (1987) therefore postulate several strategies that are used to minimize FTAs, which are expressed as a series of choices. The first is between doing the FTA and not doing it. If the speaker decides to do the FTA, the next choice of strategies is between off-record and on-record strategies. An off-record strategy is a hint or irony or similar strategy. Within on-record strategies, the speaker can choose to do the act Bald On Record, or without any sort of redress at all (for example, "Close the window!"). If the speaker chooses to do the FTA with redress, he can choose positive or negative politeness strategies. Positive politeness strategies can also be explained as friendliness or solidarity. They are meant to indicate to the hearer that he is thought well of or accepted as a member of the group. They include such things as expressing sympathy with or admiration for the hearer, using solidarity markers such as in-group terms, joking, or being optimistic. Politeness strategies which address negative face are, as Brown and Levinson point out,

what is known in lay terms as being polite; such strategies could also be termed respect or deference. They include minimizing imposition, using respect language, apologizing, and being pessimistic.

Although Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory has been highly influential, it has also received a great deal of criticism. Several researchers have pointed out that Brown and Levinson's (1987) nomenclature, with face being "positive" or "negative," is problematic. Bousfield (2008) points out that positive and negative politeness are in fact not dichotomous opposites as might be assumed from their nomenclature, "positive" and "negative" being polar antonyms (p.35). Scollon and Scollon's (1997) terms for the two sides of politeness avoid this problem. In their parallel conception of positive and negative face, these terms are called "involvement" and "independence." Involvement they define as "concerned with the person's right and need to be considered a normal, contributing, or supporting member of society," where independence "emphasizes the individuality of the participants. It emphasizes their right not be completely dominated by group or social values, and to be free from the imposition of others" (p. 47). As can be seen, this is quite similar to positive and negative face as postulated by Brown and Levinson (1987), and Scollon and Scollon mention that the terms have the same meaning (p. 47). However, in Scollon and Scollon's nomenclature, the two sides of face are not expressed as wants. Scollon and Scollon themselves claim that the terms avoid what they believe could be a problem—that people will associate "positive" with good and "negative" with bad, although in fact no value judgments are meant by the terms. Their politeness systems are different from Brown and Levinson's, based on power and difference rather than negative and positive strategies. Their first system, deference, occurs when the exchange is between two people who have psychological distance, but no distance in power. A solidarity

politeness system occurs between two people with no distance and no power disparity, and the hierarchical system occurs when there is a difference in power, with or without psychological difference.

One criticism of Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework has been that it is not, in fact "universal;" that they do not apply to all cultures, contexts, or situations, and that the two face wants expressed as "positive" and "negative" by Brown and Levinson (1987) do not describe all the face wants a person could have. Several researchers have pointed out that it is not always suitable in Asian contexts (Ide 1989, Matsumoto 1989). More applicable to the academic context is the work of Rees-Miller (1999). She found that in stating disagreements with professors, a FTA according to Brown and Levinson, the students tended to do them bald on record, without any sort of mitigation. Professors who disagreed with students, however, did the FTA with some mitigation. According to Brown and Levinson's theory, in which relative power, social distance, and imposition interact to produce the weightiness of an FTA, a student's disagreeing with a professor would be weightier than the reverse, since the professor is higher in status and has more power. She postulates that in the particular case of an academic environment, a student's disagreeing with a professor actually enhances the professor's positive face, since it upholds certain attributes which the professor may value such as being intellectually curious and questioning. This illustrates the important point that face may be more complex than the dichotomous framework laid out by Brown and Levinson. Further illustrating that face wants are in fact more complex than they appear in Brown and Levinson, Bousfeld (2008) explains that positive and negative politeness can occur in the same utterance (p.36). He has also pointed out that Brown and Levinson draw their examples from decontextualized speech. Looking at face in discourse may give us a much more complex picture. Arundale

(2006) also takes issue with Brown and Levinson's idea of inherent speech acts, believing that "no utterance inherently marks, signals, or encodes any specific face meaning or action" (p. 208). This agrees with the opinion of Bayraktaroglu (1991) who argued against politeness being treated as "something static, capturable in the grammatical characteristics of a single utterance" (p.5). To Tracy and Naughton (1994), Brown and Levinson's concept of face is very abstract. They believe, "People's situated identity concerns are more particular and contextualized than positive and negative face" (p.283), and point out that one person can also have conflicting face wants. Tracy and Carjuzáa (1993) have mentioned the decontextualized nature of Brown and Levinson's analysis as being problematic as well (p. 176). Spencer-Oatey (2007) has also claimed that the Brown and Levinson frame fails to account for the complexity of people's actual face wants in various situations. She believes that differing face wants may become more salient in different situations, explaining why people may choose one face want over another when they conflict. Certain value constructs, she feels, are more important to different people, and thus their face concerns may differ as well. Hiraga and Turner (1996), while using Brown and Levinson's conception of face to compare Japanese and British tutor-student interaction, found that different attention was paid to face wants, with the Japanese students attending more to the face wants of the tutor and the British students to their own. Clearly face wants and their import differ across cultures and contexts.

Another criticism of Brown and Levinson (1987) is that it is not complete, since it does not include rudeness or deliberate impoliteness, but only lack of politeness. In Brown and Levinson's theory, although a speaker can say a FTA bald on record and thus not attempt to redress the face threat, in actual speech speakers can actually enhance the face threat or perform "face attacking" (Tracy, 1998, Bousfield 2008, Culpeper 1996,

Rees-Miller 1999) strategies. Bayraktaroglu (1991) has added the idea of “face boosting” acts—compliments in the case of boosting the face of the hearer, boasts boosting the face of the speaker. Culpeper has developed a theory of impoliteness that is based on Brown and Levinson, delineating various impoliteness strategies in terms of positive or negative face. Bousfield (2008) also points out that the Brown and Levinson model, contrary to their claim, cannot give guidance on disarming aggression since it presupposes that polite behavior will prevent it (p.4).

Brown and Levinson’s (1987) concept of face as equivalent to politeness has also been challenged. Spencer-Oatey (2005) claims that politeness and face wants are in fact not the same thing, and one can threaten face without being impolite and vice versa. (p. 08). Arundale (2006) also focuses on face as distinguished from politeness. He believes that rather than being the social psychological phenomenon of self-image, face is “an emergent property of relationships, and therefore a relational phenomenon” (p.201). Rather than face being divided into positive and negative, Arundale sees relationships as being a matter of connectedness or separateness. Tracy and Baratz (1993) point out that Brown and Levinson do not address self-oriented face wants, making the theory of limited utility in some contexts.

Another important aspect of face is the meaning of the term itself. Many researchers have contrasted it with the term “identity,” with face having a meaning that is more tied to interaction. Tracy and Naughton (1994) use the term “identity,” which they feel means “self in situation” as opposed to “self” which refers to an individual’s internal state (p.282). “Face” also refers to the self in relationships, etc., but they believe the term “face” has an air of superficiality which they wish to avoid.

Spencer-Oatey (2007) agrees that face is an interactional phenomenon and differentiates between face and identity in several other aspects: face is positive, where identity can be either positive or negative; face has an affective aspect, where identity does not; and face is more easily threatened. Arundale also mentions that face is “a relational and interactional phenomenon” (2006:94). Tracy (1997) used the concept of “institutional identity” to explain a number of speaker behaviors when engaged in intellectual discussion. Intellectual identity refers to the way that participants in such discussion show their roles as professors, graduate students, etc. by their conversational actions. Institutional identity as conceived by Tracy is also interactional in nature. This concept is used as intellectual/institutional face in Tracy and Carjuzáa (1993), and they feel it expresses the relationship between a speaker and his or her ideas or intellectual competence, within the context of intellectual discussion.

With particular reference to Tracy (1997) and Tracy and Carjuzáa’s (1993) work on face in the academic environment, we can see that face concerns of both teachers and students may play an important role in the realization of feedback in spoken academic discourse. For the purpose of this research, Brown and Levinson’s (1987) conception of face and politeness is not so applicable, as positive and negative politeness strategies can be seen but are not common in feedback in the academic context. Rather, the broader and more complex sense of face will be applied to the giving of feedback.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to draw together many disparate threads which relate to various aspects of feedback in spoken academic discourse. First, general characteristics of spoken

academic discourse were reviewed. Metadiscourse as a frequent object of study in academic spoken English was examined (Swales 2001; Swales & Malczewski 2001; Lindemann & Mauranen 2001; Mauranen 2003, 2007, 2010; Ädel 2010; Hyland 1998, 2010; Swales & Burke 2003, Fortanet 2004). The many ways in which academic spoken discourse is supportive of novices was also reviewed (Mauranen 2002b, 2003; Rudolph 1994; Swales 2001, Fortanet 2004, Poos & Simpson 2002, Hyland 1999). This general review gives a background of some of the interpersonal aspects of academic spoken discourse. The next group of studies pertains to the first two projects of this thesis: praise in spoken academic discourse as compared to compliments in ordinary conversation, and as compared to praise in written academic discourse. To this end, the broad topic of the extent to which academic spoken discourse resembles ordinary conversation more than written academic discourse was examined (Biber 1988, 1995; Biber & Conrad 2001, Biber & Jones 2005; Csomay 2002). The difference between academic spoken English and conversation was explored with reference to institutional discourse (Drew & Heritage 1992, Hartford & Bardovi-Harlig 1992, Thonus 1999, Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford 1993). After this, some background studies on compliments and aspects in which they could be compared with praise were reviewed. (Manes & Wolfson 1981, Manes 1983, Wolfson 1983, Knapp, Hopper & Bell 1984).

Further background to the second project, comparing academic spoken English with academic written English, was next reviewed. The fact that academic speech contains more variation than academic writing has been explored in various ways (Dudley Evans & Johns 1981, Gilbert & Mulkay 1984, Swales 2001, Lindemann & Mauranen 2001). From that background, the specific context of feedback was explored, in student peer reviews (Johnson 1992, and instructors' written feedback on student writing (Hyland & Hyland 2001).

The third project deals with disciplinary differences and the effect these might have on praise. As background for this project, some studies were reviewed which examine disciplinary differences through corpora (Poos & Simpson 2002, Csomay 2007) and by looking at cultural differences among the disciplines (Biglan 1973a, 1973b, Becher 1994). Literature on the effect of the differing cultures on such things as curriculum planning and classroom activities was also reviewed (Neumann, Parry & Becher 2002, Handal et al. 1990; Luedekke 2003, Linblom-Ylänne et.al. 2006, Ylioki 2000).

The last project, on criticism, brought together a range of perspectives, and for this reason it required a review of a diverse range of studies. First, the IRF pattern and its pedagogical efficacy, were reviewed (Sinclair & Coulthard 1973, Mehan 1979, McHoul 1978, Mercer & Dawes 2008, Alexander 2008, Musumeci 1996, Wells 1993, Seedhouse 2004), and different types of interaction within the IRF pattern were reported (van Lier 1996, 2001; Cullen 2002, Barnes 2008, Cazden 2001). Other interpretations of classroom discourse (Wright 2005, Walsh 2006) were also discussed, as well as IRF-type exchanges outside of the classroom (Seedhouse 1996, Tsui 1989, Berry 1987, Antaki 2000). Then, repair in conversation and in the classroom (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks 1977; Kasper 1985, McHoul 1990, MacBeth 2004) and criticism (Hyland & Hyland 2001, Hyland 2000, Fortanet 2004, Itakura & Tsui 2009) were considered. Finally, there was a brief review of the key literature on face (Brown & Levinson 1987, Bousfield 2008, Scollon & Scollon 1997, Rees-Miller 1999, Arundale 2006, Spencer-Oatey 2007).

This literature review has been rather wide-ranging and illustrates the complex issues that are part of a study of feedback in a university classroom. While some broad

characterizations of academic spoken discourse have been made here, it is hoped that this research will enable a closer look at interaction in the classroom by examining feedback and what is known about academic spoken discourse at the present time.

COMPLIMENTS IN ORDINARY CONVERSATION AND PRAISE IN ACADEMIC SPOKEN DISCOURSE: A COMPARISON

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis as a whole will attempt to characterize spoken evaluation by tertiary-level instructors in several different ways. The first step to an exploration of praise in this context is to distinguish it from compliments. This will serve two purposes. The first is to set praise apart as a separate speech act which, although it shares certain characteristics with compliments, should be understood and explored in different ways. This will lay the foundation for the study of praise in a spoken context and the comparison across disciplines. The second purpose is to position this research within the context of academic spoken discourse. One of the main foci of research on academic spoken English is the difference between it and ordinary conversation. By looking at the ways in which compliments in ordinary conversation differ from praise in academic spoken English, and the reasons they might differ, we can add another dimension to this discussion.

It seems intuitive that praise in an academic context would be in some way different from compliments in ordinary speech. There seems to be general consensus that compliments are given for the broader purpose of establishing solidarity or making the hearer feel good (Wolfson & Manes 1980, Wierzbicka 1987). The immediate purpose can be to serve as a greeting or thanks for a meal (Wolfson & Manes, 1980), or for some other purpose. Wolfson (1984) believes that compliments in ordinary conversation can have a didactic purpose as well. She believes that one reason that women are thought to give and

get more compliments, particularly about appearance, is that compliments are given to reinforce desired behavior, in this case being attractive. All of these reasons are probably part of an instructor's impetus for giving praise. However, at least ostensibly, the main reason for praising students is probably to acknowledge a correct or desirable answer to the student as well as other hearers, to reward the students for the answer or for other behavior (diligence in study or originality of thought, for example), and to encourage all of the students to behave in a similar fashion. So, at least in terms of speaker's motivation, praise and compliments are not the same thing. This study shows several other ways in which they differ.

This chapter shows the results of a comparison between praise in academic spoken English and what is known about compliments in ordinary speech. First, the semantics and syntax of praise in the British Academic Spoken English (BASE) corpus was compared with those of compliments as found by Wolfson and Manes (1981). Praise was also examined within discourse to see the differences between it and compliments.

Several significant differences between praise and compliments can be found when we examine the structure and use of praise and compare it with what is known about compliments. The first is that praise seems to be tied more strongly to role than compliments are, with students hardly ever praising instructors in this context and, if they do, showing evidence of non-congruence, that is, an awareness that they may be acting in a way that is not appropriate for their own status relative to their instructor's (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford 1990). Second, it can be observed that where a reply, usually thanks, is obligatory in the case of compliments, it is not obligatory and may be inappropriate in the case of praise. Evidence was also found that praise differs from compliments in the extent

to which it is contextualized. These things seem to point to fundamental differences in the function of praise and compliments.

4.2 METHOD

Both the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE) and the British Academic Spoken English (BASE) corpus were examined. The BASE corpus was used for this section because, although it does not have as great a variety of types of speech events as MICASE does, it has more examples of each. BASE has 160 lectures and 40 seminars. Although there were about 15 lectures that were not entirely monologic, seminars yielded much more interaction and thus more praise. For this reason, it was decided to focus on the analysis of seminars. The seminars in BASE come from four major academic discipline areas: Arts and Humanities (AH), Life and Medical Sciences (LS), Physical Sciences (PS), and Social Sciences (SS). Ten transcripts are available for each area. The BASE corpus was collected at the universities of Warwick and Reading, and is almost entirely transcribed and available on the Internet.

Each transcript was carefully read twice and possible instances of praise were marked. After this, a search was done for the words “right” and “good” in each transcript, to be reasonably sure that all instances of praise were found. All of the examples of praise were categorized into syntactic patterns as described below. For the semantic analysis, each example of praise was categorized according to the part of speech of the word carrying the positive semantic load. Then, the number of different tokens for each part of speech was analyzed. After this, praise was examined within the discourse to see if differences from compliments could be found in the way it is used.

4.2.1 Total counts

Praise, as defined below, comprised 1,653 of the 425,650 total number of words in the transcribed seminars. This is about .3% of the total number of words in these transcripts, and .6% of words spoken by the instructor.

4.2.2 What is praise?

The definition of praise used in these projects is discussed at length in Chapter 2, but will be briefly stated here. In this project as in the rest of the thesis, praise was defined as a positive assessment of a student's performance, or an acknowledgement of a student's response as correct

right

well done

some of you have done simply outstanding (**ah009**)

In almost all cases, this included a positive word, usually an adjective but occasionally a verb.

Although one of the more common ways of acknowledging that a desired answer has been is to repeat or restate this answer, these were not included in the syntactic or semantic analyses, or the total count of praise.

In order to be counted as praise, the utterance had to occur in the feedback slot of an Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) pattern (Sinclair & Coulthard 1975, Mehan 1979a). The Initiation, in most cases is either a question or a discussion topic proposed by the instructor. The Response generally consists of the student's answer or contribution to the

discussion. Praise then comes in the next slot, Feedback. Having the praise occur only in this pattern ruled out such utterances as:

STUDENT: Are we on page 154?

INSTRUCTOR: That's right

In addition, the words *yeah* and *OK* could conceivably be used as praise, but were not counted here because it is not possible to tell when they are being used as praise and when they are being used as discourse markers. For similar reasons, *right* is only counted as praise if it is followed by a restatement or other praise words.

After these expressions were taken out of the transcript, the remainder of positive teacher responses to students' answers or discussion contributions were all analyzed as praise.

4.3 SEMANTIC ANALYSIS

One of the more surprising findings about compliments in the literature was that they are very restricted, both semantically and syntactically, in the way that they are realized (Manes & Wolfson 1981, Wolfson 1983). Knapp, Hopper and Bell (1984) found similar results.

Semantically, although compliments can be found using a wide range of adjectives, two-thirds of adjectival compliments use one of five adjectives: *nice*, *good*, *pretty*, *beautiful*, and *great*. Compliments are similarly formulaic with regards to syntax. Eighty-five percent of compliments make use of one of only three formulas: *NP is/looks (really) ADJ*; *I really like/love NP*; and *PRO is (really) (a) ADJ NP*. Wolfson and Manes (1980:

124) point to the function of compliments in explaining this regularity. They claim that, since the main function of a compliment is to create a feeling of solidarity, it is important that the compliment be formulaic and relatively free of originality which could create distance. Further, since compliments frequently are unconnected to the context of the conversation, or occur without a context, it is important that they be easy to identify.

As has been stated, it is a common-sense conclusion that praise has a different purpose from compliments. Although praise may be used for solidarity in some cases, we might expect that praise, being more status-based, will actually increase distance. If this is the case and if Manes and Wolfson's (1981) conclusion that the lack of originality in compliments is due to their function as solidarity-building devices, then we might expect praise in academic settings to be less formulaic. It is also expected that, if praise is didactic in nature, it might contain more information on what exactly the student did correctly and how this is important. This would also lead to less reliance on adjectives with a weak semantic load than can be found in compliments. The fact that compliments are not connected to previous speech may also lead to differences, as praise in a university is obviously frequently connected with a student's correct answer.

In the majority of instances of praise found in BASE, as in Manes and Wolfson's data, the adjective carries the positive semantic load (1981:116). Indeed, the percentage is over 80% in both sets of data. Of the 312 examples of praise in which a positive word can be identified, 280 are adjectival. Although Manes and Wolfson found a wide range of positive words in their data, 72 different types in all, in BASE we might expect a smaller number because there is a smaller set of things being modified. Where Manes and Wolfson's data comprise compliments on appearance, personal attributes, and possessions,

the praise in BASE is directed either to the student and her or his personal skill or intelligence, or to some sort of intellectual performance. However, in BASE we find a total of 33 different adjectives, a wide variety considering the fact that there are fewer tokens in all. As with Manes and Wolfson, who found a large concentration of compliments like *good* and *nice*, in BASE over 60% of the adjectival praise uses only two adjectives: *right* and *good*. Other adjectives often used were *excellent* (N=14, 5%), *great* (N=11, 3.92%), and *interesting* (N=18, 6.42%). If all five of these are taken together, we have a result very similar to Manes and Wolfson's: over 80% of adjectival praise in BASE uses one of these adjectives. (See appendix C-1)

As in Manes and Wolfson (1981), very few praise tokens contain adjectives in the comparative or superlative, which might indicate that it is unusual to compare one student to another student. There is only one instance in which that happens:

I think Laura's way is actually the better way

(ss006)

The other use of the comparative compares two performances by the same group of students.

Although Manes and Wolfson (1981) do not look at the nouns that these adjectives are modifying, probably because of the infinite variety of possibilities, in BASE there is a much smaller number and so we can examine these more closely. The most common such noun is *point*, but *question* and *idea* also occur more than once. All of the nouns modified by these adjectives describe some sort of intellectual performance or effort (e.g.: *effort*, *question*, *argument*, *suggestion*, *job*, *plan*). None of the adjectival praise describes the student him/herself, as in "You're a good student," for example, although *Good for you*

occurs twice. This might indicate that more impersonal praise is preferred in academic settings.

For a much smaller number of praise tokens the verb carries the positive semantic load—that is, praise using verbs of positive evaluation such as “like.” There are only ten examples in BASE. In Manes and Wolfson’s data, such compliments are as limited semantically as adjectival ones, with 80% of the them using the words *like* or *love*. (1981: 118). Although the number of tokens of praise in which the verb carries the positive semantic load in the BASE corpus is so small that it cannot be considered representative, they show a similarly limited pattern. *Impress* is the verb in six of the ten examples, with *please* and *like* making up the others. Although the impersonality of praise mentioned above might account for the words *like* and *love* being avoided, *impress* might be too strong a word for most student performance, which might account for the paucity of verb-based praise in the BASE data.(See Appendix C-2)

In adverbial praise, the adverb used was even more restricted. The most commonly used adverb is, unsurprisingly, *well* which always modifies *done*. The other adverbs used were *eloquently*, *clearly*, *outstanding*, and *great*.

You voiced it there very well clearly eloquently

(ah007)

We have seen the essays and by and large they are
super so i’m very very pleased with your results some
of you have done simply outstanding (ah009)

It’s coming great so far (ps003)

In BASE, as in Manes and Wolfson's (1981) data, there were instances of intensifiers being used by themselves as praise—in the case of BASE *absolutely*, which so often modifies *right* that it can stand in for it. (See appendix D).

Although it was thought that the didactic purpose of praise would make it necessary to use a larger range of positive words, praise was almost as restricted semantically as compliments are. One reason that this may be the case is that some of the praise occurs in classes where the instructor is asking questions of the students, rather than introducing a discussion topic. In many cases these are display questions, with a small range of desirable answers. In this situation, the students already understand that they are being praised for a correct answer, so further elaboration beyond “right” or “good” is not necessary.

There are a few examples of longer praise with a less restricted number of words being used. Unlike in Manes and Wolfson (1981) there were several instances of praise in which no one word had a positive meaning, and the praise had to be interpreted from the context. In this case, usually the instructor is describing the behavior in such a way that students understand that it is praiseworthy.

These are the sorts of arguments we'd hear in court
(ss006)

from a law classroom, is one example.

You had realized the numbers were not necessarily
going to be one to six(ps003)

occurs in a longer unit of praise, and describes how a group of students did better in a game of logic.

That's something not many people realize (ps003)

in response to an answer, also describes how the student's knowledge or behavior is desirable. These types of praise tend to be longer than the ones using positive adjectives, perhaps because it takes more words to make it clear to the student that they are being praised. Usually, this sort of praise occurs not when the student has given a correct answer, but in response to some sort of performance—participation in a mock court, in the first example, in a game in the second. So, the supposition that praise might be less varied semantically than compliments because of its didactic purpose may not be entirely incorrect, but there are relatively few instances in which praise is used to actually point out desirable behavior, rather than merely acknowledging a correct answer.

One of the most striking differences between the praise found in BASE and the compliments that Manes and Wolfson (1981) found is in the realm of deixis. Manes and Wolfson found that 75% of their compliments contain the deictic elements *you* or *that*. This, they claim, shows that usually compliments are not connected to the previous utterance, so the subject of the compliment must be specially pointed out (1981:119). When we look at deixis in BASE there is quite a different result. Overwhelmingly, where deixis is present, *that* is the deictic word, with 102 tokens or 31.24% of the total of deictic terms in the corpus. *You* occurs only 27 times or 5% of the total. This may be another indicator that there is a tendency toward impersonalization in praise which is not present, or is less present, in compliments. As was mentioned before, the object of the praise tends to be some kind of accomplishment, knowledge or performance of the student, more rarely the student her- or himself. However, the point which makes a stronger contrast with Manes and Wolfson is the fact that in the majority of cases, there is no deixis at all. As will be discussed in the section on syntax, much of the praise found in BASE consists of

utterances such as *very good*, *well done* and similar expressions, where the subject is completely omitted. This illustrates another major difference between praise and compliments: from these data it seems that praise cannot be separated from the context, since the thing being praised is usually part of the context itself. This contrasts with compliments, according to Manes and Wolfson, which require deictic elements such as *you* or *that* because they are separate from the context. In almost all cases, the thing being praised is the answer to a question or a contribution to a discussion. In a few rare cases they deal with a previous performance (paper, presentation, etc.) of some kind. So all the participants are aware that when the instructor says, “Good” he or she is referring to a student’s previous utterance. This might show support for Manes and Wolfson’s assertion of the meaning of deixis in their data, as well as for the idea that praise and compliments serve different purposes.

4.4 SYNTACTIC ANALYSIS

Syntactic analysis found that, although praise in BASE does not show the extreme formulaic quality found in compliments, instructors do tend to prefer a limited group of syntactic patterns when giving praise. The following patterns were found:

(I think) NP COP (INTENS) ADJ
 (INTENS) ADJ
 (I think) NP COP (DET) (INTENS) ADJ NP
 (I think) NP VP (DET) (INTENS) ADJ NP
 (I think) NP VP (NP) (INTENS) ADV
 I like/be pleased with/be impressed by NP
 (See Appendix D).

Most common is the following pattern:

(I think) NP COP (INTENS) ADJ
 that’s right
 i thought that watching it was very impressive (ps004)
 i think your argument’s right (ss003)
 somebody’s awake and alive (ls008)

This pattern occurs in over one-third (33.43%) of the data (113 of 337 examples of praise)
 Of all the utterances in the (I think) NP COP (INTENS) ADJ pattern, the most commonly occurring is *that's right*. 24% of the utterances in this pattern, a total of 25, are made up of this utterance.

The next most common is a pattern of a single adjective, sometimes with an intensifier.

(*INTENS*) *ADJ*
 excellent
 not bad
 very interesting
 absolutely right

This pattern accounted for another 29.28% of the data, 99 of 337 examples. It should be acknowledged that when the instructor gave the same word in praise several times (e.g. “right, right, right”) each adjective was counted separately, so the praise with this pattern is not always as perfunctory as it appears.

The next most common pattern is the same, but the adjective modifies a final noun:

(*I think*) *NP COP (DET) (INTENS) ADJ NP*
 that's a good effort (**1s004**)
 that's a super analysis (**ss004**)

11.83% of the praise found in BASE has this pattern. A variation on this has another verb in place of the copula.

(*I think*) *NP VP (DET) (INTENS) ADJ NP*
 you've raised such an important subject (**1s003**)
 i think you did a good job
 i think what you're pointing to is an interesting question (**ah005**)

This accounts for 5.62 % of the total praise. Interestingly, the verbs “seem” and “look” and the like, which occur in place of copula verbs in some data (Johnson, 1992) do not occur here.

A few more patterns are much less common. A single adverb plus verb pattern occurs in 2.95 % of the data, for a total of 10 examples. This pattern in BASE is only realized with one adverb and verb combination:

ADV VP
well done

Longer sentences in which the adverb was the positive word were also present, and these showed a little more variety:

(I think) NP VP (NP) (INTENS) ADV
you voiced it there very clearly (**ah007**)
that works well(**ps002**)

This accounts for another 3.84% of the praise, with 13 examples.

There are 6 instances of an adjective plus a noun in the 37 examples, 1.17% of the total praise;

ADJ NP
good point
nice one

As was mentioned in the semantic analysis, very little of the praise consists of a positive verb rather than an adjective or adverb. This pattern occurs in only 10 examples, or 2.95% of the data:

I like/be pleased with/be impressed by NP
i like the idea (**ss001**)
i'm impressed by your structure (**ah003**)
i'm pleased with your results (**ah009**)
we should feel quite pleased with the way these arguments went
(SS010)

There is another group of praise utterances which do not fit into any of the patterns above. These tend to correspond to the category of praise mentioned in the section on

semantic analysis, which have no specifically positive words. In several cases they have no adjectives or adverbs at all.

you were working as a team (**ps004**)
that's the thing with good things if they happen the team tend to
make them happen (**ps003**)
you had realized the numbers were not necessarily going to be from
one to six (**ps003**)

In these cases, as in the ones present in the semantic analysis, the students are able to understand from the context that the behavior being described is desirable. This further supports a difference between praise and compliments that was pointed out in the section on semantics: they are clearly, sometimes inextricably, tied to the context of the interaction. In some cases these examples are clearly praise because of the immediate context. For example in, "You had realized the numbers were not necessarily going to be one to six," the students understand that this is a good thing in the context of a game. In the case of, "these are exactly the sorts of arguments we'd hear in court," the context is more global, with students understanding that this is praise in a law classroom.

Overall it can be said that praise is very limited in terms of how it is realized. In this respect it resembles compliments, according to Manes and Wolfson (1981), although the potential variety of formulae is broader and more dependent on features of the co-text.

4.5 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Praise has several clear differences from compliments in terms of discourse. First, although the role of status in giving compliments has been discussed (Manes & Wolfson 1981; Knapp, Hopper & Bell 1984) it seems clear that there is a much stronger connection between praise and status. In an academic situation, praise seems to go in only one

direction: from instructors to students, or higher to lower status. In the BASE transcripts, there were no instances of a student giving any sort of performance evaluation to a teacher. In MICASE, this only happens twice.

S5: and also i just, wanna say something um, i just wanna say that it's, very rare that i feel comfortable in a class, enough to like talk and it, usually doesn't happen and it took me a little while but i just wanna say that this is, a class that, i definitely felt, (like contributing something) **(MICASE, Anthropology of American Cities Office Hours)**

S6: hey i i loved the class i just wanted to tell you. **[S2: good, i'm glad]** i thought at first like just driving that far, i'm like oh i hope the class is good **<S2 LAUGH>** and now it's like, and everyone's like wow you must really like that class to drive that far i'm like no it's like it_ the drive doesn't even seem that bad anymore and **[. . .] (MICASE, Anthropology of American Cities Office Hours).**

In these cases a great deal of hedging and disfluency can be seen, neither of which seems to be obligatory when teachers praise students. Although theoretically hedging is not necessary when giving a compliment, there are times when complimenting constitutes a Face-Threatening Act (Johnson 1992, Brown & Levinson 1987). (Face is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7). Johnson, for example, believes that a compliment given “arrogantly or inappropriately” can imply that the giver of the compliment claims knowledge of the subject (p. 62). Hedging does not seem to serve this purpose when it was found in the BASE transcripts, however—it is mostly used to express genuine doubt or mixed feelings about the student’s answer. The students’ speech can not be described as inappropriate, and in fact the teacher in this situation seems pleased with the praise. The phenomenon that the students above may be showing can perhaps best be explained by referring to Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford’s (1993) term “congruence,” meaning acting in

accordance with one's relative status. In the examples above, the students may be showing, by their hedging and disfluency, that they are acting in a way that does not correspond to their status as students. It may be significant, also, that both of these cases occur during the professor's office hours (that is, in a private moment when other students will not be listening). They are also directed at the same teacher, who for some reason may be more approachable or easier to give praise to.⁶ This seems to be evidence that, although compliments are sometimes tied to status, praise and status are more strongly linked, with lower-status speakers who give praise taking pains to mitigate it.

Another discourse difference between praise and compliments is that, while compliments require a response, a response to praise seems infelicitous. There are only two instances of response to praise in MICASE, both facetious. There are none in BASE.

S1: mhm i see where you're going and i think it's a really good point to press him on, um

S3: too bad he's dead (MICASE, Philosophy Discussion Section)

S1: yeah so that's a nice way to think of it. i mean so basically what happens is you have

S9: i don't understand what i just said. <SS LAUGH> no seriously i (MICASE, Philosophy Discussion Section)

⁶ Other anecdotal evidence supports the idea that praising in a classroom may not be appropriate for the speaker with lower status. An excerpt from a discussion forum about teaching on the website of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* might serve as an example. In a discussion of annoying students, one poster offers the story of a teaching assistant who overheard the poster's discussion with another colleague of various ways to teach a certain class. "After my colleague left, my TA then proceeded to give me *his* impressions of my lecture. He did it again today after class, offering his critique of one part of the lecture and giving me an overall "good job" before he left." The poster clearly felt that the TA's praise was presumptuous. ("Dr. Seuss", 2008).

In the first instance, the “him” referred to by both S1, the instructor, and S3, the student, is Immanuel Kant, and the student responds humorously to the idea that he can “press” him on something. In the second instance, the student more blatantly disavows the content which the instructor praised. Again, these instances both come from the same class, so there may be something in the classroom atmosphere which encourages such responses. We can see that responses to praise are extremely rare, however, since none of the approximately 380 tokens of praise found in BASE received any type of response that was recorded. Recordings are audio only, so the student may have smiled or looked pleased, but a spoken response does not seem necessary. This would seem to provide evidence that praise is used for a different purpose than compliments. A compliment which garnered no response would be failing in its purpose of encouraging solidarity among participants, and its more immediate purpose of starting a conversation or changing the subject.

4.6 CONCLUSION

As we have seen, compliments in ordinary speech and praise in academic spoken English differ in several important respects. In terms of semantics and syntax, although praise and compliments resemble each other in that they both use a relatively limited syntactic and semantic pattern, they differ in the use of deixis. Unlike compliments, which tend to use the deictic elements “you” and “that”, one of the most frequently used syntactic patterns omits deixis entirely. Manes and Wolfson (1981) believe that this has to do with the necessity of pointing out the subject of the compliment. Compliments, they show, are independent of context, for which reason they sometimes serve as a greeting exchange. In contrast to this, praise is very closely linked to the context. It is almost always given in response to a previous comment, so deixis is not necessary. This in turn shows us that

praise differs in its discourse purpose. Praise could not, for example, usually be used as a greeting in the classroom, or to change a subject, as compliments frequently are.

In terms of discourse, praise is much more strongly tied to status than compliments are. Compliments also require a response, usually thanks, but this is rarely seen when students are praised in academic situations. Thanks was never seen as a response to praise in either the MICASE or BASE corpora. This phenomenon also could be explained by the fact that praise has a different purpose than do compliments. If compliments are used to start conversations or to change topics as Manes and Wolfson (1981) believe, it seems clear that this is not the case with praise. In the IRF exchange, the floor is usually returned to the instructor after a positive evaluation, so any sort of response is dispreferred at this time (Wong & Waring 2009). This might also be due to the fact that, as several other studies have pointed out, academic speech usually has an institutional agenda and thus is operating under time constraints (Hartford & Bardovi Harlig 1992, Thonus 1999). It is possible that this is evidence that the most important goal of praise is not to give pleasure to the hearer. If all the parties are aware that the goal is something other than pleasing the hearer, then thanks is not necessary.

This leaves us with the question of the purpose of praise from a discourse perspective. Although it may seem obvious that the purpose of praise is to acknowledge and reward a correct answer, and concurrently to encourage other students to continue to do well, it may have other uses as well. Unlike compliments which are used to start conversations, praise may be actually used for the opposite purpose—to signal that nothing more is wanted from the student's answer and to reclaim the floor. The shorter praise is

used to show that a single student no longer has the floor, where extended praise can be used to signal a shift in the focus of the class, as in the quote below:

i thought both sides did a very good job at
putting forward a coherent argument i was
impressed by your structure i mean i thought you
both had good good form to your presentation but i
think what we should be doing now is we should
perhaps now be moving away
from just the the argument and thinking about
whether we could do some crossing over [. . .,]
(ah003)

A similar point was made by Wong and Waring (2009). Using Conversation Analysis, they found that the expression “very good” tended to end a student’s contribution to a discussion. They suggested that English as a Second Language teachers use caution with this expression to avoid cutting off a student’s contribution.

The aspect in which praise resembled compliments, the fact that they are both limited syntactically and semantically, might point to the fact that praise has an important interpersonal purpose. Compliments, after all, were thought by Manes and Wolfson (1981) to be so limited because they are vital to establishing solidarity. Hearers must be able to quickly understand that they are being complimented. The fact that praise is similarly limited may mean that it is similarly important for students to understand that they are being praised. Lack of originality may make it easier and less time-consuming for instructors to use this mode of creating solidarity and encouraging students.

It seems from this evidence we can confidently say that although the terms are often used interchangeably, praise and compliments are not the same phenomenon. They are realized in different ways, serve different purposes, and are acknowledged by the hearer differently. The differences in praise might be able to be explained by the fact that,

unlike compliments in ordinary conversation, they have an institutional agenda. It is also possible that while compliments are given for the purpose of pleasing the listener, and for starting a conversation or changing the subject, neither of these is true for praise.

A COMPARISON OF POSITIVE EVALUATION IN SPOKEN AND WRITTEN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This project will examine the extent to which academic spoken English resembles academic written English with respect to praise. As was pointed out in the literature review, one of the major goals of studies of spoken academic discourse is to determine whether it is more like academic ordinary conversation or academic written English (Swales 2001). In the previous section, a comparison was made between praise in spoken academic discourse and compliments in ordinary conversation, to address the first part of the question. The current section addresses the latter part. As will be shown, there are several challenges to this comparison, some to do with the differing purposes and characteristics of spoken classroom feedback and evaluation of academic writing, and others with the fact that the interpersonal aspect of written academic discourse has not been researched as much as that of ordinary conversation. Nevertheless, in order to explore the major concerns of academic spoken discourse, it was felt to be a worthwhile subject of research.

There are several issues relating to the comparison of academic spoken discourse with academic written English in general, and the comparison has so far remained inconclusive. The discipline or general area of study seems to have a great influence on what kind, and what amount, of language is used in both spoken and written academic English, with the humanities and social sciences being shown to vary substantially from the hard sciences. However, in general, it has been found that spoken academic English

has more variation than written academic English (Dudley-Evans & Johns 1981; Swales 2001). It also shows more contingency (Gilbert & Mulkay 1984; Lindemann & Mauranen 2001; Swales 2001). Gilbert and Mulkay describe the contingent repertoire as being contrasted with the empiricist repertoire in which conclusions are shown to have been drawn only from evidence, and thus the contingent repertoire manifests as more “personal” and “open to debate” (1984: 46). Academic speech, therefore, shows the process of coming to a conclusion to be more complex and problematic. Other studies, such as that of Poos and Simpson (2002) give further dimension to the idea of differences between academic spoken English in social sciences and in the hard sciences. Although spoken academic discourse in general seems to show more variation than written academic English, hard sciences seem at this juncture to show less variation than social sciences and humanities, perhaps because the concepts that these subjects deal with are more fixed and require less interpretation.

For this project we will be examining the differences between praise in academic spoken discourse as it is found in the British Academic Spoken English (BASE) and Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE) corpora and published studies of praise in written academic discourse—that is, written evaluations of written work. Unlike compliments in ordinary speech, praise in written academic English has not been the subject of much study. Although there have been a few studies done on feedback given by teachers on student papers, the majority of this deals with its pedagogical efficacy. Walker (2009), for example, deals with different types of comments and how “usable” students find them, based on student interviews. The extent to which feedback, either spoken or written, causes change in student behavior would be an interesting topic and one which has not been studied in the spoken context. Mauranen (2002a) has pointed out that

spoken discourse is largely the route by which novices are socialized into academic culture (p. 115). She also believes that the frequency of evaluative language in spoken academic discourse indicates a certain amount of explicit socialization taking place (p.136).

However, with a spoken corpus it is not possible to conduct interviews with the anonymous participants, and since the corpus comprises only a single class in various subjects, we cannot see improvement or the lack thereof. Instead, we will look at several studies which deal with the type of language chosen to write feedback, and the discourse purpose of praise in written feedback. These studies deal with several different types of feedback, although they all fall into the category of written academic discourse: feedback given by teachers on student papers (Hyland & Hyland 2001), peer feedback given on student writing (Johnson 1992), feedback given to academic articles by peer reviewers prior to publication (Fortanet 2008), and book reviews published in academic journals (Hyland 2000). These studies vary a great deal in the type of context they represent.

Although there are many studies of written feedback, they tend to focus on pedagogical efficacy. Through these four studies, although they deal with different contexts, we can get some idea of syntax (Johnson and Fortanet), semantics (Johnson and Hyland) and interpersonal issues (Johnson, Hyland, and Hyland & Hyland) of praise in written academic English. Spoken praise data was compared with written praise exemplified in each of these studies, and in all cases was found to have less variation and range.

5.2 PRAISE IN WRITTEN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE

Four key studies form the basis of our comparison of praise in spoken and written academic discourse. Johnson (1992) examines written compliments in the context of peer reviews by graduate students. The participants in this task were given a task, by the researcher, of reviewing essays by their peers. They were specifically asked to write what

they liked about the essay. She compared complimenting in this context with what is known about compliments in speech (for example from Manes & Wolfson 1981; Manes 1983; Wolfson 1983; and Holmes 1988b) and also examined the compliments within the framework of Brown and Levinson's politeness universals (1987). Hyland and Hyland (2001) look at feedback given to ESL students from their instructors. Their data come from not only samples of praise and criticism, but also interviews and think-aloud protocols. Their study focuses more on the efficacy of the praise and criticism, rather than structure and function, although they do point out several characteristics of written feedback. Fortanet (2008) examines a different sort of peer review—those that are given to potential authors in academic journals to help them revise their writing or tell them why the submitted article will not be published. She analyzes the language in terms of Halliday's (1985) metafunctions and also analyzes the reviews as face threatening acts (FTAs) which puts them in the context of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory. Finally, Hyland (2000) studies praise and criticism in book reviews appearing in academic journals. He also looks at the interpersonal use of praise in such reviews, and finds many differences between reviews of texts in different disciplines.

Before describing the commonalities among the different pieces of research on praise in written academic discourse, we should acknowledge the differences. The most striking of these is status. Status can have an impact on the types of praise that are given in several ways. First, it is acknowledged (in Johnson 1992 and Hyland & Hyland 2001) that someone reviewing a work for any purpose is assumed to be in a position to evaluate it. Someone who is clearly in a position of status and is acknowledged to have at least as much expertise as the writer may be thought to have the "right" to give feedback on the work. Yet even this is not entirely unproblematic. Assuming that we have the right to

praise a student's work is a concern even for teachers of ESL writing, who seem to be clearly of higher status and expertise (Hyland & Hyland, 2001). One teacher that Hyland and Hyland interview explains that she wants to respond as "a reader rather than a know-it-all teacher" (p. 200). However, instructors may feel some conflict about this, as they also believe that students are insecure about their writing and need positive feedback (p. 192). This is much more clearly the case for student peer evaluators. Johnson found what she interpreted as evidence of anxiety about evaluating one's peers in her study. It should also be pointed out that giving a compliment was part of the task given to the participants in her study, so they may have been praising their peers even more than they felt comfortable with.

Seniority in academia is also a factor which may affect the use of praise in written discourse, even among peers. Johnson's (1992) peer reviewers are students, where Fortanet's (2008) and Hyland's (2000) are all established academics, although, theoretically, peers. Tracy and Baratz (1993), in a study of colloquia at an American university, have shown that academics are more blunt with peers than they are with graduate students, in the belief that the graduate student needs more nurturing. We could therefore assume also that the feedback given by academic professionals contains more criticism than that given either to students by peers or to students by teachers. Since, as will be discussed later, criticism is often mitigated by praise, this may affect the type of praise that is given.

Another factor that may affect the type of praise given is the relative anonymity of the review. In peer reviews of manuscripts as studied by Fortanet (2008) the review may be blind, in which the reviewer and the writer of the manuscript are unknown to each

other; it may be anonymous, when the reviewer knows the writer of the manuscript but the reverse is not true; or it may be open. Since it is possible that a blind review may contain less praise, this may affect the type of data collected. At the other end of the spectrum is the published book review, in which not only are the writer of the book and the writer of the review known to each other, but the review has an audience of many other readers, although the writer of the book may be assumed to be its principle audience (Hyland 2000.). As Hyland points out, since the both the writer and the reviewer of the book belong to the same professional milieu, the act of criticizing it may constitute a real social threat.

We can see that the amount of feedback devoted to praise vis à vis criticism is very different in each genre. Hyland (2000) shows that over half of the evaluative comments, 57%, are positive in his study of published book reviews. He further notes that negative criticisms tend to be specific, where positive criticisms are global, something he attributes to politeness concerns (p. 48). Hyland and Hyland (2001) find that 44% of the comments made by instructors on student papers can be categorized as praise, as opposed to 31% which are categorized as criticism. However, this contrasts with other published studies of praise, which find the amount of praise in instructor feedback to be as low as 6% (Daiker 1989). If the larger number is more accurate, this is quite different from peer referee reports on articles intended for publication, in which positive comments accounted for only 11% of the total comments (Fortanet 2008: 31). (Johnson's [1992] study cannot be compared on this point since she instructs her participants to give praise.)

Although it can be seen that there are several pertinent differences in these types of writing which may affect the purpose, amount, and other characteristics of praise, all of

these easily fit into the category of academic discourse—two actually take place in the classroom while the other two may reasonably be expected to be studied in one. If we compare praise in spoken discourse with these four studies, we can get a sense of how they compare. Spoken praise in the classroom shares various characteristics with each of these types of feedback, which will be examined later. First, we will look at differences in context between spoken and written praise.

5.3 METHOD

Forty seminars from the BASE corpus were read and examined for praise. The praise was identified and analyzed according to semantics, syntax, and discourse purpose using the method described Chapters 2 and 4.

Fortanet (2008) analyzes the syntax of evaluation in peer reviews of articles prior to publication, using Systemic Functional Grammar. A similar analysis was done for the spoken language data in BASE and then compared with Fortanet's results. Similarly, the syntactic data obtained as described in Chapter 4 was compared with Johnson's (1992) syntactic data. Johnson's data on semantic choices also provided a comparison for the semantic analysis of the BASE transcripts. Hyland (2000) provides a semantic analysis of book reviews which also give background, although he does not give information about numeric data. Finally, the interpersonal use of and issues with praise were compared with the findings of Johnson, Hyland, and Hyland and Hyland (2001).

The amount of praise in each type of evaluative writing is likely to be very different, with more praise in the instructors' and peers' evaluations of student work and less, perhaps none, in the reviews of articles intended for publication. Taking these reasons

into account as well as the small sample size, it did not seem feasible to compare the amount of praise in written feedback with the amount found in academic spoken English, so this was not done.

5.4 GENERAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SPOKEN AND WRITTEN PRAISE

We have discussed the differences between various kinds of written positive feedback, and now we turn to contextual differences between spoken and written feedback. There are several characteristics that may be similar. Spoken praise, for example, closely parallels instructor feedback on written papers in the relative status of the interlocutors and the didactic purpose. However, there are several differences which must be addressed as well.

5.4.1 Context

Spoken praise is often as short as a single word, and, in the BASE data, only rarely exceeded one sentence. The written praise found in other studies is usually at least one sentence long. This can partly be ascribed to the fact that spoken praise is made under institutional time constraints. Praise generally occurs within a discussion or lecture in which the instructor has a certain institutional agenda, and not much time to give praise. There may also be a time constraint on an instructor giving written feedback which has an effect on its length. However, written feedback may constitute an entire sequence which can be made up of several moves. Within this, praise can play a small or large part.

It is also worthwhile to mention that the object of the praise also differs in length. With spoken praise, an instructor is frequently acknowledging the correctness or desirability of a short answer, often a single word. It is not often that an instructor answers

a short answer with longer praise, although it does happen for a particularly apt answer.

For example, from the BASE medical transcripts:

somebody's awake and alive (1s008)

The longest thing under review in our set of academic feedback is an entire book, and this does usually have the longest written feedback of one to several pages. This probably explains some of the syntactic differences between spoken and written praise, which will be discussed later. In addition, Hyland (2000) mentions lack of space as being a factor in the construction of published book reviews. This affects praise in that global, usually positive, evaluations tend to take up more of the space available for the review since giving the reader an overall impression of the book seems the best use of space.

Another important difference is the subject of the praise. Written comments deal to a greater or lesser extent with the mechanics of writing as well as the content. We may expect that the less experienced a writer is, the more feedback directed at him or her will evaluate mechanics, but even book reviews deal to some extent with form issues—usually clarity or difficulty for books that are intended to be used as classroom texts. In Hyland's (2000) study, 68% of the comments have to do with content (p. 46). Hyland and Hyland (2001) find that in student writing the ideas, as opposed to the mechanics, are the subject of 64% of teacher comments. Interestingly, 43% of all negative criticism dealt with formal issues (p. 193).

Spoken praise is overwhelmingly about the content of a student's response and its correctness or desirableness within the context of the class. After having done a presentation or given a longer answer, spoken praise may be given that deals with the form

or language used rather than just the content. This is rare, however, and was found in only a few examples:

I think it was really clear (ps004)

I thought it was brilliant you were reviewing all
the time (ps004)

I thought you both had good good form to your
presentation (sic) (ah003)

I was impressed by your structure (ah003)

You did a good sort of appendix (ah003)

These were the only instances in 213 examples of praise that could be said to be directly about the form of a student's answer or presentation, although of course any of the many instances of words like "good" or "excellent" could, in the instructor's mind, also include the form of the answer as part of the assessment.

5.4.2 Audience

Of course, in both spoken and written praise there is a speaker and a hearer, the person being praised, who constitutes the primary audience. However, spoken praise differs from some forms of written praise in that other, unconnected people are usually listening to it. There is a similar situation in student peer reviews. Johnson (1992) points out in her study of peer comments on student papers, the commenter is probably conscious of the professor as "overhearer" (p. 56). She does not mention what effect this might have on the comments that are made. This is not the case with peer referee reports, nor with instructor feedback on student written work. In fact, these cases are considered to be a very private kind of discourse, and care is usually taken to preserve confidentiality. The book review is the only form of written academic discourse here under examination that

shares the characteristic with spoken praise of being performed in front of an audience. This may lead to the praise being constrained in some way. Hyland (2000) mentions that the book review is “interactively complex” for this reason and that it carries a “greater risk of personal conflict” than other forms of academic discourse. Although it is not stated here, he is probably talking more about the risks posed by criticism than those posed by praise. However, there are several reasons why public praise may be a more complex act and carry more risks than it does in its written form. Spoken praise, like book reviews, has a primary audience consisting of the student being praised. However, it is intended to have some sort of an effect on its larger audience as well. Just as the larger audience of a book review needs to know whether a book is worth buying or adopting as a text, the larger audience for praise in the classroom needs to know whether an answer is correct or a behavior is desirable. As part of the didactic purpose of praise, the instructor may have the intention of encouraging certain behaviors in the other students, or demonstrating the reward for students who do a good presentation or come to class prepared. There also may be risks inherent in showing praise; for example, of being seen to favor one student over another by use of too-effusive praise. The desire to treat students equally may lead to more uniformity in praise and less variation than is seen in written praise.

5.5 SYNTACTIC AND SEMANTIC FORMS

5.5.1 Syntax

Although much attention has been given to the syntactic form of compliments in ordinary speech, possibly because of the surprising finding that they are so limited in scope, the syntax of praise in its written form has not been dealt with extensively. Fortanet (2008), in her study of peer referee reports, categorizes them in terms of Systemic Functional

Grammar (Halliday 1985). We should remember that, as one would expect of peer referee reports, they do not contain only praise, but criticism as well. Fortanet divides them into three categories: criticism (both positive and negative), recommendation, and question. The reports in her corpus contain more “criticism” than either of the other two categories, and “positive criticism” comprises only 11% of this. In identifying the patterns used in “criticism,” she deals with “positive” and “negative” criticism as a whole. She finds that most of her data in the criticism category consists of either attributive or identifying clauses:

Example attributive clause:

The analysis is very interesting
This paper makes an interesting, quantitative
contribution to both the competence-based
perspective of the firm and to the field of
quantitative management. (p. 31)

Her second category involves attributive clauses involving a mental process, of which the following are examples:

I am still not certain why Lecture 5 was included in
the analysis.
It is difficult to develop enthusiasm for another
article on industrial districts. (p. 31)

The third most common is what she calls an identifying clause:

the background does not specify or discuss
entrepreneurial orientation to a sufficient degree
none of the studies (. . .) consider historical
changes in academic style in actual use. (p.32).

The last of the patterns Fortanet (2008) finds uses existential clauses:

there is also no discussion of the history of the
region or the historical development of the area
(p.32).

These types of clauses represent 59.8% , 14.5%, 17.1% and 8.5% respectively, so it can be seen that the first type of clause is very common.

The BASE data shows far less variation, with complete or ellipsed attributive clauses making up over half of the data.

brilliant (**ls006**)
well done
really clear position (**ls004**)
that was very good
inoculation would be a very good example (**ah008**)

A smaller number of examples use material clauses, or mental process clauses with “I like”

I thought you had good form to your presentation (**ah003**)
we’re having great attempts at putting forth a coherent
argument (**ss006**)
I was impressed by your structure (**ah003**)
we should feel quite pleased with the way these arguments
went (**ss010**)

In this case, the spoken praise shows fewer patterns and less variation than written praise does.

Johnson (1992), seeking to find out whether compliments in student peer reviews parallel those in Manes and Wolfson's (1981) study, also investigated the syntactic structure of such compliments. She found that the compliments in her data were not so limited in pattern as compliments in ordinary speech. She finds the following patterns in her data: (These are the basic patterns, there are some variations).

(1) *NP is/feels/seems (intens) ADJ (XP)*

(2) *I really/ (especially) like/enjoy NP*

(3) *NP is (really) DET (intens) ADJ N*

(4) *NP V (DET) (intens) ADJ N*

(5) *You (intens) V NP ADV*

(6) *NP interest/fascinate/help PRON*

(7) *It BE (intens) ADJ/NP Infinitive*

(8) *(a/an) ADJ N*

Syntactically, the BASE data shows the same range as Johnson's data, with eight patterns found along with some variation. However, where the most common pattern in Johnson's data (pattern 1) represents 34% of her data, the following patterns together add up to more than half of the BASE data:

(intens) ADJ

And

(a/an) ADJ N

The actual syntactic patterns that are used in the two kinds of praise are similar but show important differences. The most commonly used pattern in Johnson's (1992) data—*NP is/feels/seems (intens) ADJ (XP)*—is present in the BASE data, but not nearly as

common as (*intens*) *ADJ*, which does not seem to appear at all in the peer review data, and (*a/an ADJ N*) which is present in Johnson's data but very rare, accounting for only 3.1 % of her data. This may be partially explained by the differences mentioned above—that in the spoken data the praise is given by an instructor operating under time constraints, and that the instructor in such cases is frequently praising a single answer, rather than a more lengthy piece of prose. Another reason for these differences is probably due to the status difference between instructor and student as opposed to between two peers, which Johnson discusses at length. Where an instructor will feel no constraint to simply saying or writing “good,” this would probably be considered arrogant if it were done by a peer.

Although this sample is very small, and only represents the genre of peer review, it does suggest the possibility that syntactically praise in spoken academic discourse resembles ordinary conversation more than academic written English in that it occurs commonly in a more limited range of syntactic patterns. (Although, as was shown in Chapter 4, there are several important differences). With respect to syntax, praise shows less variation in the two contexts which were compared.

5.5.2 Semantics

The semantic choices that are made when formulating praise in academic situations are important because, as Johnson (1992) points out, they show the collective face wants of the academic community. When papers are positively evaluated as “interesting” or “informative,” for example, it can be seen that these attributes are valued. Since we can expect these to be the same in both written and spoken mode, we may not find so much variation here.

Johnson finds that *good* and *interesting* account for 18.7% and 13.3% of her data, respectively. Other adjectives used include *clear*, *organized*, *excellent*, *informative*, *helpful*, *important*, and *easy*, which collectively comprise 62.6 % of the data. In published book reviews, Hyland (2000) found that *useful*, *important*, and *interesting* were used often by reviewers in all disciplines, although he does not provide exact statistics. More discipline-specific words of appraisal included *significant* and *insightful* for philosophy and marketing; *detailed* and *up-to-date* for hard sciences, and *comprehensive* and *practical* for engineering. Neither of these studies mentions the amount of praise that was adjectival, or gives ideas of words besides adjectives that carry the positive semantic load of the praise statement. In the BASE data, 82% of the 338 praise tokens were adjectival. Although 33 different adjectives were used in all, the most popular were *good* and *right*, which together made up about 60% of the adjectival praise. The next most commonly used were *excellent*, *great* and *interesting*. Hyland & Hyland (2001) do not specifically deal with this issue in their discussion of instructor feedback on student papers, but they do mention that praise is “less specific and more cursory” than criticism, and that suggestions had more pedagogical value. They suggest that this may be due to the fact that praise is frequently paired with either criticism or suggestions and that in such pairings the suggestion serves to narrow focus (p. 196). There are several things that are noteworthy about the differences between spoken and written praise. The first is that in both instances the written praise uses positive adjectives that are narrower in meaning than the spoken praise. Where *good* could modify almost any noun, *insightful* usually refers to some sort of intellectual process or product, such as *answer*, *point* or *commentary*. In fact, most of the adjectives used in examples of praise in the entire BASE corpus of seminars are more broad in meaning. The less commonly used adjectives include things like *brilliant*, *lovely*, and *fantastic*, which are equally as general in meaning as *good*, but are different in degree.

Very specific praise exists, but it is either not adjectival or depends on the context for specificity.

I thought the one thing you did much better this
time was to assimilate the information (**ps003**)
two very wide-ranging presentations (**ss005**)
that's something that not very many people realize
(**ps003**)
it's almost the natural way of doing it (**ss006**)
these are exactly the sorts of arguments we'd hear
in court (**ss006**)

In the examples above, we are given more of an idea of why the student's action or answer was desirable. This type of praise, however, constitutes a minority in the corpus. Most of the praise of any type is quite general, eg:

good
well done
that's a good question
fascinating idea
that's cool (**ps002**)

In this aspect, spoken praise is more like compliments in ordinary conversation, which show a similar amount of vagueness, as was explained more fully in Chapter 4. Time constraints may again be influencing the production of praise here. It has been postulated (Wolfson 1983) that the reason compliments in ordinary conversation use such a small semantic range is that compliments are so important for solidarity that they are necessarily clear and easy to understand. It is possible that in the case of written evaluations, because they mostly contain only evaluative language, this clarity is not

necessary. Another possibility is that the instructor may feel some constraint because of the larger audience of the other students in the classroom. While the instructor may wish to indicate to them that an answer was correct or hold up some student behavior as desirable, a more detailed evaluation, including more specific praise, may not be appropriate in this context.

Another noticeable characteristic of the written praise is the extent to which, in both contexts, the praise has to do with the effect of the writing on the reader. The adjectives in the spoken praise express a pure value judgment about correctness or quality, generally without expressing the feelings of the instructor toward the response. The fact that peer reviewers take care to make their praise more personal is not surprising in light of the status issues discussed previously. Peers may use this strategy to avoid making value judgments that would not be appropriate from someone of the same status. In the case of book reviews, however, this would not be the case since the entire genre exists for the purpose of evaluation. In this case it is possible that the reviewer is taking into account his or her larger audience of the readers of the review, who need to know whether or not to buy the book. Hyland (2000) also points out that one of the things a reviewer must accomplish is to demonstrate “an expert understanding of the issues.” (p. 41). It seems that the larger set of adjectives used to for published book reviews may be used for this purpose, to show that the reviewer understands the issues well enough to comment on them with a certain amount of specificity. Hyland also mentions that in the humanities and social sciences, since “controversy and debate are more important than demonstration and proof” (p. 52), reviewers oriented more to the quality of ideas and the ways in which they were expressed, and used a range of evaluative language to describe these.

Semantics, like syntax, showed less variation in the spoken form than in the written in the contexts examined, with spoken praise using fewer adjectives and less specific ones. This is interesting in light of Johnson's (1992) quote above about expressing the community's face wants. Perhaps in terms of answering questions in a seminar, a student's face wants are more simple than those of someone writing a paper or article—to get the question right, or to make a good contribution to the discussion. Further interpersonal issues that seem to be present in praise will be examined below.

5.6 PRAISE AND POLITENESS

This section will examine the interpersonal side of praise in the classroom, as compared with praise in peer reviews (Johnson 1992) and instructor feedback (Hyland & Hyland 2001). Praise in any context seems to have a complex relationship with politeness, which can be explored through Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness universals. As discussed in Chapter 3, in Brown and Levinson's framework, people have both positive and negative face wants. Our positive face wants are the desire to be liked and accepted, where our negative face wants are wanting to be respected and not imposed upon. Face-threatening acts (FTAs) threaten either the speaker or the hearer's positive or negative face. Apologies, for example, threaten the speaker's positive face by showing her or him in a poor light. FTAs are redressed, in this framework, by various politeness strategies. Brown and Levinson themselves put compliments in the category of threats to the hearer's face, because they might imply that the speaker envies or desires the hearer's possessions and the hearer will have to respond to that in the future. On the other hand, compliments can also actually function as a positive politeness strategy, to redress the face threat of criticism as Johnson, and Hyland and Hyland (2001) have found.

Although one might not expect compliments or praise to be hedged, it is often found this way in academic written English, for several reasons. First is the idea that praise is an FTA in itself because it implies an evaluative status in the speaker or writer. Hyland (2000) also mentions compliments as being FTAs in his work on published book reviews, because “not everyone is entitled to compliment” and because lavish praise may be “superficial and indiscriminating” (p. 45). In the case of student peer reviews, reviewers seem to be more markedly hesitant to adopt an explicitly evaluative stance. Johnson (1992) finds that about one sixth of the compliments found in her data include expressions such as “I think” or “I feel,” which she interprets in this case to be a type of hedge. She believes that in these reviews the students are using the expressions to “[limit] the scope of their claim to knowledge” and “make explicit to their audience that they are offering a personal opinion, and that this opinion may not be shared by others (‘I think X, although others might not agree’)” (p. 62). This does not seem to be a feature of peer referee reports, although other speech acts, such as requests for improvement, do show evidence of mitigation (Fortanet 2008, p. 29) . This may be due to the fact that the peer report is anonymous, or to the paucity of praise in such reports.

In the spoken praise in BASE, 38 “I think” expressions in 312 instances of praise were found, or about 12%. “I find,” “I believe” or other similar expressions do not occur. “I guess” occurs once, but its meaning seems to be to make the praise less forceful (more explanation below). The occurrence of “I think” in spoken praise is therefore much less common than in peer reviews, and there is no evidence to show that the instructor might be redressing a possible FTA by using it. Contextually, there appears to be no difference between instances of *that’s good* and *I think that’s good*. Instead, it seems more likely that it is serving the purpose that Hyland (2000) gives for such expressions in book reviews.

Although he believes that such expressions serve as hedges when they are introducing criticism, Hyland also believes their use with praise links the positive evaluative more clearly with the reviewer. “Instead of weakening the speech act, as with criticism, designating oneself as the source of praise served to mark certainty and so emphasise the force of an evaluation, enabling the reviewer to take greater personal responsibility for it” (p. 58). It is not always easy to say whether the instructors in the spoken praise meant their “I think” expressions to hedge or boost the praise. There are about 12 instances of *I think that’s right*, for example, and one would need intonation data to be able to determine whether the instructor was emphasizing “think” to show hesitation, or “right” to claim the praise more strongly. There are examples of more strong and specific praise in which the instructor says “I think” repeatedly

well i think i think this has been a very funct- i
think fruitful area i mean i think you did a very
good job at really researching a number of different
position and i don’t know if you found that i think
you did a very good job at moving through these
different positions and avoiding er painting
yourself into ideological corners that you didn’t i
thought you did a good job at sort of looking at the
different sides of the same question and talking
around them (ah003)

In this case, “I think” occurs with other boosters “I mean,” and “very” and it seems if anything to be boosting the praise. Johnson (1992) mentions “Your analysis is correct” as being the type of comment which, although positive, would seem blunt when given to a

peer because it claims a higher level of knowledge. However, examples of praise with almost the exact same form were found in the spoken corpus

you're absolutely right (**ls002**)

that's a super analysis (**ss004**)

Therefore, although some of the "I think" expressions found in BASE may actually constitute hedges, this does not seem to be a major feature of spoken praise.

Hedged praise also occurs in some contexts as an equivalent to criticism. Hyland and Hyland (2001) find this in written teacher feedback, in examples such as

Fairly clear and accurate

Or

Mostly fairly good (p. 197).

Hyland (2000) finds similar expressions in published book reviews:

I found the book reasonably well written.

This is in many respects a good book. (p. 60).

Hyland (2000) attributes our understanding of these as criticisms to Grice's Maxim of Quantity. As the Maxim of Quantity states that speakers give the information that is required, no more and no less, limited praise implies to the reader that that is all the praise there is to give. We find several praise expressions in BASE which seem to parallel the weak praise as criticism examples above:

I mean I guess that's right (**ss003**)

I thought your answers were pretty good (**ss001**)

well, that's a good effort (**ls004**)

you were accurate (**ps003**)

that's a pretty good piece of work(**ps008**)

you've used all the right words i'm not sure in the
right order (1s005)

In these cases, rather than being linked to the Maxim of Quantity these seem to occur when some sort of evaluation is obligatory in the classroom—when someone has given an answer or finished a presentation—and the instructor feels that he or she can not give full praise because of the shortcomings of the student's performance. The fact that other types of peer review such as Fortanet's (2008) study of peer reviews of articles before publication and Hyland's (2000) study of published book reviews do not include hedged praise could be ascribed to the position of both the writer of the review and the writer of the original article or book. If both are established academics, then the supposition that they are entitled to pass judgment on each other's work may not have an influence. It is also possible, of course, that hedged praise was in fact present in these reviews but not noticed by the researcher.

Another way in which praise is frequently used for politeness purposes in written academic discourse is to open or close a lengthy piece of academic prose. Hyland (2000) believes that it may function in this case to build rapport with the audience (p. 53). He also believes that praise in this context has the same meaning that compliments do in ordinary speech: to establish solidarity, in this case between members of the same profession (p. 53). Hyatt (2005) in his study of feedback on Master of Education assignments, puts praise occurring at the beginning or end of a longer piece of feedback which includes positive and negative comments in the category of "phatic comments" rather than "positive evaluation," along with comments such as "I hope you find these comments helpful." (p. 344). It thus seems that the question of whether such comments actually are praise, or are serving a completely different function, has not been fully decided. This is mentioned as

being a feature of book reviews (Hyland 2000) as well as peer reviews (Johnson 1992). Interestingly, it also seems to be a feature of non-academic speech as well. To take one example, it was mentioned by Madeleine Albright as a way to open high-level diplomatic meetings (Montagne 2009). Although brief praise is sometimes used to close a sequence, as Wong and Waring (2009) and Mehan (1979) have pointed out, one rarely finds praise in BASE used to open or close evaluative comments, probably because, as mentioned before, evaluative acts are not very lengthy. As will be discussed in more detail below, it is also the case that criticism is not very common in academic spoken English. Where praise is used to open an evaluation in written English, the evaluation usually includes both negative and positive comments. Lengthy evaluations in BASE are very few in number, and the criticisms therein are entirely positive except in the case of composition class transcripts, also discussed below. Therefore, it is not possible to see one instance of praise as being a distinct “opener.”

One of the very common politeness uses for praise is in combination with criticism. This is a very common way of mitigating criticism across genres. Hyland and Hyland (2001) find that 20% of the negative comments on student papers are paired with praise (p. 195). Interestingly, they also find that students are aware of this tendency, and may discount the praise as a result (p.202). Fortanet (2008) also mentions it briefly as a way of mitigating blunt criticism in peer referee reports (p. 31). Johnson (1992) considers that a peer review considered constitutes a “global FTA” because of the criticism and suggestions it contains. Within the global FTA are specific FTAs of critical remarks or individual suggestions. Johnson suggests that praise is used to redress both of these types of FTA. (The global FTA is redressed by the praise opening as discussed above).

This is found comparatively rarely in the spoken praise data. One reason for this is that direct criticism was very rarely found in either the British or the American corpus. In seminars in the humanities and social sciences, in which students generally give personal opinions and experiences, one very rarely finds an instructor openly evaluating a response as not desirable or “wrong.” In fact, since every answer is accepted, it is very difficult to tell what answer the teacher is hoping for. Here is one of the few times when it was clear that a student gave a mistaken answer:

S13: in the like the Amazon they still are, a little bit

S1: sorry?

S13: like in the Amazon where they, really have no contact [**S1:** they've] outside, the tribes have no contact at all.

S1: um, well they do, [**S13:** well very little] i mean that's, that's i mean that's that's an interesting, situation to bring up. i mean they do have contact, with the government at this point. um, i think this was discussed in your book but um, maybe even thirty-five years ago, there would've been tribes, that had pretty much autonomy. but, but now, um, really they don't. (**MICASE, anthropology**)

Although the teacher (S1) does point out that the student is mistaken in his belief that there are tribes in the Amazon that have no contact with the outside world, and that in fact the student might know this if he had done the reading, she begins by saying “that’s an interesting situation,” precisely the same sort of language used in other contexts to praise students.

The exception is the hard sciences, particularly medicine, in which seminars often take the form of a lecture with frequent questions from the instructor. In these cases the instructor will negatively evaluate a wrong answer, usually without any mitigation at

all. This is probably due to the importance in the field of medicine of memorization of facts. We do occasionally see very mild praise used to soften a negative evaluation:

er not quite no good effort septic yeah (1s004)
that's an interesting one but i think that comes later
(1s009).

The examples above show that while praise in written academic discourse serves a range of politeness functions, it does not have the same functions in the spoken discourse. This is another way in which academic spoken discourse, in this particular context, shows less variation than academic written English. In fact, it may be the case that the smaller range of functions that praise serves in the spoken language contributes to its smaller syntactic and semantic range. However, considered as a whole it seems significant that while spoken academic discourse in general shows more variation than written academic discourse, for this speech act the opposite is true.

5.6.1 Composition classes: the exception

Although praise was not often found to mitigate criticism in the BASE data, the exception to this is seen in a composition class, as below:

generally i like the way that flows as a sentence er i
like the way that you haven't been er constrained by
the order in which these appear i-, i-, d-, doesn't
look as though you just lifted things from it er now
having said that i think it would be better if you
added a quotation or two now as we were just
discussing you haven't put in a sort of final bit

about where there might be a gap for further research

(ps008)

This excerpt is from the BASE corpus. The American corpus also has an example of a composition course in which praise and criticism are freely offered. In this case also we can see praise paired with criticism:

um Amy you do this. you go nuts with the footnoting.

um i commend you for being kinda responsible you don't

wanna take credit for a- another person's, work

(MICASE: Composition)

In the example above the praise may seem ironic (and is in fact followed by laughter), but there are also more straightforward examples:

i like this part of the paragraph because we're

getting away from, what we now see has been um

although high quality summary nonetheless summary.

okay? **(MICASE: Composition)**

Although he does use praise to hedge some of the criticism, he also seems to feel no constraint against direct criticism in class:

Leslie you are a, big-time violator of the comma splice rule, and so is Erica (who's not here.)

S4: i thought i did better this time.

S1: <LAUGH> i still caught some, right? you you got rid of the uh, the incomplete sentences, <SS LAUGH> but you're still having trouble, <LAUGH> at the other end.

S4: thank you very much Simon for announcing my uh, problem (in) class.

S1: yeah i can read you, some examples **(MICASE: Composition)**

There are only two examples of basic composition classes, and of course the amount of praise and criticism may be due to the instructor's own personality and style, but it may be significant that the composition class transcripts in both corpora are marked by the same sort of praise usage that can be seen in written discourse—to open comments, to praise globally before offering specific criticism, and to pair with criticism to mitigate it. This could be due to the fact that, at least in this instance, the composition class is basically used as an oral version of instructor comments on a student text. In this case, the audience does not seem to prevent the instructor from using direct praise or criticism. This may be partly because of the instructor's personality, or the rapport he seems to have with his students. There is a great deal of laughter in this particular classroom, the instructor is older than his students but in a close age-bracket, and in other parts of the transcript we can see them sharing personal stories and troubles with him. This class may be particularly congenial and therefore the instructor may have no trouble with telling his evaluations to all of them. The fact that this occurs in both corpora for composition classes, and nowhere else, however, suggests that composition classes have a special position within academic spoken English, in which instructors are less constrained to criticize students' opinions and the form they take. (A longer discussion of the role of praise in mitigating criticism is found in Chapter 7).

5.7 CONCLUSION

Praise in seminars in the BASE corpus seemed to show less variation than in the selected written contexts of academic English. This contrasts with what has been found about academic spoken English in different contexts. There may be several reasons for this. One may be that there were a variety of written genres selected for comparison to a single genre of spoken praise. Another may be time constraints. The effect of an audience

may be important, too, although in some cases it does not appear to be. Of course, much of the praise that was found in the corpus consists of formulaic expressions, such as “good.” There seem to be fixed expressions that are used at certain times in the classroom. Mauranen (2002a) for example, has found that “that’s a good question,” aside from its evaluative content, also indicates the instructor’s willingness or responsibility to find the answer to the question (p.135). There may be other formulaic expressions within the range of spoken praise in the classroom but they are beyond the scope of this project.

As was mentioned before, the fact that spoken praise in the classroom seems to have fewer functions than praise in written feedback may account for the smaller amount of semantic or syntactic variation. Written praise can be used to open or close comments in several different genres, or to hedge a critical comment or a suggestion. Spoken praise has a much smaller set of uses: it is generally used only to evaluate an answer, a presentation, or much more rarely, a behavior. It can also be used to close a sequence. It remains to be seen if written praise used to open an evaluation, for example, differs from the type of praise found within the evaluation.

Another factor that might explain the relative lack of variation in spoken praise is that in many disciplines the subject of the praise is a short answer which is either correct or incorrect. Evaluative comments are general given for relatively long pieces of writing for which criteria may not be fixed, or may not be clear to the receiver of the feedback. This may make necessary the use of a wider variety of semantic and syntactic structures in order for the reviewer to get his or her point across.

Another thing we should consider is the issue of contingency mentioned before. A great deal of academic spoken English—seminars, meetings, office hours—may represent a step in the process of producing prose. It thus shows more contingency, different styles of speech, more “fuzzy” language, more hedging (Dudley-Evans & Johns 1981; Gilbert & Mulkay 1984; Lindemann & Mauranen 2001; Swales 2001). When we look at both spoken and written evaluation, however, the reverse may be true. In some forms of evaluation—the peer review of an article intended for publication, the student peer review, and instructor’s comments on a student paper—the evaluation is directed toward an intermediate step in the process of making an academic product. In these cases, the material that received the evaluation will be re-written, or the student will write another paper that uses the comments he or she got on the present one. In the case of spoken praise, however, except in the case of the composition classes discussed above, the praise is directed toward a finished product—an answer or a presentation. As Mehan (1979b) has pointed out, it usually marks a terminal point in a sequence. This might account for more care being taken with the written feedback, leading to more detail and greater variation. The extent to which a discourse is “finished” may constitute another way of dividing the scope of academic discourse besides along the written/spoken axis.

PRAISE IN UNIVERSITY SEMINARS: DISCIPLINARY DIFFERENCES

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous two sections, the question of whether academic spoken English resembles more closely ordinary conversation or academic written English was explored with respect to speaking and writing. This addresses one of the goals of the thesis as a whole. However, through looking at other research on this question, it becomes clear that disciplinary differences are an important consideration. In order to more completely investigate the characteristics of academic spoken English, disciplinary differences will be considered in this section. Because disciplinary differences encompass such things as classroom activities and goals for learning, the possibility that they would affect an instructor's praising behavior merits investigation. Praise could differ according to what is praised (the student's answer or behavior) as well as how students are praised (the exact words). In the three disciplinary areas that were found to be suitable for comparison in BASE, the amount of praise, and amount of praise variation, was determined using quantitative methods. A qualitative analysis was also done to determine the extent to which the praise reflected cultural differences among the disciplines.

Corpus studies of spoken academic discourse frequently reveal disciplinary differences. Swales (2001) has shown that academic spoken English shows more variation than writing (p.34). We find that instructors in humanities and social sciences use a more varied vocabulary (Schachter et. al. 1991, 1994) and that these disciplines are in some ways "fuzzier" than the hard sciences, using a wider variety of vocabulary as well as words with less precise meanings (Poos & Simpson 2002). This would seem to be an

important dimension to take into account whenever studying differences between spoken academic English and written academic English, or between it and regular speech.

Useful categorizations of disciplinary culture were made by Biglan (1973a, 1973b) and Becher (1994). Biglan and Becher, and those scholars who draw on their work, discuss the disciplinary culture in a much broader way, encompassing the major goals of the discipline in terms of the student's intellectual growth; the professional life of the faculty in terms of the relative amount given over to teaching, service, and research; and the type and quantity of research that is produced by each disciplinary category. Although this framework is very influential, it is not unproblematic. Kember and Leung (2010) have suggested that these categories are not as useful in describing undergraduate major courses of study, since undergraduates tend to take more generalized classes (p.279). Fanghanel (2009) believes that studies based on Biglan and Becher, "tend to yield a normalized view of practice, emphasizing similarities while glossing over internal differences"(p.567). The current study was done with reference to Biglan and Becher's work because the corpus-based studies mentioned above divide the disciplines in the same way and seem to share a taxonomy of disciplines, and none of the corpus-based studies seems to have made direct use of Biglan, Becher, or related research. The two research threads appear complementary, however, and it was thought that Biglan and Becher's framework would make the most suitable frame for the current research. Bearing in mind Hyland's (1999) caveat that the hard/soft divide should be more of a continuum (p. 80), the content of the class and the activities of the day were carefully considered before they were placed in a category. This will be explored in more detail below.

This study will examine the speech act of praise in the classroom from the perspective of both the Biglan/Becher typography and the corpus studies. From the perspective of the Biglan(1973a, 1973b) and Becher (1990, 1994) studies, we will examine whether praise reflects differing disciplinary goals. From the perspective of the corpus studies, the question of whether praise in different disciplines uses more words or greater variety will be examined. It is hoped that this will yield a new insight into the study of those disciplines as well as the speech act itself. This also might provide some practical information for students in different disciplines in terms of what to expect, and may be of use to teachers when determining ways of meeting students' needs.

6.2 CULTURAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DISCIPLINES

Studies which describe the cultural differences between the major disciplinary areas are discussed in greater detail in the literature review, but will be briefly reviewed here. Biglan (1973a, 1973b) and later Becher (1994) postulated a typography of disciplines, dividing them along a hard/soft axis and a pure/applied axis. This yields four major categories: hard-pure, soft-pure, hard-applied, and soft-applied.

These major categories differ in several important respects. The first is social connectedness. According to Biglan, researchers in the hard disciplines and the applied disciplines in general tend to do more research with other people, and are influenced more by other researchers (1973b:205). Correspondingly, idiosyncrasy and independence in scholarship are more valued in the soft disciplines (Biglan 1973a, 1973b, Becher 1994).

Another difference that has been observed is in the types of activities used in classes. The humanities seem to favor lecture, seminars and tutorials, where the natural

sciences, technology, and medicine prefer laboratories, exercises and field trips (Neumann 2001).

The disciplines also differ in the goals of study. Hard applied disciplines have the development of products and techniques as their goal, soft applied knowledge is aimed at the development of protocols and procedures (Neumann, Parry & Becher 2002:406). Hard disciplines assess students by asking them to memorize and apply the course material; soft disciplines ask for analysis and synthesis (Braxton 1995, Neumann 2001).

In her exploration of the “moral order” of various discipline, Ylijoki (2000), found some differences as well. Soft pure areas value learning for its own sake and dedication to study, as well as using the subject to help others. Independence and originality are mentioned here as well. Soft applied areas value obtaining job skills, status and prestige. Hard applied disciplines favor learning by doing and practical training.

If the classroom praise in these disciplinary categories reflects their goals, values, or moral order, we might expect it to differ in several ways. Since soft disciplines emphasize independence to a greater degree, we might expect instructors in these classrooms to use less praise. It is also possible that hard disciplines would use more praise because of the greater emphasis on memorization and acquisition of knowledge, which could require instructors to acknowledge correct answers more often. What the student is being praised for may also be influenced by the values of the discipline. Students in soft discipline areas may be praised more for critical thinking, synthesizing, or independence of thought. Looking from the perspective of Ylijoki’s (2000) research, it is also worth investigating whether other values such as speed or practical applicability have an effect

on the use of praise, and whether the professional world is mentioned more in the applied fields. Other factors, such as the nature of the activities used in the class may change the way praise is given, since it has been shown that the different disciplines tend to use different types of activities. The applied disciplines may include more “hands-on” or practical activities and this may change the quality of the praise. It may be that a different sort of praise is given for a discussion contribution, favored in the soft disciplines, than a correct answer as would be sought in the hard fields. Different teaching methods also lead to differing amounts of teacher talk and student talk in the classroom, and this too may lead to differences in praise.

The studies mentioned above have been general examinations of the culture of the discipline, but such differences have been studied from a linguistic perspective as well. There have been several studies done with academic spoken English using various corpora that show differences in the disciplines. Such studies generally do not use the disciplinary divisions postulated by Biglan (1973a, 1973b) and Becher (1990,1994) but tend to simply divide the disciplines into physical sciences on one hand and humanities and social sciences on the other. One of the main questions that researchers in academic spoken English look at is the extent to which it resembles academic written English as opposed to ordinary conversation. A great deal of variance between the disciplines is shown in the answer to this question. Poos and Simpson (2002) found in their study of hedging that it occurs more frequently in the humanities and the social sciences than in the hard sciences, which corresponds with the conclusion of Hyland (1999). They believe that this is due to differences in language use between the disciplines, with the social sciences being less precise. They also feel that the subjects and the type of classroom activity call for more exchange of personal opinion, which might necessitate more hedging. Schachter et.

al.(1991, 1994) found similar differences in their study of filled pauses. They find that in natural sciences instructors use fewer filled pauses, a sign that there is less searching for an appropriate word, and fewer words overall. Schachter et. al. (1991) clarify that this difference is seen only in academic speech and not in ordinary conversation, which means that they found no evidence that more verbose individuals tend to go into the humanities. Not every linguistic feature is influenced by discipline, however. Simpson and Mendis (2003), for example, found no disciplinary differences in use of idioms.

The corpus studies also suggest ways that praise might differ across contexts. Although the Biglan/Becher typography leads us to believe that the soft disciplines may contain less praise, the corpus studies suggest that soft discipline praise may be longer in terms of number of words used, since these disciplines tend to use more words in academic speech. We may also see these differences in the diversity of praise given, with the soft disciplines showing more variety. Hard disciplines may use words like “right” or “correct” more often, not only because of a relative lack of variation in vocabulary used in those disciplines, but also to reflect those disciplines’ greater emphasis on accuracy and memorization of facts. The value placed on originality and independence in the soft disciplines may lead to words such as “original” or “unique” being used more often.

6.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Following the studies of discipline areas mentioned above, the study examined how praise reflects disciplinary differences in two aspects: linguistic and cultural. Variation in the words of praise given and the number of words used in praise would reflect the linguistic differences between the disciplines. In terms of cultural differences, the object was to see

the extent to which the praise given reflects the cultural norms of the discipline. Thus, the research questions for this project were as follows:

- What difference is there in the quantity of praise given between soft-pure, hard-pure, soft-applied and hard-applied disciplines?
- What differences are there in the amount of variation in praise in these disciplines?
- How, if at all, does praise reflect the differing goals of the different disciplines?

6.4 METHOD

To do this, the British Academic Spoken English (BASE) corpus was used. BASE is a 1.6 million word corpus, consisting of 160 lectures and 40 seminars, recorded at the universities of Warwick and Reading. For this research the seminars only were used, as it was felt that they would be more interactive and thus contain more praise. BASE contains ten seminars each in four disciplinary categories: Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, Life and Medical Sciences, and Physical Sciences. These transcripts were read several times and marked for praise, in the manner detailed in Chapters 2 and 4.

The classes were divided into the categories delineated by Biglan (1973a, 1973b) and Becher (1994). Becher himself (1990) has pointed out the difficulty of distinguishing between the four major disciplinary groups. Subgroups within, for example, an applied discipline might contain elements similar to a pure area (such as jurisprudence in the field of law) and vice versa. Similarly, hard disciplines may contain soft subgroups and vice versa. In addition, some disciplines such as psychology or geology straddle the divide between hard and soft sciences (p.334). With very little background information on the

seminars offered in BASE, sometimes judgments were made purely on the basis of what was going on in the class on the day that the recording was made. It should be pointed out that this may result in some distortion, as some classes are clearly doing activities that would not be part of the normal class (discussed in more detail below). Economics, for example, can go either in the hard-applied or hard-pure category, depending on its focus (Nulty & Barrett 1996) . Although it is not clear whether the course as a whole adopts an applied or a pure approach to the topic, the class which is transcribed in BASE is on “industrial economic analysis” which was felt to go more in the applied category. Likewise, statistics, although it could be thought to go in the hard-pure category, was placed in the applied category because for this particular class was on the topic of Introduction to Health Service, and the content of the class was on learning to use the SPSS statistical software package. The psychology seminar in BASE is on Territoriality and Sexual Behavior and was placed in the soft-applied category since it deals with behavior and not actual physical brain functioning. A discipline frequently mentioned as not clearly belonging to any of the categories is biology (Nulty & Barrett 1996). In the BASE corpus, the biology transcript consists of student presentations and contains no praise, so it was not included.

In many cases these disciplinary divisions corresponded to the disciplinary categories in which the BASE corpus compilers place the seminars. However, this is not always the case. It is not apparent, for example, why a class on preparing a literature review, for a course entitled English and Comparative Literary Studies was included in Physical Sciences along with Chemistry and Engineering. In these cases, a judgment was made as to where in the Biglan/Becher typography these courses would fit. (A list of the

courses in each category and how they correspond to the BASE categories can be found in Appendix E.).

Because the BASE Corpus divisions and the Biglan/Becher divisions do not correspond exactly, there is a discrepancy in the number of classes for each category. Fourteen transcripts were placed in the soft-pure category, four in the hard-pure category, fourteen in the hard-applied category, and six in the soft-applied category. Of the four in the hard-pure category, three consist of a Chemistry class in which games are played in order for the students to get to know each other, presumably during the first class of the term. Since this seems to be a special occasion—not only is chemistry not discussed at all, but the class seems to contradict the classroom patterns found by Luedekke (2003)—it was felt that an analysis of these four classes would not be a good reflection of a typical hard-pure class. Therefore, the hard-pure category is not discussed in this research. Other classes with games, notably in education, are included because the focus remains on the subject matter.

In addition to this, it should be noted that there are several other classes in which the activities don't seem typical. Two of the soft-pure classes have guest speakers, with a corresponding lack of student input. (It is, however, possible that guest speakers are a regular feature of these classes). It is also evident from context that several of these classes were recorded on the last day of class before an exam, and consequently may have a higher amount of review of previous information than the class would usually contain. In general, however, the classes follow the patterns of classroom activity found in Luedekke (2003) with soft disciplines relying on discussion and other means of exchanging opinion, and hard disciplines featuring students' answering questions put by an instructor. Presentations are a feature of both types of classes. In

Humanities classes presentations are used both to present opinion and as a quick review of facts before opinions are exchanged. In the hard-applied disciplines, which are mostly in the medical school, presentations are a description of a patient and his or her symptoms, as might occur in a hospital. After this, again, opinions are exchanged about the nature of the patients' illness or injury. (A list of the main activity of each class is in Appendix B).

First, the amount of each class devoted to praise was calculated, and compared across the three general disciplinary areas. For each class, the approximate number of turns in general and the number of turns taken by the instructor(s) were counted, to have a general idea of the amount of interactivity and teacher-frontedness in the class. Then, the approximate number of words spoken by the instructor was counted, and the percentage of the instructor's words that constituted praise were calculated. All of these numbers are approximations because there are many places in the transcript where through context it is apparent that one or more contributions has been omitted, although these are not marked. For example in the following excerpt (nm5250 is the instructor):

```
nm5250: [ . . . ]what were the key features that  
distinguished the rheumatoid for instance from other  
disease  
nm5250: say again at the back  
nm5250: er yeah that they're they're good descriptions  
of inflammation but that's not what she complained of  
(1s006)
```

It is easy to see here that at least two student responses, the answer to the original question and the answer to the request for repetition, have been omitted, probably because they were inaudible. However, since there is no indication, except through context, of

when these occurred, there may be other examples which are not as obvious. Thus, although every effort was made to use care in counting, the number remains an approximation.

6.4.1 Definition of praise

As was discussed more extensively in Chapter 2, it is quite difficult in some cases to determine what is and is not praise. The definition used will be briefly reviewed in this section. In this project, any positive comments in response to a student's performance were counted as praise. As with many speech acts, it is difficult to determine the boundaries. Praise frequently resembles agreement very closely semantically and syntactically, and in some situations in a classroom agreement might actually constitute praise. However, praise differs in that it has a didactic component. So, where during a discussion an instructor's saying "That's right" might have the function of indicating to the students and his or her peers that an answer is correct or a discussion contribution is desirable; an instructor's saying, "That's right" in response to a statement such as "Is today the 15th?" is not. Therefore, the decision was made to only count an utterance as praise if it was made in response to an answer or discussion topic posed by the teacher.

For this study, all the words of a clause containing praise were considered to be part of the praise, excluding words that seem part of a false start. In a very few cases it's not clear whether something is a false start or not. For example

you both had *good good* form to your presentation

(ah003)

This could be a false start, or the instructor could be repeating “good” for emphasis. In this case it is not clear that this is a false start, and so both instances of “good” were counted.

However in this case:

mm-hmm it's good it's good it's a good it's a good
poetic(**ah004**)

It seems fairly clear that the instructor did not intend to praise the student five time, thus it does not seem right to count this as five separate instances of a student being praised.

Praise can be, and often is, as short as a single word.

good
right
absolutely

In some cases, however, praise can be more lengthy, where the instructor gives more explicit evaluation about what the student did right:

I thought both sides did a very good job at putting
forward a coherent argument (**ah003**)

This is more likely to happen when an instructor is evaluating something lengthy like a presentation or paper.

Quite often, an instructor will repeat an answer that a student has just given.

Although this is sometimes done to confirm a correct answer, it was not counted as praise, since the purpose is not certain. Repetition could be done, for example, to make the answer audible to all students.

There are, however, a few instances of what we will call *boosted repetition*. For example, in the following excerpt:

yes well certainly if you've had any surgery to the
terminal ileum that would certainly put you at risk
(1s008)

The instructor is basically repeating the student's answer with the addition of "certainly." This is more likely to be the instructor's acknowledging a correct answer, but again it is not certain to be praise—it could, for example, be followed by the instructor's explaining why the answer is wrong in this case. Therefore, these were also not counted as praise.

As was mentioned in Chapter 4, almost all the examples of praise found are adjectival, which makes a contrast with ordinary compliments where verbs such as "I like" are also commonly found. "I like" is almost never used in the corpus to evaluate a student's answer, although "I'm impressed by" is occasionally used. However, in most cases in this corpus the adjective carries the positive semantic load. In some cases, there is no positive word. Some of these are expressions such as

you have it (ah008)

which indicate a correct answer. Some of these instances are dependent on context, such as

These are exactly the sorts of arguments we'd hear in
court (ss006)

Although there are probably many situations in which being told that one is talking like a lawyer does not constitute praise, this is a law class and the comment can be understood as positive. In cases such as these, all of the words in the clause were counted as part of the praise.

When recording the praise, the situation in which the praise was given was also recorded. As was shown in Luedekke (2003), the hard disciplines tend to rely on instructor-posed questions to which there are a limited number of correct answers. The answers given were generally quite short, one word or a sentence, and the instructor tends to praise equally briefly. In the soft disciplines, praise was mostly given for discussion contributions. Both types of disciplines had examples of praise being given for reports and presentations, in which case the praise tended to be longer. There are a few other situations such as participation in a game or practical training (use of the SPSS software package) where praise is given.

6.5 RESULTS OF QUANTITATIVE ANALYSES

The first research question deals with the relationship between the disciplinary category and the amount of praise given in each class. First, because the classes differed a great deal in duration (from 21 minutes to one hour and 36 minutes), the amount of praise per hour was calculated after the praise tokens had been counted. As has been observed before, disciplinary categories can differ in several ways in addition to the subject of study, and these might contribute to the difference in the amount of praise if one was found. Because of this, initially a correlation was done between the amount of praise per hour and number of turns per hour, number of instructor turns per hour, words per hour, and number of non-students (instructors or guest speakers) who were present during the class. Since the data did not meet the qualifications for a parametric test, a Spearman's rho was performed. The SPSS software package was used, with $p < .05$. No significant results were found. First the number of tokens per hour was correlated with the amount of praise per hour. The results of this correlation were not significant ($r = -.135$, $p = .445$). Next, a

correlation was done between the number of instructor tokens (total number of words uttered by the instructor) and the amount of praise per hour. These also were not significant ($r = -.128$, $p = .469$). The number of turns per hour was then correlated with amount of praise per hour. This was not significant ($r = .075$, $p = .676$). Finally, the number of turns taken by the instructor was correlated with amount of praise per hour, and the results here too were not significant ($r = -.032$, $p = .859$). No relationship was found between praise per hour and words spoken per hour, words spoken by the instructor per hour, number of turns per hour, or number of turns taken by the instructor per hour. Neither the amount of interactivity in the class nor the extent to which it is teacher-fronted seem to have an effect on the amount of praise given in the classroom.

After this, a non-parametric multiple regression analysis was performed between these variables (instructor turns, turns per hour, instructor turns per hour, and praise per hour) and again, no significant relationship was found ($F(1, 33) = .651$, $p = .43$), meaning none of these variables has predictive ability on the amount of praise given per hour. Therefore, neither the subject under study nor other characteristics of the disciplinary categories seems to have an effect on the amount of praise given in the classroom.

The next question was whether the praise given in the soft disciplines might show more variation than praise given in hard disciplines. To determine this, adjectival praise was examined. The reason for this was that examples of praise in which an adverb or verb carries the positive semantic load are comparatively few in BASE, so that only a total of five different adverbs and three different verbs are used. Since the majority of praise is adjectival, there are many more adjectives to examine. For each discipline, the number of unique adjectives used in praise was determined. A chi-square was done between the

frequencies of unique adjectives in soft-pure, soft-applied, and hard-applied disciplines(χ^2 (1,25=32.33, $p=.15$). Again, no significant difference was found. Soft disciplines do not show more variation than hard-applied disciplines.

Although statistically no difference was found between the disciplines, the soft-pure disciplines were found to have a wider range in amount of praise given per hour. The highest number found in the corpus as a whole was 128.33 tokens per hour (for a discussion class on the Cuban revolution). Aside from the several classes which had no praise at all—usually because for various reasons the students did no speaking—the lowest in the corpus was 1.85 praise tokens per hour in a class on Logistics and Operation Management Production. The range found in the soft-pure category of disciplines was 123.97. The most praise was found in the aforementioned Cuban Revolution class and the least in a Film and Television Studies with 4.36 praise tokens per hour. The range for soft-applied disciplines was next, with 105.18 tokens, from a high of 107.3 (Psychology) to a low of 1.85 mentioned above. Last was the hard-applied disciplines which ranged from 92.94 tokens in an Economics class to 8.42 tokens in Engineering, making the range 84.52. The larger ranges in the soft disciplines might be attributed to a larger variety of activities done in those classes. In addition to the main activities shown in the Appendix, students sometimes had papers or other assignments which were praised as part of the class. (See figure 1)

Figure 1: range of number of praise tokens per hour (soft-pure classes)

Highest	The Cuban Revolution	128.33 tokens per hour
Lowest	Film and Television Studies	4.36
	Range	123.97

Figure 2: range of number of praise tokens per hour (soft-applied classes)

Highest	Psychology	107.3 tokens per hour
Lowest	Logistics and Operation	1.85
	Range	105.18

Figure 3: range of number of praise tokens per hour (hard-applied classes)

Highest	Economics	92.94 tokens per hour
Lowest	Engineering	8.42
	Range	84.52

Figure 4: range of number of praise tokens per hour (all three disciplinary categories)

Highest	The Cuban Revolution	128.33 tokens per hour
Lowest	Logistics and Operation	1.85
	Range	126.48

It can be seen from this that, although there is a great deal of variation in how much praise is used in each class, the samples from the corpus indicate no relation between the amount of praise and the major disciplinary category. Praise shows neither a higher number of words nor a higher amount of variation for soft-pure disciplines, which contradicts the findings of prior research.

There are a few possible reasons why the disciplines show no significant difference in terms of amount or variation. The first is that there is simply not enough praise to

capture the effect. As has been discussed, praise actually makes up a very small amount of classroom speech. In the BASE corpus, the most praise recorded in a single classroom made up only 7% of the total classroom speech. In most classrooms this is much lower. If larger amounts of praise were examined, we might be able to see a clearer pattern of difference between the disciplines. In addition, we might be able to see more praise if other genres of academic discourse were examined. It is also possible that graduate classes would show more of this variation, since they are more specialized and the students in some sense more committed to the discipline.

6.6 PRAISE IN CULTURAL CONTEXT

This brings us to the second research question, whether the behavior being praised differs according to discipline. Given the disciplinary differences in goals of teaching determined by Biglan (1973a, 1973b) and Becher (1994) might lead to the conclusion that students in the soft disciplines are praised for independent thought, or for synthesizing information, or for general personal growth or critical thinking. The hard disciplines, on the other hand, would use praise for students' acquiring of information. It was found that any such difference among disciplines is very difficult to determine from a spoken transcript. At some points in the transcript it is obvious that the student is giving an expected answer, but it is not possible to understand, from a transcript of a single classroom event, whether a student's answer shows independence of thought or critical thinking. This is due in some cases to the researcher's unfamiliarity with certain disciplines, but also due to the fact that even a response which seems very original may be parroting a reading or an instructor's statement from an earlier class.

One way to determine differences in what is being praised, therefore, might be to look at the words of the praise itself. In most cases, as has been shown, instances of praise consist of a single word. However, there are a few examples in the transcript of more extensive praise, which give us more insight into what the instructor considers desirable behavior. These are very few in number, however, and do not give us a clear picture of disciplinary differences. In a soft-pure transcript we have these examples:

i thought both sides did a very good job at putting forward a coherent argument i was impressed by your structure i mean i thought you both had good good form to your presentation (**Comparative American Studies, ah003**)

i mean i think you did a very good job at really researching a number of different position and i don't know if you found that i think you did a very good job at moving through these different position and avoiding er painting yourself into ideological corners that you didn't i thought you did a good job at sort of looking at the different sides of the same question and talking around them i thought that was very impressive (**Comparative American Studies, ah003**)

that represents er a very good attempt at sort of compressing and differentiating between the books (**Preparing a Literature Review, ps008**)

i'm very impressed by the word respect turning up so much (**Poetics, ah004**)

These examples do seem to be reinforcing certain types of behavior. In the case of the first three examples the instructor seems to be praising the students for synthesizing and organizing information. The last example is from a discussion in which students were asked to articulate their own poetics. This example of praise might be seen to be in response to the students' personal growth, thought to be a feature of soft disciplines (Braxton 1995, Smart & Ethington 1995, Neumann 2001, Neumann, Parry & Becher 2002) . However, we also find these examples in a hard-pure class:

that's right that was quite good and i thought in your plan you realised that there could be a zero that's something that not many people realise you realised there could be high numbers there (**Chemistry-Blindfold numbers, ps003**)

i thought your plan was fantastic completely different you for the first task you came back and made a plan you you planned for all sorts which a lot of the teams probably would've done but then the worst and this whole task is designed to give you unexpected things (**Chemistry-Blindfold numbers, ps003**)

i thought it was brilliant you were reviewing all the time that's what's going wrong an- and changing the plan an-and going absolutely you were really really

good yeah that was really positive (**Chemistry-Toxic
Waste, ps004**)

In the cases listed above, the praise could be seen to be reinforcing critical thinking or personal growth—soft discipline values according to the research. These instances of praise are given during a game in which teams have to work together to solve some problem, so, as mentioned before, they are not typical classes for the discipline. Likewise, although it was postulated that the hard disciplines might use more words such as “good” and “right” to praise correct answers, these were found equally frequently in the soft disciplines, often to praise factually correct answers.

As for other characteristics found for the different disciplinary categories in the Biglan/Becher typography, very little evidence was found that they are being explicitly praised in these classrooms. As mentioned before:

These are exactly the sorts of arguments we'd hear in
court (**ss006**)

is one example of praise found in a Law classroom. Since this is an applied discipline, this could be taken as support for the idea that courses in the applied disciplines focus on professional skills. However, it is impossible to draw a clear conclusion from only one example. No instances were found of dedication to study being praised in soft-pure courses, and although Ylijoki (2000) found that using the discipline to help one's fellow man was a virtue found in soft-pure disciplines, the only mention of helping others was found in medical school classes, which fall in the hard-applied category. At least in these transcripts, praise in these classes does not seem to reflect the moral order of these disciplines.

6.7 DISCUSSION

The goal of this research was to determine the extent to which the disciplines, divided according to the taxonomy developed by Biglan (1973a, 1973b) and Becher (1990, 1994), vary with respect to how praise is formed and used. In the seminars recorded for the BASE corpus, they show very little difference across the disciplines, either in amount or variation. The cultural aspects of the disciplines also were not reflected in the praise given. Added to results of the other two studies, this may signify an important feature of praise: that it shows a great regularity of form and purpose, even in contexts which usually show variation. This may speak to the importance of praise in the interpersonal aspect of spoken academic discourse, which will be further discussed in Chapter 8.

We should also acknowledge other characteristics of the research which may have contributed to the results. Although soft disciplines may use more student-centered, “active” classes, as Luedekke (2003) shows, the examples above suggest that the type of praise, and the behavior that students are praised for, may have more to do with the type of classroom activity than the discipline. It should also be noted that the instructor’s personal didactic style is probably very important. While the instructor in the Comparative American Studies course extensively praises presentations in her classroom, in other soft-pure classrooms presentations end with no acknowledgement other than, “Thank you.” It will take more data than is available in the relatively small sample of the BASE corpus to determine if teaching style differs systematically among the disciplines.

Another factor may be that the different disciplinary categories are in fact reinforcing different behavior but they are doing it in a way that does not involve classroom praise. It seems more likely, for example, that feedback on written work will show this kind of difference, since the instructor has more time to consider the work that he or she is praising and give more exacting feedback. It may be very rewarding for a student to have his or her idea taken up by the professor and used in discussion than it is to be explicitly told that it is a good idea. More research is necessary to determine the different ways that novices may be being socialized into different disciplines.

Although no significant variation was found in this particular context, using examination of a corpus, the question of variation in praise across disciplinary areas is one that will benefit from further study of different genres and by different methods. Interviews and stimulated recall data, for example, could add a great deal to our understanding of this subject. Looking at feedback on written student work and on graduate classrooms would also show another dimension of praise which might reflect the values of the disciplinary culture more clearly.

6.8 CONCLUSION

No disciplinary variation was found in the praise given in undergraduate seminars in the BASE corpus, in contrast with other studies of disciplinary differences. This suggests a conclusion similar to that of Wolfson and Manes (1980) in terms of compliments: just as compliments are important social strategies that must be understood by people of different backgrounds, so too does praise fill a vital role in the classroom, which might lead to the relatively limited forms it takes. Virtually all students come into the university classroom

with many years of experience of Initiation-Response-Feedback patterns (Sinclair & Coulthard 1975). It may be that praise takes the same form in all levels so that valuable classroom time will not be used explaining to students that their answer is correct. This important classroom role of praise does not differ across disciplinary divides, apparently, so it does not need to take different forms.

This may be all to the good. Murray and Renaud (1995) have investigated disciplinary differences in 64 different behaviors, of which one is praise, rated highly on student evaluations. They found that, although the disciplinary categories differ in how often such behaviors are found in the classroom, students in all disciplines seem to uniformly find them desirable. This suggests that students' idea of good teaching does not differ by discipline, no matter what the norms of their discipline are. Although this study cannot deal with the pedagogical implications of different types of praise, praise in general seems to be perceived by students as valuable. This can be of use to instructors in any discipline.

CRITICISM IN SPOKEN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE: FORM AND FUNCTION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Research on evaluation in all contexts of academic spoken discourse has found that it tends to be positive. Adjectives used in academic spoken discourse are often positive (Swales 2001) and evaluations tend also to be positive, with negative evaluations being more hedged (Mauranen 2002b, 2003), delayed (Waring 2008) and generally showing signs of being dispreferred. This is part of the role of academic spoken discourse to support novices, but its effects are not thought to be entirely positive. Mauranen has been led to wonder how students are being taught to evaluate negatively. This research will examine what happens in the classroom when a student's answer is not satisfactory for some reason, because incomplete, incorrect, or not on topic.

This chapter will first explain the methods used in exploring criticism in university discussion section. A study of criticism presents challenges to the researcher which a study of praise does not, so those will be outlined as well. After showing some of the factors that go into the realization of criticism in the classroom—such as pedagogical goals, face wants, and the IRF exchange—some ways of giving negative feedback in a discussion section will be explored.

7.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This project seeks to explore what happens in a classroom when a student gives an answer which is not adequate for some reason: because it is factually incorrect, not stated in an academic way, not detailed enough, not tied to the subject, or some other reason. The research was based on the assumption, later verified, that examples of direct criticism

would be very hard to find in classroom discourse. Then, what does the instructor do with inadequate student responses? What does feedback look like when it is not positive?

In this study, F-moves that were not explicitly positive were examined, and some that might be criticizing the students or encouraging them to amend their answers were identified. No claim is being made that all of the negative criticism samples have been identified, nor that all possible categories have been found. Rather, the aim of this research is to use the data to identify a set of occurrences, describe and position them with regard to existing theoretical frameworks, and explore what this means for the possibilities open to teachers.

In addition, this study will examine some of the ways that instructors address face concerns and pedagogical concerns simultaneously when giving evaluations or follow up in the classroom, and the different contexts in which this happens.

7.3 METHOD

In this section, ten transcripts from the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE) were examined. MICASE was chosen over the British Academic Spoken English (BASE) corpus because, as will be seen later, a greater degree of detail was needed in order to find examples of negative feedback. For example, the student's response to feedback, if any, must be understood. MICASE is the more carefully transcribed of the two corpora, and thus it was felt to be more suitable for this study. The seven transcripts comprise discussion sections of Anthropology, Astronomy, Biology, Economics, History, Philosophy, and American Politics and undergraduate seminars on Philosophy, Composition, and Politics of Higher Education. "Seminar" and "Discussion

Section” are MICASE designations, but seem to be very similar in terms of interactivity, range of activity type, and academic rank of both instructors and students, so both types were examined. One transcript, Biology of Birds, contains some interaction, but nothing that was identified as negative criticism. Another, Heat and Mass Transfer, has only instructor speech and thus no criticism. The transcripts can be divided into general disciplinary group, with Biology and Astronomy belonging to the hard disciplines and the others, except Economics, belonging to the soft. Economics could be either one, depending on the focus.

The term “discussion section” in the US generally means a class for undergraduates that goes along with a larger lecture class (the “lecture section”). Particularly in large schools where lecture classes might have hundreds of students, a discussion section is a chance for students to discuss the ideas brought out in the lectures, and to review in a smaller group or have the chance to ask questions. The discussion section is generally taught by a graduate student, where lecture sections are taught by more senior faculty. Discussion sections are roughly similar to what is called “tutorials” or “undergraduate seminars” in other countries. In main focus or activity the discussion sections also differ quite a bit. In some cases, the discussion section is used, as one might expect, for discussion, to make clear or further examine the ideas brought up in the lecture section. In two cases, Philosophy and Economics, the classes seem to be taking place immediately before the final examination, and the students are invited to ask questions about concepts they don’t understand. The Anthropology and American Politics classes, on the other hand, seem to be taking place at the beginning of the semester, as they are defining basic terms in the field. The Biology section is going over homework questions and acting out meiosis and mitosis as a review. In the History section, a professor is going

over answers previously prepared by students, as practice questions for an upcoming examination. The Astronomy section is in a planetarium.

The MICASE transcripts were examined for instructor follow up moves (F-moves), with particular attention paid to F-moves that were not positive. Ways of responding to student contributions that indicated a mistake on the part of the student, or that asked the student to expand or amend an answer, were coded, and these were analyzed in terms of the presumptive goals of the classroom.

7.3.1 Research dilemmas

In the previous sections we have looked at praise in seminars. Although praise is rare in such contexts, it is also a comparatively clear-cut phenomenon in academic discourse. Praise can usually be easily identified by a positive word in the instructor's feedback turn. However, it is hard to even imagine an instructor saying, "That is a bad answer." We can intuitively grasp that instructors use more subtle means of showing students that their answer is not desirable or could be improved. Although it is not unheard of for instructors to respond to a student's contribution with "no," it is limited to certain situations and pedagogical goals. Instructors use a variety of other means to deflect students, get them to add to or amend their contributions, or encourage other students to give a different answer.

This makes it very difficult to identify negative feedback in the classroom, which may be part of the reason why very little research has been done on this subject. Previous studies have been done by examining written feedback (Hyland & Hyland 2001) or by setting up a situation in which participants had to give criticism (Tracy & Eisenberg 1991). From the studies on praise we can see that written and spoken feedback may differ

considerably in the way in which the feedback is realized, both in length and lexical choices, and in the goal of such feedback. A discourse-completion or similar task which sets up an artificial situation may not capture the way that instructors give feedback in fact. However, looking at actual classroom data has its own difficulties. Without understanding what an instructor's goals are for the class, or sometimes even what he is thinking at a certain time, it is not clear what an individual example of feedback is intended to accomplish. While using a corpus has the benefit of providing enough data to examine a relatively rare phenomenon, the drawback is that the instructors are not available to make their motives known. However, the instructors themselves may not be consciously aware of what they are doing when giving feedback, as Tracy and Eisenberg (1991) have pointed out in the case of criticism. Even if it were possible to interview these instructors and ask what the purpose of certain feedback was, it is not certain that they would be able to answer. Therefore, negative criticism must be approached in a different way from praise.

This study was done with reference to Tannen's (1984) three types of accountability. The first, multiplicity of interpretations, refers to the fact that the explanation here is not the only possible one. The second, internal and external evidence, means finding evidence for the interpretation both inside and outside of the text. In this study, we can find some recurring phenomena, as well as other evidence that supports the interpretation of the participants' face wants and pedagogical goals. As for external evidence, unfortunately since a corpus is being used interviews with the participants are not possible. However, evidence for the interpretation of the goals of the discussion can be found in other sources. Tannen's last form of accountability is what she calls the "aha factor." This refers to the fact that to readers who are familiar with the context some interpretations will resonate as something they are familiar with, but have never been

consciously aware of. Most of the readers of this study will be familiar with the process of giving feedback in a classroom; it is hoped that some interpretations will resonate. The interpretations here were done in a similar manner to those of Tracy (1997) and Tracy and Naughton (1994), whose goal was to “[make] visible potential likely meanings of conversational devices” (1994:285). First the possible goals and face-wants of the instructors giving praise will be shown. Then, the feedback that they give students in the discussion sections will be examined in light of these goals, to see how they might be made manifest.

7.3.2 Research Background

7.3.2.1 Teaching dilemmas

In the context of the seminar or discussion section, students are expected to learn actively by freely expressing ideas and arguing both with each other and also possibly the instructor. In this type of class, participation is vital, so it is essential that instructors not inhibit students from speaking out. Teachers must do a great deal of interactional work in order to achieve this. At the same time, it is important to encourage students to make worthwhile contributions, and to let them know that their answers are wrong or their reasoning is faulty. This is not only important for the purpose of making certain that students have understood the course material, it is also sometimes considered practice for other types of intellectual work. These conflicting goals may be seen in the way instructors respond to contributions from students that may be incorrect or undesirable. The instructor of a discussion section, because of her position as the liaison between the professor who teaches a lecture course and the students, may also have conflicting goals: to appear warm and approachable while at the same time being seen as professional, competent, and in control of the material.

7.3.2.2 The University-level discussion: goals and problems

Although the goal of the discussion section will of course differ depending on various factors, discussion sections seem to have some general goals in common. Interviews with instructors of seminars (which are close in purpose to discussion sections in the US), transcribed in the British Academic Spoken English (BASE) corpus and available on the website, show that they are nearly unanimous in believing that a seminar is a place for more active learning than a lecture and that students must participate in the seminar in order to learn. This is despite any broad disciplinary differences. A Classics professor says that the purpose of a seminar is “allowing the students to do a little bit of work on their own, so that they can begin to realise that they have a real contribution to make to the learning process. And it isn’t just a one-way process.” An instructor of History of Medicine points out the benefit for students: “They’ve contributed. They’ve brought something in. They’ve tried it out, if you like, in the seminar discussion with their peers and with their seminar tutor, and that will fix things in their minds, in a way which is totally different, I think, and much more real and much more internalised very often, than some of the sort of skip-reading which is necessary, obviously for writing for essays and all the rest of it.” Although in the hard disciplines the seminar does not deal so much with the exchange of opinion, as a Chemistry instructor believes: “In science one is trying to help students understand different concepts, to be able to employ problem solving skills, and these don’t lend themselves to the development of student opinion on matters, but rather student understanding.” In some cases, the instructors believe that disagreement and argument between students is desirable, whether or not this actually happens in the seminar. “. . .[T]hat’s part of their learning process, I think, to have a point of view and to argue for it, is important. Especially in relation with our students, to work they’ve done or

seen in schools” (Education). In some cases the arguing or airing of different opinions among students is thought to be an essential part of the epistemology of the discipline. “There are - there are certainly important facts and figures that we need to know and take account of. But those facts and figures are themselves socially constructed[. . .]We have to understand why the social world is a contested world, with different people having different understandings of what crime is, whether crime is a problem?” (Sociology). It can be seen from this that student participation, in all disciplines, is something that the instructor must actively encourage, and this is part of the essential job of the instructor of the seminar. Although in the hard disciplines expressing one’s opinion may be of less importance, in the soft disciplines the students must feel comfortable in order to share their understandings of the subject. Some instructors referred openly to the importance of students feeling comfortable. “I think most students can feel self-conscious or embarrassed about talking in seminars - as indeed they might feel self-conscious about asking a question in a lecture - or even participating in a tutorial. That’s - that’s very well understood. I think the lecturers taking the seminars are sympathetic to this and would help people (Psychology). “[. . .]I hope to get to such a state in a seminar, particularly if it is a small seminar, where there’s confidence, that people trust each other, and where people actually experience a seminar as a ground in which they can just, you know, articulate whatever they feel like articulating at that moment, and then build it up from there” (Art History).

Therefore, the comfort and psychological safety of the seminar participants seem to be very much on the minds of the instructors as an essential part of the students’ university learning. At the same time, however, instructors must pay attention to a conflicting goal: to make sure that students do not misunderstand the material, and that their comments

contribute to the discussion in a positive way. In the hard sciences, instructors at some times are obligated to tell students that they are wrong. “If it’s a misunderstanding of the content of the tutorial, then I think all that one can do is kind of correct the student as the teacher, if you like. You have to say, like, “Actually you’ve got it wrong. You don’t quite understand this - this area of work.” That’s difficult. One has to do that with some sensitivity, of course, in order not to completely switch off a student” (Biological Sciences). Interestingly, the instructor here refers to correcting the student “as the teacher,” which may indicate that he orients to this identity more when correcting students than at other times. He also refers explicitly to the threat of a student “shutting down” if she is not corrected in a sensitive manner. In the soft disciplines, although there may not be such clear cut divisions of right and wrong, some student discussion contributions are seen as undesirable. “However, at the same time as you criticise you must support those criticisms with a presentation of some evidence. You cannot just simply say, “This is my opinion.” And that’s it. There’s no discussion. Because then you would be accused of being not objective. It’s a purely subjective opinion which, if everybody did that, then everybody could have their own opinion, and there would be no discussion” (Globalisation and Regionalisation).

We can see that two conflicting goals, encouraging students to participate in a discussion and guiding students’ contributions to be both factually correct and worthwhile, are important to instructors as they lead the discussion. The way in which these competing goals are accomplished may be visible in the way that instructors try to redirect students or get them to amend their answers. Another important element in the way that instructors frame their negative feedback is differing face wants.

7.3.3 Looking at face/identity as a factor

When giving any sort of feedback in the classroom, but particularly negative feedback, the face wants of both the instructor and the student will be factors in how the feedback is realized. The most common way of looking at face as a factor in interaction has been the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1987). In Brown and Levinson's framework, face is the image that human beings want to project. We have positive face wants--the desire for others to see us as a good person, or to want what we want; and negative face wants--the desire to not have our wishes impeded, or to be free from having others impose their wishes on us. Face Threatening Acts or FTAs are speech acts which in some way would threaten the hearer's positive or negative face. A complaint or disagreement, for example, could threaten the hearer's positive face, because it suggests the speaker does not think of her positively or does not want what she wants. A request would threaten the hearer's negative face, because it shows that the speaker might wish to impose upon the hearer. Politeness is the way that we offer redress to such acts. Speakers have the choice of not doing the act, using a positive politeness strategy, using a negative politeness strategy, or using off-record strategies. When choosing a strategy, according to Brown and Levinson, speakers take into account the social distance, relative power of speaker and hearer, and degree of imposition in the FTA. Brown and Levinson's description has been amended and expanded by other researchers. Face has come to be considered an interactional phenomenon (Arundale 2006, Spencer-Oatey 2007), and more complex than in Brown and Levinson's framework, as will be described below.

A cursory look at negative feedback with reference to Brown and Levinson (1987) would suggest that negative feedback threatens the student's positive face, and thus would be redressed by various means. Indeed we do find ways, such as hedging, in which this is

accomplished, and these will be discussed later. But, for various reasons, the Brown and Levinson view of face and politeness may not be entirely adequate to describe what is happening in the university discussion. Rees-Miller (1999) has shown that such challenge and criticism may not threaten face in ways that are predictable from looking at Brown and Levinson's model. In looking at disagreements in university settings, she found that "pedagogical context and purpose affected the expression of disagreement in ways that could not be explained by the difference in power of interlocutors or by degree of severity" (p.1095). She found that professors, in disagreeing with students, used "softeners"--either positive or negative or other polite forms more often than students did with other students or even students did with professors. (Rees-Miller categorizes as "disagreement" statements that would be called negative feedback in the current research). According to Brown and Levinson, it might be predicted that students, being lower in status and power, would use more polite forms. Rees-Miller believes that professors use such softeners to build solidarity between professor and student.

Tracy (1997) feels that Brown and Levinson's description of face wants may be too simplistic. "If[. . .]face wants are highly situationally influenced, then it is important to be The face wants individuals pursue are different in different contexts" (p. 218). She points out also that the face wants of a single person can be conflicting (p.220). This leads us to consider the face wants of the instructors themselves. Tracy (1997) and Tracy and Baratz (1993) have shown a fairly complex and sometimes conflicting number of face wants among academics participating in a colloquium. These have to do with the individual's relative status, as well as his relationship to the subject he is talking about, and his intellectual claims. Instructors of discussion sections tend to be graduate students, who

may feel constrained from claiming a much higher status than their students because they are only a few years older, and yet need to demonstrate authority and control of the subject.

These studies suggest that face wants in academia are quite complex and may not fit in with pre-determined “universals.” When giving feedback there is the added complexity of pedagogical goals which may differ and at times conflict. In the fourth and final study of this dissertation, we examine the different ways that negative feedback is realized in the classroom and how this may serve different goals.

7.3.4 Conflicting Face Goals

As the interview subjects above mention many times, the seminar or discussion is intended to be a more active component of the student’s learning. This contrasts with the lecture section, in which the students are expected to learn more passively, mostly by listening. In many cases, this means that the instructor of the discussion section, when different from the lecture section instructor, may be in a position of liaison between the professor and the students. It is part of the discussion section instructor’s job to make the lectures easier for students to understand and to answer questions which they may not get the chance to ask in lecture. In order to attain the instructional goals of making students feel comfortable and encouraging them to participate, the instructor of the discussion section may take pains to align himself with them, sometimes against the professor, the book, or the material. The instructor may also have the face goal of appearing warm and friendly to students. Tracy (1997) and Tracy and Baratz (1993) have also suggested that in some contexts academics feel particular constraint against appearing to assume a station above their own. Benwell and Stokoe (2002) in a study of tutorials, found that tutors avoid “expert” and authoritative language, which they postulate may be a strategy of

democratization. For a young graduate student teaching undergraduates only slightly younger than she is, it may be particularly important to show solidarity with the students. The instructors show this in several ways, which will be discussed below.

At the same time, the instructor has an institutional identity in which she is the expert on the material and the leader of the class. This orientation can be seen in the classroom as well, most commonly by the use of Initiation-Response-Follow Up (IRF, see below for discussion) patterns in the discourse. Although not all teachers conduct class in this way, IRF exchanges confirm the instructor's status as a teacher and the leader of the class or discussion.

Tracy and Carjuzàa (1993) have found that participants in colloquia show intellectual identity by showing distance between themselves and their ideas, with the novice members, graduate students, displaying more distance (p. 173). Examples can also be seen of instructors in discussion sections doing this, possibly to establish solidarity with students. There are several different ways that the instructors show this distance.

Instructors of discussion sections that are linked to lecture sections may specifically refer to ideas as belonging to the more senior faculty member who teaches the lecture section.

S1: [. . .]just like, just like Dr Kottak was talking about today, um, with how um, in the on the coast of Peru he was saying the, different groups expand they come into conflict, and then a larger government forms to mediate, and that's sort of, you can look at it the same way there. **(Anthropology)**

S1: so Professor Walton gave you the, example of the stop sign right? what's the stop sign example? **(American politics)**

Of course, linking the content of the discussion section serves a pedagogical purpose as well, by reminding students of content that they have learned already and checking that they understand.

Instructors of discussion sections may also position themselves as being on the side of the students against the professor. Sometimes this takes the form of assessing the content of the lecture section from the students' point of view.

S1: (xx) okay. so somebody explain to me how it is, that the categories, explain, unified consciousness
<PAUSE0:12> this is pretty tricky. it involved a game...
(Philosophy Discussion)
S1: these lectures are really hard, i think **(Philosophy Discussion)**

In these examples the instructor characterizes content delivered by the professor as “tricky” or “hard,” indicating that she is placing herself in the students’ position with respect to the teacher of the lecture section. One instructor more explicitly orients to an “us against the professor” position:

S1: [. . .]i don't know if it's gonna be useful but, i hope so because Ricardo is writing a final on this part. and he's very mad. so we must be ready, for that. <LAUGH>
(Economics)
S5: are you gonna ask something like this like in proof in the short answer part in the, uh
S1: no i don't think so
S5: okay.
S1: i don't think so. i hope not. i'll fight for it.
(Economics)

[In this excerpt, as in all the MICASE excerpts except where otherwise specified, S1 is the instructor].

In the first example above, the instructor places herself with the students as the “we” who must be ready for the professor’s question. She also shows herself to be in possession of privileged information--that the professor is angry--and to be allying herself with the students by sharing it with them. In the second example, she explicitly states that she will

“fight” against having more difficult content on an examination, again showing herself to be on the side of students against the professor.

Rather than align themselves with the students against the professor, instructors may also align themselves with the students against the material.

S1: mhm i see where you're going and i think it's a really good point to press him on, um
S3: too bad he's dead
S1: pardon?
S3: too bad he's dead <LAUGH>
S1: too bad he's dead. <LAUGH> it is actually cuz i think a lot of people would have a lot of questions for this man. Um **(Philosophy Discussion)**

In this excerpt, the “he” in question is Immanuel Kant, whom the students are discussing. The instructor distances herself from the material and shows solidarity with the students by supporting a student’s argument against the philosopher. As well as the pedagogical purpose of encouraging a student to analyze and assess the classroom content, this shows that she is seeing the students’ point of view.

As was seen earlier, sometimes instructors may share privileged information, for example information about the instructor, with the students in order to show solidarity. Instructors may also take pains to show that some of the information they give students in the discussion section is not specialized. This seems to be done in cases where information that is outside of the content of the lectures and readings for the course is discussed:

S1: [. . .]just in case you're interested, um, Alasdair MacIntyre. i don't know jus- just to let you know. but yeah he's he's he's, um a really well-respected philosopher who said something very similar. Yeah **(Anthropology)**
S1: [. . .]like i don't know if you've all f- been, following, um what goes, what's, goes on in Turkey i mean i haven't, followed it as much as i'd like to **(Anthropology)**

S1: [. . .]so like in, the original form of this argument, um, this is kind of actually an interesting historical fact the first time this came up, these guys were not even on the board, the only other possible explanation was chance, (**Philosophy Discussion**)

In these examples, the instructors downgrade their ownership of more information than the students. The anthropology instructor displays the fact that she has acquired such information only incidentally, and in the second example shows that it is available to students as well and that they may already have it. In the third example, the philosophy instructor describes the information as “just an interesting historical fact,” using the downgrader “just” to show that the information is not of particular importance.

Another way that instructors have of distancing themselves from the content of the class and showing solidarity with the students is what might be termed “reverse jargonization,” after Waring’s (2002) term. This occurs when an instructor restates a specialized term in a more colloquial manner.

S1: [. . .]through something called independent assortment. <PAUSE WHILE WRITING> and that's just a fancy way of saying, random, alignment of chromosomes, at metaphase okay? (**Biology**)

S1: what do we want? what do we want from the government?

SS: collective goods.

S1: collective goods, we want stuff. (**Political culture**)

As Poos and Simpson (2002), and Swales and Burke (2003) found, instructors may hedge or mitigate the use of jargon in their classes in order to align themselves with students. The restatements in the examples above show the instructors distancing themselves from the material by stating the specialized terms in language the students themselves would use. In the first case this also serves to define the term, but the second example is a restatement of a term the students seem already to know.

Although these examples come mostly from discussion sections which correspond to a lecture section, they are not necessarily used only by graduate students or discussion section instructors. As has been shown (Rudolph 1994, Swales 2001, Fortanet 2004, Swales & Burke 2003, Poos & Simpson 2002, Hyland 1999), tertiary instructors of all levels seem to do some work to show solidarity with student and to be supportive. This may not be only for pedagogical purposes, but also can express the face wants of the faculty member, to be seen as a supportive teacher and in some cases not to be seen as behaving inappropriately for the faculty member's station.

This face want may conflict with the instructors' institutional identity of being professional, expert, and in control of the material, the activities, and the class. This identity, also, is sometimes explicitly shown by the faculty member:

S11: um, then i talked about, salons and how they became educated and enlightened by, having all these discussions with men [S1: later on alright that's, uh good] um i, threw in um, Mary Wols-Wolstoncraft as an example of like the strong um, founder of modern feminism, it's later, indication rights of women,
S1: that's that's later that's that's, hold that for another course hold that for another course.
S11: don't go that far?
S1: don't go that far don't go that far this course this course comes to an end uh, this course comes to an end when it does for two reasons number one limits the time and number two when i get bored with history. [S11: okay] uh, which occurs a lot er- earlier than thanthan when my thing

(History)

This is also taken from a discussion section, but the instructor seems to be entirely responsible for the content of the class, which leads to the conclusion that the class does not have a lecture section or he is teaching both sections. He is a senior faculty member. Throughout the class he refers to the age difference between him and the students, and to the length of time he has spent studying the subject. These ways are also mentioned in

Tracy (1997) as a way of claiming more ownership of the subject matter. In addition, as can be seen above, he is explicitly showing ownership of the class, in that he is able to end the class when he wants to, for any reason including that he is bored.

Such clear aligning of oneself with the course and the course material is rare, perhaps because these classes are taught by graduate students or younger faculty members. However, it may also be because of the nature of the class. In these classes the instructors are, naturally, giving information and answering students' questions, which may make their identity as instructors apparent enough that they do not feel the need to display it further. In addition, several of these classes are using IRF formulations in their teaching. Since the IRF formulation is a typical one for classrooms of all levels, as explained below, this also may display professional identity.

7.3.5 What is criticism?

Although the intention of this project was to understand the forms that criticism takes in discussion sections, criticism is rather hard to define in this context. Hyland and Hyland (2001) define criticism as "an expression of dissatisfaction or negative comment" (p. 186) in their study of written work. In spoken feedback, however, it is much less clear

Although a few instances of direct expressions of dissatisfaction in certain circumstances are discussed below, they were not often found. This is in contrast to feedback on students' written work, where negative feedback seems to be quite common. Hyland and Hyland find 31% of feedback in their data is negative (p.192). Further, most of the feedback that Hyland and Hyland find, both positive and negative, deals with the content of the student papers, not the mechanics. So it may be fair to say that, without the constraints of

criticizing in front of an audience as classroom feedback entails, instructors would find something to criticize in their students' contributions. Yet we find very little direct rejection of those contributions, and nothing that could be called criticism in Hyland and Hyland's definition except for a few special cases, notably composition classes, as has been suggested in Chapter 5. This may be partly because of politeness concerns, but it may also be because even a poorly thought-out idea can be used productively in a classroom discussion. Taking up the idea and using it to ask a further question or have a student clarify a concept may avoid the problem of negative feedback altogether while still maintaining the flow of the discussion.

S1: [. . .], i mean, um why do you think that there are not as many consequences? i mean why do, why do um, why does society_ why is our society set up so there won't be as many consequences?

S6: cuz they aren't gonna like, throw like a six-year-old in jail for like stealing something or like make him pay a big fine (he'll) probably just turn- return it if like

S1: i mean that's absolutely true but i mean why, what is it that, what is the value behind that? what is the idea behind that?yeah.

(Anthropology)

The instructor here seems to be trying to bring the idea of socialization out into the discussion. The tautological nature of the student's response would seem to be undesirable, but the instructor is able to use it to move the discussion forward. So, while it is not a "good" answer per se, it also need not be seen as "wrong."

In addition to the obvious point that there is more threat to the student's face when other students are observing, another possible reason for the lack of negative feedback in the classroom could be that the didactic purpose is less clear. When correcting a composition, teachers write comments with the expectation that the student will carefully read the comments and amend their drafts. (Hyland & Hyland, 2001). However, when

giving feedback in the classroom it is not certain whether the positive aspects of the use of criticism to refine students' answers and make their thinking more clear outweighs the possible negative effects—that students will be self-conscious or anxious and contribute less to class discussions. When conducting discussions, instructors have the two competing goals of having all students participate, and having the contributions be both well-considered and thought provoking. If teachers, aiming for the latter goal, criticize student contributions, then students will feel less comfortable and be less likely to participate. As Hyland and Hyland remark about written criticism, teachers must be aware of both pedagogical and interactional effects of comments (p.190). The discussion section, more than written feedback, may be a place where the tension between the pedagogical and the interactional is more clearly felt, since the interactional aspect in the discussion section may outweigh it in written feedback.

7.3.6 The Initiation-Response-Follow-up (IRF) Exchange

One of the reasons that instructors may be working to display solidarity with students is to mitigate the control shown in the use of the Initiation-Response-Follow-up pattern. An introduction to the IRF pattern, and controversies about its use have been discussed in Chapter 3. Here we will briefly review different frameworks of the uses of IRF exchanges, and categorization of the F-move

IRF exchanges (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975) consist of an Initiation by the teacher, usually a question but sometimes an informative utterance or a request for action (p. 36). The corresponding R-move from the student could be an answer to the question, a question from the student, an action, or an acknowledgement. The teacher Follow-up acknowledges and sometimes evaluates the student response. Sinclair and Coulthard

categorized the F-move as consisting of Accept, Evaluate or Comment, with possible rejection included in the Accept move. Mehan conceived of a similar pattern, which he termed Initiation-Response-Evaluation, or IRE. Since most of the authors quoted use “IRF,” and since in the present study the third turn is not necessarily evaluative, the term “IRF” is used here.

Of particular relevance to the current research are studies of the F-move in the IRF formula, as that is where evaluation occurs. Many of these studies consider language classroom contexts and so describe F-moves that do not occur in a tertiary context (Lyster & Ranta 1997, Cullen 2002, Edwards & Mercer 1987). Research which discusses avoidance of the F-move, however, is relevant here because of the rarity of direct criticism. Several researchers have found that F-moves are omitted by the instructor (Kramsch 1985, Mercer 2001, Wright 2005). The phenomenon of questions being repeated (Kramsch 1985, Edwards & Mercer 1987), or the IRF sequence being reinitiated (Zemel & Koschman 2010), or multiple questions being given (Kasper 1985) as a way of avoiding negative evaluation or implying a response is undesirable is also seen in an academic setting, as will be discussed below.

It has been shown that the IRF exchange can occur in contexts outside the classroom (Berry 1987, Tsui 1989, Seedhouse 1996, Antaki et. al. 2000; explained in more detail in Chapter 3). Although the IRF pattern may be found in other contexts, it seems to be characteristic of the classroom, and a third turn which assesses or evaluates may be seen to be the hallmark of a teacher.

Many researchers have recognized the dual nature of academic discourse: that it is used for checking and assessing what students have learned, and also for encouraging students to explore a topic through discussion (for example, Cullen 2002, Wright 2005). Van Lier's (1996, 2001) conception of the assessment and participation orientations is a useful one, but it is difficult in this particular instance to use it to categorize the activities of the discussion sections under investigation. When looking at the MICASE data, it does seem that the participation orientation is more strongly represented. In this excerpt, for example, from the astronomy discussion:

S1: forty-two. and forty-two is what... forty-two degrees of... altitude. [S2: oh] so altitude is the number of degrees from the horizon, to a star. so this star here would be at what altitude to us?

S2: twenty-six

S1: yeah about twenty-six, and this one would be at,

S4: (be at) eighty

S1: eighty degrees of altitude. so altitude is determined by the observer.

We can see what van Lier would probably call "recitation," since the IRF exchange is being used to check what the students have learned. In his explanation, the display orientation of recitation would be used to "check memorized material," and the participation orientation to "stimulate access to memory." First, it is difficult to look at a single class transcript and see which of these is happening. Also, the data show some differences according to instructor I-move. Since the assessment and participation orientations include all types of teacher I-moves, this distinction is less useful for

categorization of this particular set of data. Therefore, in this section we will categorize the instructor's I-move according to Mehan's (1979a) four types of elicitation.

Mehan describes four types of elicitations (not necessarily "questions") in the classroom. *Choice elicitations* require students to choose between two answers. Yes/no questions are one example of these. *Product elicitations* require a factual response. *Process elicitations* ask a student for an opinion or interpretation and *metaprocess elicitations* ask students how the opinion was formed, or for their reasoning (1979a:45-46). We can see the differing challenges placed on the student, with choice elicitations being the easiest and metaprocess having the most difficulty. It seems also that choice and product elicitations are more likely to fall into van Lier's (1996, 2001) assessment orientation, and process and metaprocess into the participation orientation. It is postulated here that the face wants of both instructor and student may differ as well according to the type of elicitation. Face concerns and pedagogical purpose both play a part in the type of follow-up that can be subsequently seen.

This excerpt shows a product elicitation used in a classroom:

S1 [. . .]how do we know where the North Pole is?
what's a good reference point?
SS: Polaris
S1: Polaris and how do we find Polaris?
S3: Ursa Minor (xx)?
S1: Ursa Minor, it's part of Ursa Minor, and what points
to it?
SS: Ursa Major
S1: Ursa Major. okay and, we find those in the northern
part of the sky [. . .]
(Astronomy)

Although product elicitations are used in the soft disciplines, the two hard sciences represented in the transcript have product elicitations as the most common type of I-move.

In this example, the instructor is in a planetarium with the students, checking on material that students have already learned. The students' answers are brief and it would probably not be appropriate for students to add further detail. She also acknowledges them briefly. Choice questions are less frequent in MICASE, but show the same qualities as product questions.

S1: do we tend to have real nice things to say about people who are different than us? [SU-m: no] just generally speaking? what do you think? we as Americans do we generally have nice things to say about people who are not like us?
S6: i don't think we can make a broad-based generalization like that.
S1: you don't think so? [S6: i don't think so.] how's that?
S6: <LAUGH> i, i just don't think we can i think that, America is made up of many different types of people and i think, some people are very accepting and others aren't, and, that's reality and so some people have nice things to say or even if they don't have nice things they don't know enough, but i i don't think that you, i don't think that you could classify it. i think maybe we could take a census of like, you know the census just went out maybe you could like, put another one out about how do you feel about people that are different from you or i dunno. **(American Politics)**

The passage above exemplifies process elicitations. The instructor is using “do you think” to make clear that she does not expect there to be a single correct answer. She also encourages students to expand on their contributions, mostly successfully as above. Although it can be seen that the teacher is controlling the discourse and expects it to go in a certain way, and although she has certain outcomes she wants to achieve and will guide students' answers so that they conform to this, she is not using the IRF exchange here for assessing how well students have learned previous material, but to explore their opinions. It is possible in this type of IRF exchange for other students to give different answers to the same question (after bidding and being recognized by the instructor).

Mehan (1979a) mentions that metaprocess questions are not often seen in his data. The same is true with MICASE, since nothing that could be definitively identified as metaprocess elicitation was found.

These three types of elicitation lead to different types of F-move. This point will be further discussed in this paper, but it can be seen here that the instructor using the process elicitation follows up by encouraging further elaboration by the student. She could also have opened the question to other students, or added her own comment. The instructor using product elicitation followed up by acknowledging the correct answer, by repeating it with a falling intonation and sometimes adding “OK.” She could also say “good” or “right” or something that would acknowledge that the answer is correct.

There are also several classes in which IRF exchanges are not used, or not used at times. In the Philosophy and Economics classes, students are asking questions of the teaching assistant who is teaching the class. The instructor of the Philosophy section, for example, begins by asking students the subject they want to talk about. Students then ask questions. It is also apparent that students may challenge the teacher’s explanation:

S3: okay my question is, how do we know that the numina does not already have these, processes already involved like, could it- could have a spatial framework and a temporal framework, but since we're using our sensibilities, a fun factory if you will, we're assuming that that is causing those things to be in there where they could actually be in it already, how do we know that, it's, our

S1: contribution

S3: yes.

S1: this is the question that even, everybody was asking last week, and, um the main way we're supposed to know that is just by being convinced by these arguments, that it's us. okay? that the best explanation is the categories. [S3: wouldn't, Occam's-

] that's not really convincing what you're gonna say
is, something like
S3: wouldn't it be simpler just to say that the numina
already has that? i mean wouldn't Occam's Razor say,
the simplest explanation is the best one, so you could
just say that, the simplest explanation is not that we
add something to it that it already has it
(Philosophy)

Students here are taking the role of deciding the topic. The teacher's answer is not the final move in the exchange, but students can add to it as well, as above. IRF moves are present only a few times, as below:

S1 [. . .] okay. so somebody explain to me how it is,
that the categories, explain, unified consciousness
<PAUSE0:12> this is pretty tricky. it involved a game...
S4: Monopoly?
S1: yep...
(Philosophy)

In this example, the teacher is not so much checking to make sure everyone learned something, since the Monopoly example given by the professor is not a philosophical concept. Rather, she is making sure everyone has a shared understanding of the concept given in the lecture section.

In the philosophy class, although the participants are not precisely equal, the students do seem to have more of the right to choose topics and decide turns than they do in the IRF exchange classes. This class might exemplify what van Lier calls "transaction," where all participants take part in determining the topics and contributions, but the discourse is still subject to institutional constraints (1996:180).

In two sections, the students are providing the follow-up for other students' answers. In one case, they are asked to do so by the instructor. In fact, although she gives

instruction that this is to be done, she has to remind students each time, because the floor returns to her. This is a biology class, and more heavily IRF-oriented, so the floor may revert more automatically to the teacher. In the case of a philosophy class, IRFs are not used as often and students feel free to respond to another student, including giving follow-up to them. However, in both cases the professor will ratify one student's answer, usually by repeating it. This signals that the teacher still controls the class and what is seen as correct, although students have different levels of control.

Other classrooms that do not follow, or do not strictly follow, IRF format are History and Composition. Although IRF exchanges are not so often seen in these transcripts, it could be said that they are following the IRF formula if it is very broadly defined. In both of these classes the students have submitted a written essay in response to a teacher prompt, and the instructor is verbally evaluating it. In the Composition class, the other students are taking part in this evaluation as well. So, although the discourse does not look like IRF exchanges in some respects, the instructor is still controlling the discourse and evaluating students' responses.

It can be seen that, in addition to face concerns, there are also pedagogical reasons to use different forms of assessment in the classroom. The fact that the two types of elicitation seem to divide along disciplinary lines could be seen to show this. The teacher using choice or product elicitations want to check students' knowledge in a more efficient way. The ones using a process elicitation want students to explore opinions and talk more in class. Face concerns, however, also seem to be present in both cases, as will be seen below.

7.4 FINDINGS: OPTIONS FOR NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

When the transcripts were examined for feedback indicating an inadequate response, several different types were found. Two broad categories found were direct negative feedback and questions. Negative feedback can be mitigated in various ways. Questions, also, were found to serve several purposes as feedback. These aspects of negative feedback will be explored below. First, the phenomenon of uptake, in which students give some response to indicate that they have understood or acknowledged the criticism, will be explored here.

7.4.1 Uptake

One way that a direct negative evaluation, or any negative evaluation, can be distinguished is by the presence of uptake on the part of the student. As was shown in the previous study, praise is almost never followed by any sort of acknowledgement by the student. Criticism or negative feedback, however, is very often followed by uptake.

Most previous studies on uptake have been done in an ESL/EFL context, and the purpose has been to show evidence of learning. Within this context, however, the term has been used to mean two distinct things. Allwright (1984) uses the word to mean what the learners report having learned. Lyster and Ranta (1977) use it to mean all student responses to feedback, both those that include repair and those that do not. Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen (2001) also in an ESL context, use a definition of uptake that closely matches what was found in the MICASE data. According to them, it is an optional, student move occurring where students have “demonstrated a gap in their knowledge,” which may be by giving an incorrect answer or asking a question, and someone else, usually the teacher, has provided the information. (p. 286).

Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen (2001) focus on linguistic features in this definition, but apart from that focus, this describes a phenomenon that can be found in the MICASE data. This is a student move that follows the instructor's providing of information, usually as a correction or occasionally the answer to a question. It is optional, although its frequency suggests that it may be preferred except in certain situations, described below. However, cases in which a response is obligatory (when the feedback is in the form of a question, for example) were not counted as uptake. Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen and Lyster and Ranta (1997) examine the phenomenon to judge the relative efficacy of ways of teaching or giving feedback. However, the purpose of examining uptake in this study is to help distinguish praise from criticism. Because of this, any response to feedback meeting the above conditions was counted as uptake, no matter how minimal (mmm-hmmm, oh, etc.) The reason for this is that such uptake was never observed as a response to praise, so this aids in distinguishing the two. Uptake occurs either during the instructor turn or immediately after; no uptake was found occurring after that.

Uptake in this context may be related to a feature noted by Jefferson (1987), which she believes distinguishes embedded correction from exposed correction. Where embedded correction does not lead to any comment from the recipient except to adopt the correction, exposed correction is accompanied by accounts, apologies, or other such activity that acknowledges the correction. A similar type of move may be necessary when students are being corrected or receiving information, to show that they understand they are being corrected.

Uptake occurs very frequently after correction or sometimes after questions are answered, but there are exceptions. When the student corrects herself, even if the instructor also corrects her, uptake does not seem to be necessary:

S4: crossing over, can occur i put meiosis one and two.
actually,
S1: wanna take something back?
S4: um, not meiosis two.
S1: mkay, yeah just meiosis one. why can't it occur, during
meiosis two? (**Biology**)

Here the instructor explicitly invites the student to self-correct, clearly indicating that there is something wrong with her answer, but even so, the student does not make an uptake move.

S5: so how can you, like if you want, oh you can't_ i'm just
trying to bring them, together
S1: don't. don't. <SS: LAUGH> don't try. oh okay. see that? So

In this case the student is about to ask a question when she corrects herself. Although this is followed by correction by the teacher, there is no uptake move.

As Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen (2001) point out, uptake is given in response to the instructor's providing information. Uptake was not seen when the instructor does not provide information, even if she seems to be indicating that the student's turn is not desirable. :

S1: so what's politics?
S7: stuff, that's political.
<LAUGH>
SU-m: (thoughts and stuff?)
S1: what's politics? Mark? (**American Politics**)

Although there is no direct negative criticism, it seems clear that the instructor is not accepting the answer (discussed further below). In this example, the teacher moves on to another student without comment. Since she has recognized another participant, it may not be appropriate for S7 to comment further.

As in Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen (2001), uptake follows another participant's supplying information, but the participant does not need to be an instructor. This is an example of uptake following correction by a fellow student:

S5: because, there's it like maybe they're really into the environment or whatever. but [S1: uhuh] they and they, they despise like, wasting and all of the uh toxins being used and going into the atmosphere so, they they **install** values that the environment's really important [SU-f: **instill**] so **instill**, values the environment's really important so then you look at it in in politics for, who's like, like who's, who strives to, help e- the environment. (**American Culture**)
[emphasis added]

In this excerpt, another student supplies the correct word, “instill,” where the student has used “install.” The recipient re-starts his utterance from the place of repair, adding the correct word, to show that he has understood the correction.

Student uptake is also seen at times after a teacher answers a student question:

S5: are you gonna ask something like this like in proof in the short answer part in the, uh
S1: no i don't think so
S5: okay. (**Philosophy Discussion**)

Most of the uptake found, however, was a student response to feedback from the teacher.

As was mentioned before, uptake in the MICASE transcripts is often very brief. It occurs here in the parenthesis:

S1: so so where's this socialization come from?
SU-m: society

S1: society socialization from society that, isn't that kinda like answering the definition [**SU-m: alright**] with the same word? [emphasis added]
(**American Politics**)

In the case of an extended turn by the instructor, there can be several instances of uptake.

S4: should that be plus?
S1: oh no no no because [**S4: is that**] i changed , i i used, the change the growth rate of little-Y equals to the growth rate of big-Y, minus ch- growth rate of L [**S4: oh okay**] minus growth of B. so i kind of like change around. [**S4: okay**] [emphasis added]
(**Economics**)

A student's uptake sometimes uses humor, but of course this depends on the class and what is being asked.

S1: [. . .]anybody know what Orion is hunting?
S2: a bear?
S1: kay not hunting a bear [**S2: dang**] no good good guess uh,
(**Astronomy**) [Emphasis added]

S8: it's like the methods in which we, interact with one another in order to attain power.
S1: no that sounds like politics.
S8: yeah. what was the question?
(**American politics**) [Emphasis added]

In the first example above, the student is guessing, one of the circumstances under which Seedhouse (2004) posited that instructors frequently give direct negative feedback. In addition, it is part of a series in which the instructor's I-moves are all inviting student guesses. Some of the instructor's queries are serious, some are clearly facetious, as when she has the students guess that the dogs Orion has with him look like Scottish terriers. Similarly, in the American Politics class both the instructor and the students use humor a great deal. Mauranen believes that laughter occurs often in contexts of argumentation and criticism, and in situations that are potentially embarrassing (2001:06), so it is possible that the student is responding to the awkwardness of giving an incorrect answer.

Uptake sometimes constitutes an extended turn, sometimes including an account or even contradicting the instructor's negative assessment.

S2: i thought it meant more than that to Kant. i
thought it was_ i thought a priori wasn't just not as-
a posteriori but that it was actually necessary.
S1: nope and it's actually critical that it be, a
garbage category to Kant. so, hold on a second .
S2: (well) **Gold did a bad job of explaining that**
(Philosophy) [Emphasis added]

S1: oh wait a minute but nothing can really violate the
principle of contradiction.
S4: alright uh i i'm probably just like, you know (xx)
(Philosophy) [Emphasis added]

In the first example, the student responds to the teacher's contradiction with a criticism of either the textbook or the instructor leading the larger lecture section which goes along with this discussion section. In the second, the student seems to be about to begin an account, perhaps of what led him to be mistaken on this point. This sort of extended uptake is unusual, possibly because of the time constraints present in the classroom. Criticism or rejection of the instructor's feedback is, of course, unusual because of the teacher's higher status and the fact that she has the right to give feedback in this context.

Other options for uptake include apologizing, as below.

S1: give me an example.
S6: between kings and religion? [S1: yeah] um, Leo the
Third and, Charlemagne.
S1: okay, w- it's not kings and religion kings and the
church [**S6: the church yeah yeah, i'm sorry**] okay,
yeah, alright.
[History] [Emphasis added]

Apologizing is one way that students indicate that they accept the teacher's correction.

Another way of doing this is for the student to ask a follow-up question.

S2: but he they did at one time, were able to hear confessions but that's not the same thing as being a priest like,
S1: i don't_ Francis doesn't hear confessions. [**S2:** **later on, did they?**] he had, he had he has no, Francis had no authority to absolve sins or to do what a priest did
 (History) [Emphasis added]

Uptake can even occur before correction, as here.

S1: calculating the laws of nature is not correct. you don't calculate the laws of nature. you can express.
 [**S2: yeah, express them mathematically, that's what i was**] express, let's do it this way. um... it's actually New- Newton's Principia. okay? (History)

This example is also interesting in that the student is expressing the fact that she knew the correct answer. Waring (2002) also notes the phenomenon of students' knowledge display accompanying a display of noncomprehension. While not common in MICASE (this is the only example found), some sort of expression of knowledge may be one way of responding to criticism.

Uptake occurs quite often on anything that could be considered negative feedback, even when the student rejects the feedback. The presence of uptake may be one of the things that helps to distinguish positive and negative evaluation, even though negative evaluation can be so mitigated and indirect as to be unclear. If the F-move is positive, it is a terminal move and the floor reverts to the teacher, as Waring (2008) and Wong and Waring (2009) have pointed out. As was mentioned in an earlier section, response to praise by students is very rare in MICASE and nonexistent in BASE. If the F-move is negative, however, some sort of response from the student seems to be appropriate or even preferred. This can show the instructor that the student is listening and has understood, or it can be a new response to the instructor's I-move, or it can even be an objection. In other cases in which student's R move is not complete or correct or desirable, the F-move is a

question which also requires a response from the student. Silence after the F-move on the part of the student may therefore be one of the defining marks of praise.

7.4.2 Direct contradiction or negative feedback

Times when students are directly told that their answer is not acceptable are, in fact, fairly rare in MICASE, and disproportionately represented in the discourse of one instructor. When overt expressions of dissatisfaction occur, frequently the teacher is criticizing not the student's answer, but some other behavior

S5: i don't have my book either.
S1: you don't. <LAUGH> alright. <PAUSE:06> let me steal this for one second and make a copy.
S7: you can make two.
<SS: LAUGH>
S1: this is discussion you guys you're supposed to have this.

(Biology)

Although this excerpt seems to be clearly criticizing the students for not bringing books to class (albeit in a good-natured way), there is no negative adjective, or in fact any negative word in the instructor's critical comment, "this is discussion guys you're supposed to have this."

Seedhouse (2004) delineates several times when flat "no" answers, with or without mitigation, are common in the ESL classroom. These are when students are guessing, in response to a question originally posed by the students, and in procedural explanations. Although the forms of the classes are different, we can see these somewhat in MICASE transcripts as well.

Seedhouse (2004) points out that a straight negative assessment seems to be acceptable when students are guessing. This can be seen in MICASE as well.

S1: east to west. okay if i start here, and i draw a line, all the way around the base of the dome, what's that line going to represent?
 SS: the equator?
 S1: um actually, no.
 S2: damn

(Astronomy)

Here the criticism is slightly mitigated (“actually”), but the student receives a “no” response. We can see from the good humored uptake that this is not considered inappropriate or overly harsh.

Another time in which it seems to be usual is in response to a question originally proposed by the student.

S4: well i- so you can't violate,
 S1: generally. although wait wait wait that's not [S4: you can't] quite right about synthetic but
 S4: you can't violate the principle of contradiction so wouldn't it be necessary then? cuz if it c- if it's not allowed to violate it...
 S1: oh wait a minute but nothing can really violate the principle of contradiction.
 S4: alright uh i i'm probably just like, you know (xx)
 S1: what it means to violate the principle of contradiction is to have um, something be, both itself and not itself at the same time. and, and nothing in reality at least according to an analytic philosopher, does that, okay. <LAUGH>

(Philosophy)

This was listed in Seedhouse (2004) also as being a time when direct criticism is frequently given.

Another time that Seedhouse (2004) believes contradiction is acceptable is in procedural explanations. Although no examples of procedural explanations as explained by Seedhouse were found in MICASE—that is, times in which students misunderstand the instructions for a class activity—an interesting parallel can be found between this and classrooms in which instructors are discussing student compositions. This could also be

considered a “procedure” in that teachers are giving direct instruction on a procedure for doing something. In this case, direct criticism seems to be acceptable.

S1: uh i'll probably repeat this later when more people show up. um, but write this down, for your sake, while it's still fresh, on my mind. uh comma splices, what are those? do you know? well you don't l- have to know what they're called i guess but, it's a run-on sentence. right? two sentences joined by a comma. uh they should be, separated into two separate sentences or you should do some sort of punctuation fix, um semicolon dash maybe even a colon, okay? Leslie you are a, big-time violator of the comma splice rule, and so is Erica (who's not here.)

S4: i thought i did better this time. **(Composition)**

7.4.2.1 Ways of mitigating direct negative criticism

Direct criticism seems to be avoided in spoken academic discourse. This is probably done to avoid face threat to the students, but there may be reasons connected to the instructor's face wants as well. When direct criticism is given, it can be mitigated in several ways. The amount and type of mitigation seems to differ a great deal between instructors, suggesting that individual differences play a large role in the mitigation used. The instructor for the Anthropology course rejected few student responses, and seemed to use a great deal of mitigation, as well as disfluency, when doing so. The instructor in the History class not only rejects more student contributions outright, but also seems to use less mitigation when he does. The fact, mentioned before, that younger instructors may be anxious not to be seen to be behaving in a way that does not fit their status could have something to do with this, since the Anthropology instructor is young and the History professor is a senior faculty member. However, it may also be significant that the Anthropology instructor is female and the History instructor is male, although there is not enough data here to study the question systematically. The two instructors may have different philosophies, either consciously or unconsciously, about feedback in discussion

sections. Certainly idiosyncratic differences play some part, as can be seen by the fact that the American Politics instructor, also young and female, does not use a great deal of mitigation.

Holmes (1984) defines mitigation as “a strategy used to reduce the anticipated negative effect of a speech act” (p.346). There are several ways that a speech act can be mitigated, and some may be specific to the speech act of criticism or praise in academic contexts. Hyland and Hyland (2001) point out several ways that feedback is mitigated in a written context, some of which also apply in the spoken context. However, as was pointed out before, some differences in giving feedback orally or in written form may lead to differences in the form of the feedback. Perhaps most significantly, spoken academic discourse seems to contain much less negative feedback, so examples of mitigation will necessarily be fewer.

7.4.2.1.1 Pairing with praise

Hyland and Hyland (2001) point out that in written feedback, criticism is often paired with praise in order to mitigate the criticism. This is done in spoken academic discourse also, in both the IRF orientations, in both soft and hard disciplines.

S4: Jupiter
S1: nope not Jupiter [S4: oh] good guess
S2: Saturn?
S1: not Saturn, good guess
S3: Venus?
S1: Venus. yeah it's gonna be Venus. so that'll be over here

Astronomy

S1: no even people colors and shapes are gonna be the understanding cuz all your sensibility does is space and time. okay?
S8: okay.

S1: um, but, you might, right now be sort of showing that there's tons of different levels of interpretation which are gonna happen, and think of the twelve categories, as the most basic of those additional, levels of interpretation beyond space and time.

S8: mkay.

S1: but that's good, um

Philosophy

S1: uh, and, typically who would be, the strongest individual?

SU-f: king

S1: so, i think a, the leader of, the war band... you see, you were, you're quite correct in everything you said. [S5: mhm] but it was nebulous in terms of, of of where it really lies.

History

S2:
like innovation versus tradition or something (like that)
S1: tradition versus innovation. [S2: okay.] that's a super point. you're burying it here...[...]

History

Besides the fact that this mitigation strategy is not common in spoken academic discourse as it seems to be in written feedback, there are several differences between these examples and the ones found in Hyland and Hyland's (2001) data. First, Hyland and Hyland characterize the praise as "cursory" (p. 196) and suggest that it is tacked on to the criticism only as a mitigation strategy, something which the students they interviewed seem to assume as well. It is not so clear in the case of spoken discourse that this is happening. In the first example, the astronomy instructor is in the planetarium showing the students a model of the night sky, and inviting student guesses about various items. She answers each incorrect one briefly with "no" or some variant and "good guess." In this case, the "no" in her answer is not really criticizing the students, who are apparently not expected to have learned the information beforehand. It seems clear that her rejection of their answers is not particularly face-threatening, and the praise is intended to encourage the behavior of

guessing. In the second example, from the philosophy class, the student has given his own example to illustrate Kant's ideas of human sensibility and human understanding. In this case, it is possible that, after having corrected a misunderstanding, the instructor tacks on "that was a good," possibly intending to say something like "That was a good try." In this case, where the critique is specific and detailed, the praise, if that is what it is, is fairly cursory and general. This is a review lesson before a final exam, however, so the instructor may feel some urgency in correcting misapprehensions. In the final two examples, in which the history instructor is discussing practice examination answers that the students have already prepared, the instructor seems to be giving equal weight to the praise and criticism. Instead of using the praise to mitigate the criticism, the instructor is showing the students that some aspects of their response are praiseworthy and some are not.

An interesting subcategory of this phenomenon was found in the feedback of a single teacher, the anthropology instructor. She several times accepts (usually as "true") a student's answer before pointing out that it is lacking, usually by asking a question. In the MICASE transcript, part of the discussion is taken up with her attempting to have the students discuss socialization.

S6: cuz they aren't gonna like, throw like a six-year-old in jail for like stealing something or like make him pay a big fine (he'll) probably just turn- return it if like

S1: i mean that's absolutely true but i mean why, what is it that, what is the value behind that? what is the idea behind that? yeah.

S15: it's also not exactly a bad thing to learn, new information i mean even if that, even if, a college education isn't gonna be exactly, what you're gonna, if it's not gonna take you where you wanna be it's not exactly a bad thing to, learn, new stuff.

S1: yeah, that's true, um, definitely. um <PAUSE:04> but how do you know what kind of, what kind of stuff that you, that you wanna learn...? ho- i mean how do you know what kind of stuff is, is more important or more valuable? yeah.

S10: i don't think it's really a difference i think that, in bands tribes and chiefdoms, they had to do that, to get people to follow 'em. and, support 'em. but if they could've, like just kept it all to themselves they would've.

S1: maybe so. i mean i'm not saying that's not true but it was a, it's a standard of that society right? yeah.

Anthropology

In the first two examples, the fact that the answer is not what she wants is further mitigated by the fact that she is asking further, more specific questions rather than directly criticizing, which will be discussed later. In the third, she added a tag question, which Holmes (1984) mentions as a mitigation device (p. 356).

Praise is, therefore, occasionally paired with criticism in spoken as well as written feedback. Where in written feedback praise is seen mostly to mitigate criticism, praise in spoken academic English is paired with criticism for other reasons.

7.4.2.1.2 Hedges

Hedging is a strategy mentioned by Hyland and Hyland (2001) which also occurs in spoken feedback. Direct criticism is almost always accompanied by hedging in MICASE.

S1: east to west. okay if i start here, and i draw a line, all the way around the base of the dome, what's that line going to represent?

SS: the equator?

S1: um actually, no.

S2: damn

Astronomy

S4: well i- so you can't violate,

S1: generally. although wait wait wait that's not [S4: you can't] quite right about synthetic but

Philosophy

S1: so so where's this socialization come from?

SU-m: society

S1: society socialization from society that, isn't that kinda like answering the definition [SU-m: alright] with the same word?

American politics

The examples above contain what Holmes (1984) would term a content-oriented downgrader, such as *actually*, *not quite*, *sounds like*, or *kinda*.

Although the fact that there is little direct criticism overall means that there are not many examples, the only time when such criticism is not hedged is when the instructor is asking the students to guess. It would be fair to say that such hedges are usually done for the sake of politeness. However, there is also an example of an instructor amending a student's answer with a content-oriented downgrade that seems intended to restate the answer in a more acceptable form, rather than for interpersonal purposes:

S5: and then they violat- or they, go against, our culture and th- yeah

S1: they don't necessarily, give the same meaning to

S5: y- well yeah exactly they have different, cultural um, backgrounds and stuff.

Anthropology

In this case the instructor seems to be unsatisfied with the students interpretation of people from other cultures “violating” or “going against” American culture, so she restates it in a form that better suits an academic discussion. This example indicates that hedges in spoken academic discourse can sometimes have a pedagogical, rather than an interpersonal, focus.

7.4.2.1.3 Framing the criticism as the instructor's opinion

Hyland and Hyland (2001) found a category of mitigation in which the instructor frames criticism as her own personal opinion. They point out that this “allows [teachers] to relinquish some of their authority and adopt a less threatening voice” (p. 198).

S5: um, and then, the fo- how fourteenth century and sort of like post-Black Death is, leads to the end of feudalism with the rise of the middle class and, sort of, a more free

S1: those things happened but i would not necessarily say that those are, that there was the one cause which would be the Black Death, um

S5: i didn't sa- i just said it was sort of post-Black Death

S1: okay, um... think here for just a second...

S2: just the destruction of feudalism, of feudalism

History

S1: uh, the decay, i think of feudalism. you know, if you wanted to you could certainly, in in this, um, might not work so well here, well it might, but you might, s- you might want to ask yourself, notions of authority.

History

S1: okay, i don't think you can use the word democracy in History one-ten. either in terms of the history or in terms of the way i run the class.

History

S6: but isn't he actually contradicting himself? cuz he is he, in on the one hand he's trying to, use, her authority and her influence, [S1: yes] and on the other hand he's saying that if he's a real philosopher you shouldn't be, discussing these matters with women.

S1: i'm not certain that the quotation from, from Jerome, is intended to make precisely that point or whether it's intended to make another point. Um

History

All of these examples are from the same class. There are two possible reasons for this.

The first is that this instructor uses more direct criticism, and thus he has more occasion to mitigate. This could also be due to some personal idiosyncrasy. This instructor does tend to present himself as solely responsible for the content of the class, as opposed to the graduate students who refer to another, senior, faculty member as the person in authority. So his use of "I think" could also be a way of asserting his control.

7.4.2.1.4 Metalanguage

At some points in the MICASE transcripts instructors explain the reasoning behind negative evaluation or repeated questioning, which has the effect of mitigating the force of the criticism. This kind of metalanguage builds solidarity with the students by positioning

the teacher and the students as allies against possibly difficult subject matter. It may also serve to reassure the student that the criticism is not personal.

S1: so why is it, why is it that, young children don't understand, say, about, what it means to kill somebody? and it's not a difficult, question really i'm just trying to get you to, really spell it out.

Anthropology

S1: that's, a good point. establish validity is_ you go to, the s- the the state fairgrounds and you get cotton candy. and you know, what is cotton candy? it's sort of air and sugar, and finally you hit the cardboard. you know i don't mean to pick on you, [S2: no] but i think that, that establish validity is not the same thing, as, um, let's find another expression.

History

In these examples the instructors seem to be reassuring the students about the purpose of persistent questioning and in the second example, letting the student know that he is not being singled out for any reason. Although this is not a common strategy, it seems to be a way of softening the power differential inherent in an instructor critiquing a student's performance.

7.4.2.1.5 Third-party evaluation

Another way that the instructor can avoid directly giving negative evaluation is to ask a third party, in the MICASE data always a student, to evaluate. Where in a discussion section an instructor might ask for other opinions on what a student has said, in this case the instructor is asking if the student's response is correct or not, and she ratifies one answer rather than the other. This occurs in contexts, therefore, where there is a clear correct or desirable answer.

S5: homologous chromosomes separate during anaphase, i put meiosis two.

S1: anybody agree, disagree?

S4: disagree

SS: disagree

S1: disagree why?

SS: meiosis one.

S1: okay meiosis one. you don't have homologous chromosomes at meiosis two anymore

(Biology)

S1: what's political culture?

S8: it's the way we do it like, you know like the style, like our culture.

S1: do we agree with her?

SS: no

(American politics)

In the second case above, although more than one answer to the question “What’s political culture?” is possible, it appears that students might have already discussed this definition.

In these cases the instructor can avoid directly criticizing the student by calling for different student answers, to which she is then able to give positive feedback (the second answer above is followed by the instructor calling on another student). At the same time, she is able to check the other students’ understanding. In the second example, the instructor is contrasting the expertise of the rest of the class with that of the student who responded.

7.4.2.2 Strategies using questions

As was discussed before, questions in the F-slot of an IRF exchange can indicate an incorrect or undesirable answer (Zemel & Koschmann 2010, Edwards & Mercer 1987, Kramsch 1985). Lee (2007) also explains the concept he calls “steering the sequence,” in which questions in the F-move are used to guide the discussion in a certain way. This is also observed in the MICASE data, where repeating or restating a question several times does seem at times to indicate that the student’s response is wanting. However, asking for elaboration or clarification can also mean that the student’s response was acceptable in its content but not in the way that the student formulated it. Or, it could mean that the student’s answer is off topic or otherwise off the mark in some way. It could also

conceivably mean that the student's answer is very good, and the instructor wants to take it up and discuss it more. Without knowing what the instructor's goals are or what she has planned, we cannot say for certain her purpose in using questions. However, several types of questions seem to indicate that some type of amendment of the student's answer is wanted.

In terms of Mehan's (1979) categorization of product and process elicitations, the type of elicitation in the I-move that the student is responding to seems to be connected to the type of criticism in the F-move. Direct negative feedback, with or without mitigation, was found with responses to product orientation, although it can also be used for a process elicitation when the student makes a factual error in her response. In contrast to this, questioning is mostly used in cases where the I-move is a process elicitation. When asking for opinions, teachers tend to be drawing the students out and encouraging them to elaborate more, which does not seem to happen when the class is mostly product elicitations. It is also found where IRF is not the dominant structure; for example where students are questioning the instructor as in a review. Question strategies are generally used when the student's contribution is not relevant to the discussion. Question strategies thus are used more in discussions in which there are no "wrong" answers, but merely ones that do not move the discussion forward.

7.4.2.2.1 Repeating the same question

Repeating the same question with minimal or no restatement usually has negative implications, sometimes strong ones.

S1: alright. who was the author? [S10: um... was it]
 who was the author? who was the author please? who was
 the author? you.
 S11: uh was it Galileo? [S1: no] Newton?
 S1: who was the author please?
 S11: Newton?

History

S1: <PAUSE:08> so we have ideas beliefs, attitudes
 <PAUSE:07> about, where <PAUSE:09> not only where power
 belongs but, how we get it there, right? right? [SU-f:
 right] i mean that's what government's about right? we
 think, s- we need some sort of central authority right?
 cuz we want what?
 S5: we want, representation.
 S1: what do we want? what do we want from the
 government?
 S5: collective goods.
 S1: collective goods, we want stuff.

American politics

S7: um political culture's like your values and beliefs
 and everything like like geared toward the, politics.
 S1: so what's politics?
 S7: stuff, that's political.
 <LAUGH>
 SU-m: (thoughts and stuff?)
 S1: what's politics? Mark?

American politics

Repeating the same question without amendment can indicate that the instructor is impatient (as the instructor in the first example seems to be). Unlike restating or elaborating on the question, it seems to put the entire onus of communication on the student. Restatement of the question seems to indicate that the teacher feels some responsibility for the fact of the exchange not being completed satisfactorily, and is attempting to remedy this.

There are a few exceptions in MICASE, where in repeating a question the teacher is trying to get a variety of different answers, or, in one case, the same answer.

S1: so what's the what's the point there? alright
 l- let's try this. what does a stop sign mean?
SU-m: to stop.
SU-f: means stop
S1: what does a stop sign mean?
SU-f: to stop.
S1: what does a stop sign mean?
SU-f: stop.
S1: stop
SU-f: <LAUGH> (alright) (xx)
S1: what does a stop sign mean? [SU-f: (no)] stop. what
 does a stop sign mean?
SU-m: stop.
S1: okay. do we have some sort of agreement in here
 about what, the stop sign means?
SU-m: yeah

American politics

In this case, the teacher is successively asking the students the same question in order to demonstrate that they share the same cultural understanding of a stop sign. However, she prefaces this with metalanguage, “let’s try this,” and ends it also by explaining what she is doing, to make clear to the students that successive instances of the same question do not mean that the question is wrong.

7.4.2.2.2 Asking for elaboration

Asking for elaboration has been identified as one of the key features of the participant orientation of the IRF sequence (van Lier 1996) or discoursal function of the F-move (Cullen 2002). When an instructor asks a student to elaborate his or her answer, this is seen as moving away from evaluation into follow up and thus allowing the student more freedom. In MICASE data, asking for elaboration does usually occur in the participant orientation such as a discussion. However, it would be wrong to say that when an instructor asks for elaboration he or she is not evaluating the student. This strategy does at times constitute feedback. In some cases, asking for elaboration almost constitutes praise in itself, encouraging the student to develop a good idea. In others, it indicates that the

student has misunderstood the point of the question, or led the discussion to a place the instructor does not want it to go.

In some cases, the feedback inherent in the instructor's asking for elaboration is positive:

SU-m: media
S1: media?
SU-m: yeah
S1: ooh, tell me.
S14: yeah because i went to a school that was [. . .]
American politics

Here, the instructor's feedback is so enthusiastic that it seems clear she likes the way the discussion is developing. A teacher's asking for elaboration can also seem quite negative, however.

S7: i don't really understand how that, uh like i don't think that makes sense as political culture.
S1: why?
S7: i don't know. i just don't. i_ like i feel like culture should be like,
S1: what should culture be?
S7: i don't know. but like i understand like the attitudes and beliefs part but like, [S1: uhuh] i don't know then, never mind. i don't know what's wrong with me.
S1: so Professor Walton gave you the, example of the stop sign right? what's the stop sign example?
(American politics)

In this response to a student's question, the instructor's questions seem antagonistic, and the student's extended uptake, including part of an account, indicates that she received it as criticism.

Asking for elaboration seems to sometimes constitute a negative reaction on the part of the teacher. In the examples in MICASE which have been tentatively identified as having the intention of giving negative feedback, these

questions tend to be more specific. Hyland and Hyland (2001) found that written negative feedback tends to be more specific than positive feedback, something they attribute to the fact that the positive feedback is being used to mitigate the criticism. In the case of spoken feedback in MICASE, however, negative evaluations in the form of questions are often given because the student's answer was too vague or not tied to the topic. So, in this case the instructors are showing the students proper discussion behavior to keep their contributions relevant and specific.

S2: right he, he only like understood death by how the movie portrayed it. like big deal like, another one, like in T- in T-two like, thousands of people die. you know to him <SS: LAUGH>

S1: so why is it, why is it that, young children don't understand, say, about, what it means to kill somebody? and it's not a difficult, question really i'm just trying to get you to, really spell it out.

Anthropology

Here, from the excerpt previously quoted, the teacher is trying to get students to discuss aspects of socialization in this introductory class, specifically here the fact that it is a gradual process that takes place throughout childhood. She is asking why children do not face the same consequences for transgressing societal norms, possibly with the hope of having students see that consequences in most societies are set up with the idea that children are not fully socialized. Here, the student answers with an anecdote, about the movie *Terminator 2*, which is only tangentially related to the subject of the discussion. The instructor asks for more details, mitigating here with metalanguage as was discussed above.

S1: a new way of looking at?

S13: everything around you? [S1: mm you can, be more precise.] i mean like, (calculation)

S1: it was not a new way of looking at tables. [S13: oh] what is that new way? what is, what are the crucial

hallmarks of that what are the crucial features of the new way...?

History

Combined with the instructor's initial request that the student be more precise, and his sarcastic rejection of the initial answer, it seems clear that elaboration is asked for because the first answer was not desirable. This instructor seems to be taking the opposite tack from the anthropology instructor above—direct where she shows hesitation and disfluency—but they both choose to ask more specific questions, and ask multiple questions, in order to get different answers from students.

Clarification requests are placed in this category, because it is sometimes difficult to draw a line between asking for clarification and asking for an answer to be expanded. In the ESOL contexts described above, it is probably much more clear, but there are few examples in MICASE where it seems an instructor genuinely does not understand what the student is saying. In the following example, the teacher asks for clarification, but it is not likely that she does not understand the word “freedom.” Rather, she is asking the student what the connection is between the single word answer he offered and the topic of the discussion.

S4: it's one of our uh, experiences.
S1: is that we experience freedom?
S8: societal (rules)
S4: we do.
S1: we do?
S4: belief... [SU-f: (xx)] belief?
S1: we might believe in freedom. <LAUGH>

American politics

In other examples, the instructor is also trying to get the student to make his or her point more clearly.

SU-m: school
S1: and what you should do about people who are not like you.
SU-f: school

S1: school? how's that?
American politics

It is possible that in these cases, the single word given by the student is not intended to be a complete answer, but functions more as a bid. When the instructors ask for expansion they are actually giving the student permission to speak.

7.4.2.2.3 Questioning the R-move's relation to the subject

A subset of this category, which can also be used to indicate an undesirable answer, is asking the student to relate his or her R-move to either the subject of the discussion or the broader subject of the course.

S1: and so, maybe we could just talk about, how these sort of apply to your, own experiences. so i was hoping you could just sort of throw out some, ideas, about, how, social control works in our society. basically, why do you do all of the things that you do? um, if you, if you go into um, a store and you see something that you really want, and, you, can't afford it, why don't you just take it...? assuming that you don't of course.
S2: well when you're younger you do. <SS: LAUGH>
S1: i think though that's, that's a good point, actually. so let's let's, keep that in mind.
S2: and sometimes that when you're older you still do like if you're a, if you're a criminal. <SS: LAUGH>
S1: sure. i mean, i i mean, social control is obviously, not perfect. so um <PAUSE WHILE WRITING ON BOARD> so yo- so young people. um what does that tell us about young people, um, if young people are more likely to say, steal something?

Anthropology

S12: i just remember, uh my dad, had to secretly vote for Dukakis cuz my mom would get really upset. <SS: LAUGH> definitely... like she didn't want us to hear about it. <LAUGH>
S1: so they tell you, so that's that's a pretty uh, [SU-m: (harassment)] it's a pretty, obvious form of, political communication right? when we're, explicitly talking about candidates and, we know that that's, political. what about, other ideas they pass on to

American politics

S16: that whatever their parents say is right no matter, what's coming out of their mouth.

S1: but what else are they learning?
S7: he told me i was going to hell, a little five-year-old. i didn't take the pamphlet he gave me.
SU-f: maybe you are
S7: i don't know like he was like you're going to hell cuz i wouldn't take his thing.
S1: alright but what are they learning about politics? can you give me some practical_ what are they learning?
 (Adam)

American politics

In all of the examples above, the instructor either asks the student to tie the contribution to the subject or does it herself in conjunction with a follow-up question. In these examples, the student's contribution is either facetious or personal. The last example, from American politics, is part of an extended exchange in which the students are talking about street preachers on campus. The instructor tries repeatedly to bring the subject back to something more relevant to the class, but the students' contributions indicate that they are too interested in the subject of street preachers in general. In the Anthropology example, the student S2 repeatedly makes a joke about young children stealing things. The instructor brings the joke into the discussion at first, since it ties into the subject of socialization, but in the second instance she restates the questions to get the discussion back to the subject matter, by bringing in a specialized term ("social control"). This is similar to Waring's (2002) idea of jargonization. In Waring's view, peers in a discussion may jargonize to indicate shared knowledge of a subject. Several instances of instructors restating student answers using jargon were found in MICASE, but they usually occur in the context of positive feedback. That is, the instructor would restate and jargonize the student's answer in order to ratify it as on topic.

It may be significant that these examples tend to deal with students' bringing in personal experiences to the discussion. The student is of course the Primary Knower when

introducing a personal experience, meaning that evaluation by the instructor is not appropriate in this case. By using the strategy of questioning, the instructor is able to both avoid giving feedback and indicate to the student how to make his or her answer more fitting to the discussion.

7.4.2.2.4 Multiple questions.

As was mentioned above, such specific requests for elaboration sometimes involve multiple questions. Kasper and Ross (2007), in a study of oral proficiency interviews, found that multiple questions are used by interviewers when there is a gap between question and answer or when the candidate's answer is problematic for some reason. In the MICASE data as well, they seem to indicate an instructor's perception of incomprehension on the part of the student.

In the excerpt below, the previously explored discussion of socialization is taking place. The teacher is asking the students why they go to college and why they attend class. This occurs in the middle of a discussion about values, so possibly she wants the students to realize that going to college is something that is valued by young people of their social class or the one they aspire to.

S1: [. . .] there're other, types of control, besides, morals that are exerted on us i think. um, for example, let's say um, coming to class, right? um, it's not immoral, to cut class well maybe it- i mean you could ma- maybe someone could make an argument like, i don't know your parents paid all this money and, you made a promise to them to go to class and so it's immoral to cut class but, um, let's say uh, let's say for the sake of argument you know you paid your own, tuition, it's your own choice, um, but you're still here, you came to class, um ho- hopefully part of the reason is because you like coming to class and you're learning something and you're, you know. but um, in some cases maybe not in this class but in some class that you've taken you probably didn't, really like it or really get that

much out of it but you still, went to class anyway. um, not because it was immoral not to go but, but why?

However, students do not grasp the intention behind the question, and tend to give answers as to why they personally feel college is a good idea.

S2: the grade

S1: i mean yeah, i mean this, still gets back to consequences definitely, um social consequences. um, and that's one reason. <PAUSE:04> **do you think that's the only reason?** <PAUSE:05> **or if you do come to class because you, you're getting something out of it say, you're learning something, that you wanna learn, what is it that, what is it that, makes you wanna learn, these particular things?**
[. . .]

S8: maybe you have like higher aspirations like on a- like if you have a different, if you have like a, some kind of goal later in life that you wanna achieve, then you can't really achieve that by going camping

S1: yeah, i mean that's, that's an important, i mean that's related to consequences but it's, it's separate.... i mean, yeah definitely goals, definitely goals are important. and that's wh- for a lot of people that's that's the reason why they do, go to school. what if you um, i mean there must be someone like this, in the class, um like, me, when i was, um your age. **what if you really don't know what you wanna do, when you graduate from college?** i mean chances are probably that um, going to college is gonna help you with whatever you, end up deciding to do, but if **you really don't know what you're gonna do how do you know, that um, going to college is a good thing?** i mean this, i mean what is it, yeah.

S14: because you've seen it work for other people, [S1: yeah] and so you

S1: that's true, yeah and that's, i mean that's um, that's important, that's an important part of socialization is, is um imitation. and you sort of have to trust that, things will go the same way for you that they go, for other people. yeah.

S15: it's also not exactly a bad thing to learn, new information i mean even if that, even if, a college education isn't gonna be exactly, what you're gonna, if it's not gonna take you where you wanna be it's not exactly a bad thing to, learn, new stuff.

S1: yeah, that's true, um, definitely. um <PAUSE:04> **but how do you know what kind of, what kind of stuff that you, that you wanna learn...? ho- i mean how do you know what kind of stuff is, is more important or more valuable? yeah.**

Anthropology [emphasis added]

The instructor uses a series of multiple questions, which are sometimes separated by an example or more explanation but are multiple questions in the sense that she does not wait for a student to answer each one. Here she uses “but” to indicate a change of focus from the student’s answer (cf. the use of “yes, but” in Holtgraves 1997, Rees-Miller 1999, and Zemel and Koschman 2010). This can also be contrasted with the affiliative use of “so” in Waring 2002). She does this in a long sequence until she gets an acceptable answer from a student:

S3: i think it's also too to some extent social, social conditions social norms like, when you're talking about something as broad as college you know. i- in our, in our society it's, it's the thing that you should do, you know you should go to college if you were in high school and you were smart
[. . .]

The instructor responds positively to this, tying it to the classroom subject of anthropology.

By doing this she implies that the other students’ answers had less to do with the subject:

S1: yeah i think that's um, i think that's a really good point, um, and let's yeah i mean that's, probably a point that's, more related to um anthropology

Anthropology

Another, similar example comes from the American politics class:

1S: what do you think um, they would think about, government resources going to, um activities they feel are, not [S7: at odds] not acceptable, not consistent with their beliefs...? not acceptable... what do you even_ they might not even think that, shoot people like Stacey should, be eligible for, um, you know college money from the government right? why waste our public money on Stacey she's going to hell. <SS: LAUGH> do you see my point? [SU-f: yeah] but (is it_) they're learning something about people who are not like them, and what that should mean for them politically. where else do you learn about people who are not like you?

American politics

The instructor has tried several times to connect, or get students to connect, one student’s anecdote about being assailed by a street preacher and his young children to the topic of

politics. The question above follows an exchange by several students about whether one of them is going to hell. The instructor repeats questions to get the students to relate this to its political meaning.

These are what Kasper and Ross (2007) termed “horizontal” multiple questions, which occur in the same turn. Kasper points out that these do not often occur in ordinary conversation, although they may in different institutional contexts. Lee (2006) has termed “parsing” the concept which Kasper refers to as “vertical” multiple questions: rephrased questions made in response to student silence. Kasper and Ross and Lee are both talking about non-native speaking students in a language class, the context in which most of the analysis of this kind has taken place. In the MICASE data this was not found, either because native or near-native-speaking students do not do this often, or because student silence was not clear in the transcript. In this case, although the multiple questions are similar to the same question being repeated several times, they show the instructor as being more willing to take some responsibility for poor communication. Multiple questions indicate that the student has misunderstood the question, possibly because of the way the instructor has worded it, where repetition of the same question merely indicates that the student was not able to answer it. The frequency with which the new questions are prefaced by “but” suggests that the previous answer is not satisfactory.

7.4.2.2.5 Hints

In what might be said to be the opposite of asking for elaboration, the instructor sometimes gives a series of easier questions, designed to help the student build up to the correct answer. This is another instance in which questions are used to correct factual information. This is similar to what Mercer terms “cued elicitation” (2001:246), and what Lee calls

“intimating answers” (2006). In the academic context, this could be seen as another way to avoid directly saying that the student is wrong, while giving the student a chance to self-correct and perhaps having the whole class review together.

S12: uh- generates two haploid cells from a diploid
meiosis one. i don't, nope.
S1: okay she sounds confident. <SS: LAUGH> is that your
final answer?
SS: yeah
S1: uh everybody agree?
S4: no
S9: i put meiosis two.
S1: no? okay somebody thinks it's also meiosis two?
SS: no
S4: no, (that creates) four.
S1: okay Maria's right. um, you get two haploid cells
from a diploid cell. why isn't it, meiosis two?
S4: you get four
S1: and what do you start with?
S4: haploid.
SS: haploid
S1: okay you start with a haploid. remember, it's
diploid at the beginning, then haploid haploid. mkay? so
it's just meiosis one.

Biology

S7: lineage, who your father was?
S1: 'm'm
SU-f: religion
SU-f: charisma?
S1: people here who are not going who are not pre meds are
what?
SU-f: L-S and A.
S1: according to your parents. if you're not a pre med what
are you?
S2: law student
S1: law. so <PAUSE:06> no?
S2: Roman law?

History

In the first example, the instructor is leading the students through steps that they already know in order to demonstrate how the answer was derived. In the second, the instructor is giving hints that are not connected to the class. In the first example we can see the

instructor's dual purpose, to avoid direct correction and also to help the students review.

In the second, the instructor seems to be mostly avoiding direct correction.

Hints often take the form of display questions, except that rather than test something the student is supposed to have already learned, they function to help the student to rethink an idea or make connections between ideas.

S6: [. . .] was between the king, and religion, and then i gave examples. and then the second tension

S1: give me an example.

S6: between kings and religion? [S1: yeah] um, Leo the Third and, Charlemagne.

S1: okay, w- it's not kings and religion kings and the church [S6: the church yeah yeah, i'm sorry] okay, yeah, alright.

History

S1: everybody. they had a population at one point of about three million. Detroit was a pretty gosh darned big booming city. they had this whole auto industry thing going for 'em, right? then what happened?

SU-f: suburbs

S9: suburban sprawl.

S1: but why? [S9: because] it just happened? just one day

[S9: because no,] people just started moving

American politics

The instructor in the first excerpt asks the student for an example to show that the student is in fact talking about the clergy rather than religion per se. In the second example, the teacher wants questions of economics and race specifically brought into the discussion. In both cases we can see the presence of uptake, and in fact in the first example the student apologizes, which may indicate that she takes this as correction. Although this may be a rather strong way of pointing out that an answer is not acceptable as it is, it does avoid direct correction of the student.

7.5 ELICITATION TYPE AND NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

The type of elicitation used, as elucidated by Mehan (1979) and explained above, seems to be linked to form that negative feedback takes. This in turn may be because of both pedagogical and face issues present in the classroom context. These will be examined in this section.

7.5.1 Face wants, type of elicitation, and type of feedback

The face wants of teachers using different types of elicitation may differ, as may those of the students who are responding. In a class which primarily consists choice or product elicitation, mentioned above as being largely the hard science disciplines, there is less necessity to encourage students to speak. In the first place, since they are all expected to have learned the material, any student can be called on. In a discussion, for the most part the instructor must wait for a student to have something to say, but in this type of class all of the students are theoretically prepared to answer any of the questions. There is no concern, also, with answer length. Not only are the answers prescribed already, but speed may be an important factor in using this orientation, and so students' answers are expected to be brief. Therefore, the face wants of students are likely to not be so complex as for other types of elicitation. The students probably wish to be seen as competent students who have learned the material (or, in a few cases, to be seen as funny). The face threat of giving a wrong answer may be relatively small, depending on the situation, and non-existent in the case of guessing.⁷ Likewise, in this situation, the instructor is probably more comfortable being seen as an expert who has the right, and task, of evaluating students' answers. In most cases, she is the primary knower of the information. As she is merely

⁷ Mehan (1979) might place guesses with process elicitations, since they are asking what the student thinks, but they are categorized as product elicitations because at least in the MICASE data they require a short, factual answer, not a considered explication of a student's opinion. Also, as Seedhouse (2004) has shown, and as has been seen in the data, they seem to receive a different type of feedback)

assessing whether a student has learned a certain fact, and not the way a student is participating, she does not feel constrained in evaluating students' responses and does not have to take pains to build solidarity between her and the students. In addition to the lesser face threat for teachers and students, it is possible that other factors make clarity more important than the students' face concerns. In situations where students will have to use the information soon after the questioning, such as for an activity or quiz, the instructor may give more import to the students' understanding of the material.

When these types of elicitations are part of IRF exchanges, we are likely to see more direct criticism. Mitigation can be seen, but it is minimal, and it is very clear when the answer is negatively evaluated. This is for a number of reasons, having to do with both face and pedagogy. In terms of face, because of the lower face-threat for both instructors and students, it may be that less care is taken to address face wants when giving feedback. For pedagogical reasons as well, it may make sense to be clear on why an answer is wrong, not only because of the time constraints mentioned but because of the nature of the disciplines which use this orientation. It is also sometimes not necessary in these classes to encourage students to talk. In many examples, the instructor is the Primary Knower (Berry 1987) and there are clear right and wrong answers. The instructor in the Biology section avoids giving direct negative feedback a couple of times, first by asking "anyone want to help her out?" and then "I knew you'd say that." Although neither is explicitly criticizing the student, especially the second instance is face-threatening, in that it implies that the student got the answer wrong in a predictable way, or is making a common mistake. The first is slightly face-threatening, because it implies that other students have the answer. However, this is mitigated by the instructors characterizing the other student's providing an answer as "helping" rather than giving information that the first student does

not have. Other mitigation strategies we can include pairing with praise, pseudo-clarification questions, and hints.

In IRF exchanges which include process elicitation, as tend to occur in discussions in the soft disciplines, the situation is much more complex, and interpersonal concerns probably play a much bigger role. In this type of elicitation the face threat is greater, since the teacher is not just critiquing a failure to memorize a fact, but giving feedback on the student's personal thoughts, opinions, and ability to participate in a discussion. The pedagogical goals are more complex as well. When doing this type of elicitation the instructor must simultaneously evaluate the student's answer while also encouraging participation. In addition to this, the answer itself may be more difficult to evaluate. Unlike a choice or product elicitation where the expected answer is usually the only correct one, with a process elicitation as part of a discussion, even when the answer is not the one expected by the instructor it may still be a useful contribution. However, the time constraints that are sometimes seen when teachers are using product elicitation may not be so important. When responding to a choice or product elicitation, utterances tend to be short, and extraneous information is often not appropriate. When responding to a product elicitation however, students' answers may be longer. In some cases long answers, which represent greater participation, are encouraged. Thus the instructor must take more care than with a product elicitation, not to discourage a student from speaking.

It is in this type of elicitation that we may more clearly see the instructor trying to distance herself from the material and create solidarity with the students. This may be part of an attempt to create an egalitarian atmosphere where no one person's opinion matters more than another's. In order to make students more comfortable expressing their

thoughts and opinions, the instructor may be trying to create the idea that the class is a group of equals having a conversation, instead of a classroom in which evaluation is taking place.

The face wants of both instructor and student are also more complex with this type of elicitation. The face concerns of the student may be a more delicate matter here, since opinions and thoughts which comprise contributions to the discussion are more clearly tied to the student's identity. A single incorrect answer to a choice or product elicitation may only label the student as someone who perhaps did not study the material that was assigned, where an undesirable answer to a process elicitation might suggest that the student is not intellectually capable of making a sensible contribution. (Or, perhaps, did not have the social skills to participate in a discussion). Therefore the face wants of the student are probably more of a concern for the instructor in this context.

The face wants of the instructor are also worthy of note and may be more complex than with choice and product elicitation. Where assessing the correctness or incorrectness of an answer to a product elicitation only requires the instructor to show herself to be in control of the material, instructors may shy away from appearing to believe themselves worthy of assessing the way a student thinks. Bearing in mind Tracy's (1997) observation that faculty members are concerned with appearing to adopt a status that is above their actual status, instructors may be very hesitant to appear to be passing judgment on a student's intellectual prowess. Therefore, instructors may be taking pains to de-emphasize differences in status or educational level.

In this context we are more likely to see questioning strategies used in the F-move. The first reason for this is probably that, as this type of elicitation is more face-threatening for both parties, the feedback is made with more care for face concerns, possibly even at the cost of clarity. Since this type of elicitation frequently occurs as part of a discussion, one of the main pedagogical concerns is to encourage students to participate, so this is probably also a factor.

Of the questioning strategies, probably the most face-threatening is repeating the same question. This is due to the fact that in many of the questioning strategies, some part of the student's r-move is used, or "recycled" to encourage the student or his classmates to contribute better answers. To repeat the same question in effect re-does the question from the beginning and discounts the student's answer entirely, thereby implying that no part of the student's response is useful for the discussion. By not rewording the question, the implication is that there was nothing wrong with the teacher's initiation and the misunderstanding, or failure to answer sufficiently, lies solely with the student. This is the questioning strategy that is also used with product and choice elicitations, which tend to be evaluated with direct criticism, which may also indicate that it is more face-threatening.

Multiple questions show a little more concern for face. By restating the question in several different ways, the instructor is showing that she bears some responsibility for the student not being able to answer it in a desirable manner. She shows that one of the reasons the student may not have been able to answer the question is that the question itself is faulty or unclear in some way. Questioning the way that the student's R-move fits with discussion is face-threatening in that it implies lack of discourse competence on the student's part, but the answer is accepted.

Asking for elaboration is probably the least face-threatening way to indicate a request that the answer be amended. Asking for elaboration can indicate interest when used in ordinary conversation and may have the same nuance when used in spoken academic discourse. We can see that it poses no, or very little, face threat to the student by the fact that students at times seem to be encouraging instructors to do this, by making a one-word bid that will require instructors to ask for elaboration in order to make it a viable contribution to the discussion.

Outside of the IRF context, in the Economics and Philosophy sections mentioned above, there is not much evaluation because the instructors are not eliciting answers from students. In both of these sections mostly direct criticism or contradiction is seen, sometimes mitigated with praise. This is probably because the instructors are responding to students' questions, and direct criticism is acceptable at those times (Seedhouse 2004).

7.6 CONCLUSION

Criticizing someone's ideas is a very delicate process, although, most would argue, necessary in the academic world. The interplay between the pedagogical and the interpersonal is very visible here. Instructors must use various means, of varying degrees of subtlety to guide a good discussion, in which many students participate and the talk goes toward the teacher's pedagogical goal. There are undoubtedly many ways that instructors deal with undesirable answers, including simply ignoring them, that were not apparent in this study.

It is easy to see theoretically how face concerns and pedagogical goals might be working at cross-purposes, and some studies have suggested that this is indeed the case. Hyland and Hyland (2001, 2006) have demonstrated how non-native speaking student writers can misunderstand and ignore instructor comments when they are hedged or expressed in an indirect fashion. Misunderstanding is not, however, a feature of being a non-native speaker of the language of the instruction. Vasquez (2004) in a study of meetings between teaching assistants and their mentor/supervisors, found that the teaching assistants reported disappointment that they were not getting any constructive criticism on their teaching. This is despite the fact that the mentors gave them advice and suggestions, which the researcher felt constituted mitigated forms of criticism in this instance. In some cases also, an instructor's position in a higher status than the student can outweigh her attempts at mitigation. Crossouard and Pryor (2009) found that, although tutors of doctoral students tried to downplay their position with respect to students in email feedback by ways such as suggestions or modals, the students imbued this feedback with a great deal of authority. They did this even when specifically told that the tutor's comments were suggestions and not requirements.

However, in this study it was also possible to see how face wants and pedagogical goals work together. In the sections where choice and product elicitation are frequently used, the instructors tend to use direct criticism. Because product elicitation does not involve evaluation of the students' personal thoughts and opinions, they may be less face threatening to students, and direct criticism may be more appropriate. At the same time, since time constraints may be present or, as in the MICASE transcripts, students may be preparing for some activity or test, criticism is also most appropriate because relatively easy to understand. Therefore the relatively low face threat and the pedagogical goal of

clarity and speed work together. On the other hand, process elicitations may have a relatively high face threat since they are more personal to students, and one of the pedagogical goals is to encourage students to talk. When instructors use more mitigated and less direct forms of evaluation, they are able to address both of these concerns.

From the current study, it cannot be said definitely whether pedagogical goals were met or students felt comfortable. It would be fruitful at this stage to investigate how students take negative feedback in a classroom. Does mitigating feedback in a discussion prove a barrier to understanding its purpose, as in the examples above? Or, do students feel hurt or anxious or constrained from participating in class if the feedback is not mitigated or not mitigated in a certain way? If the categories listed above could be evaluated by students and if more examples of them could be found it would add to an understanding of academic discourse, as well as providing a tool for improving tertiary instruction.

CONCLUSION

This research has explored the nature of feedback in academic discourse within the context of seminars in two universities in the UK, and discussion sections in an American university. Praise was compared with compliments in ordinary conversation, with praise in written academic English, and across major disciplinary areas. Possible means of giving negative feedback, and various ways of mitigating it, were explored. This section will present a summary of findings, discussion, and suggestions for further study and practical application.

8.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

8.1 Praise and compliments

Although praise in spoken academic discourse is similar to compliments in ordinary conversation in some respects, most notably in the aspect of being limited semantically, it is different enough to be considered a separate speech act. Praise is realized semantically and syntactically in different ways from compliments. Perhaps more importantly, the discourse function for which praise is used is different from compliments as well.

As Manes and Wolfson (1981), Manes (1983), and Knapp, Hopper, and Bell (1984) found, compliments are surprisingly limited semantically and syntactically. Semantically, only five adjectives are used for about two-thirds of adjectival compliments: *nice*, *good*, *pretty*, *beautiful*, and *great*. Similar results were found in the BASE data: over 80% of adjectival praise uses one of the words *right*, *good*, *excellent*, *great*, or *interesting*,

with *right* and *good* alone making up about 60%. Syntactically, although the BASE data was limited, it was not so limited as compliments. Three syntactic patterns occurred in over 65% of the data in the BASE corpus, where three patterns accounted for 85% of Manes and Wolfson's data.

The fact that praise is almost as limited as compliments is unexpected. Compliments are thought to be formulaic because they are made for the purpose of establishing solidarity, and originality might have the opposite effect of creating distance (Wolfson & Manes, 1981). However, if praise has a different function, that of confirming to students that an answer is correct as well as encouraging further correct answers, then we might expect more originality. An instructor might use a greater variety of adjectives in order to better explain to the student why his or her answer is desirable, for example. In fact, such examples were found in the data, but they are quite rare. A possible reason for this is that, like compliments, praise must be simple, familiar, and easy to recognize, but for a different purpose. Where compliments are formulaic to increase solidarity, praise may be formulaic for institutional reasons—so as not to waste limited class time explaining to a student that their answer is correct. Another possible reason is that, for reasons of both face and pedagogy, instructors also may not wish to distinguish one student from another, and thus may give virtually the same words of praise to all students.

Praise differs from compliments in several respects. The first its connection to institutional role. Status is a factor in compliments, with compliments on certain subjects being more welcome from someone of lower status. However, praise seems to carry with it the idea that the person giving praise is worthy of evaluating the receiver, and thus the status or role aspect is stronger. Several researchers have pointed this out (Tracy & Baratz

1993, Hyland 2000) and in the current research the circumstances under which praise is given seem to bear this out. Praise was given almost exclusively from teachers to students. In the rare circumstance in which a student praises a teacher for a good class, this is done privately and is marked by mitigation.

Finally, one of the more striking differences is that responses to praise in the classroom seem infelicitous and are almost never found. Compliments, on the other hand, require a response.

These differences point to the fact that praise seems to have a very different discourse function than compliments do. As mentioned before, this is probably affected by institutional requirements. The purpose of the classroom is to transmit information within a limited time, and spending a great deal of time on praise of a single student is generally not done. The fact that a response to praise seems dispreferred shows another difference between praise and compliments. Where compliments, because unconnected to the previous utterance, can be used to start a conversation or change the subject, praise, as the final move in the IRF exchange, can be used by the instructor to regain the floor. Praise closes the topic or indicates that a student's answer is finished. This has been noted in other research as well, such as Wong and Waring's (2009) Conversational Analysis study of an ESL classroom.

Although research has generally shown that academic spoken English resembles ordinary conversation in several respects (Poos & Simpson 2000, Swales & Burke 2001, Mauranen 2001, Lindemann & Mauranen 2001), when comparing praise in academic spoken discourse with compliments in ordinary speech some differences become apparent.

Although in some aspects praise is similar to compliments, praise and compliments are realized in different ways and used for different purposes. These aspects of praise can help us to understand what it is used for in the classroom.

8.1.2 Praise in spoken academic discourse and praise in written academic discourse

For the next project, praise in spoken academic English was compared with positive evaluations in four written academic contexts: feedback made by instructors on student papers (Hyland & Hyland 2001), peer feedback on student writing (Johnson 1992), comments by peer reviewers on academic articles prior to publication (Fortanet 2008), and book reviews published in academic journals (Hyland 2000). These four contexts differed in terms of the relative status and academic rank of the evaluator and evaluated, as well as the degree of anonymity of the person giving the evaluation. It was found that, in contrast with spoken and written academic English in other contexts, praise in academic spoken English shows less variation than in written academic English.

There were several important differences in spoken praise. The first of these is length. Where spoken praise can be as short as a single word, written evaluation in academic discourse was at least one sentence and, in the case of a published book review, sometimes ran to several pages. Another difference is that written evaluations of any kind seem to deal to a great extent with the mechanics of writing as well as the content. There are very few examples of this type of praise in BASE, usually dealing with presentations that have just been finished. Another difference was the degree of privacy. Certain forms of written evaluation—for example peer feedback on articles intended for publication—is meant to be very private. Praise in a classroom, however, almost always has overhearers, and may be considered to be partly meant for them.

Spoken praise was found to show less syntactic variation than written praise. In contrast with Fortanet's (2008) study analyzing written comments by means of Systemic Functional Grammar, the praise in BASE showed fewer syntactic patterns. Johnson (1992) examined the compliments in student peer reviews with the same sort of syntactic analysis done by Manes and Wolfson (1981). The praise in BASE was found to show the same range of patterns as in Johnson's study, but with the difference that (INTENS/ADJ), which barely occurs in Johnson's data, is the most frequent pattern used for giving praise in BASE. This can probably be accounted for by status differences—"good" would seem overbearing if written by a student peer, but perfectly natural if spoken by an instructor.

Spoken praise also showed less variation syntactically. One of the more striking differences is that spoken praise showed much less specificity. Where adjectives used in written reviews included such words as *insightful* or *organized*, spoken praise usually consisted of items such as *good* or *excellent*.

The third major difference is that spoken praise is less personal than written praise. In written praise reviewers occasionally showed the effect of the writing on the reader, but this is not done with spoken praise.

The cause of the relative lack of variation in spoken academic praise may again be institutional time constraints. The issues of face mentioned above with regard to praise and compliments may be a factor as well, because praise in a classroom involves an audience where written praise on a student paper does not. Another factor may be the

research method, as the variety of genres selected for comparison may have yielded more varied praise than the context of discussion sections.

Spoken praise is also used for different purposes than written praise. Although written praise is frequently used to frame an evaluation or to mitigate a compliment, spoken praise is not often used in this way. One of the main reasons for this is that direct criticism is very rare in university classes. The exception to this, composition classes, do in fact seem to be using praise to mitigate criticism. The praise itself may also be mitigated in written evaluations, but this is not often done in spoken praise.

From this we see again that status and institutional constraints play a large part in determining how praise is realized. Although compliments can be used for solidarity, praise runs the risk of increasing distance between students, by seeming to favor one student over another. Difficulties with negotiating status which may play into how praise is formed in written evaluations do not seem to be a part of spoken praise, on the other hand. This may also contribute to the fact that praise in spoken academic discourse tends to be shorter. Since it needs no mitigation, it may be said in the most terse form possible.

8.1.3 Praise according to discipline

It has been shown that major disciplinary areas in academia differ in several significant ways, so it might be expected that the praise produced in these areas would be different as well. Studies based on corpora have found that the humanities tend to use more words and more variation (Swales 2001, Schachter et.al. 1991, 1994). It is thought that the humanities might have less precision in speaking because of the nature of both the

concepts which these disciplines deal with and the types of activities that are used (Poos & Simpson 2002).

Another way to understand differences between the disciplines is the Biglan/Becher framework. Biglan(1973a, 1973b) and Becher (1994) devised a typography that divides the disciplines generally along two axes. The first is the hard/soft axis, having to do with the strength of the research paradigm of the discipline. The other is the pure/applied axis, which has to do with the extent to which the discipline focuses on real-world or professional applications. The disciplines have been found to differ in several ways according to where they fit in this typography. In terms of classroom activities, ways of thinking about study or research, and overall goals, the disciplinary areas have been shown to differ (Biglan 1973a, 1973b., Becher 1994, Braxton 1995, Ylijoki 2000, Neumann 2001, Neumann, Parry & Becher 2002).

Both the differing goals, activities, and means of expression might be expected to lead to praise being formulated in a different way, but such was not found to be the case. In the context examined, praise showed no significant variation, either in the amount given or the variation shown. The only significant difference found was in the range of praise tokens per hour, which was much higher in the soft disciplines. This probably reflects the wider variety of activities that are used in such disciplines, and may be an artifact of the limitations of the data. Further investigation is warranted before significant conclusions can be drawn.

While this result may also be attributed to institutional and face concerns as mentioned above, the context must also be taken into account. In the context of

undergraduate seminars, disciplinary differences may come less into play than in graduate seminars or faculty colloquia, for example. When students move into a relatively expert level in their discipline, the type of feedback they receive may tend to more specificity and begin to reflect the disciplinary culture more. This is a point that would be worthy of further investigation.

8.1.4 Criticism

Where praise is quite easy to identify, by the use of positive words among other things, negative feedback was not. This study took up the question of how instructors indicate to students that they have not given a good answer, given the fact that negative assessment in all contexts is quite rare in academic spoken discourse (Mauranen 2002b, 2003). To do this, discourse analysis was used to identify instructor follow-up that could be negative.

The pedagogical goal of discussion is to get students to participate, yet instructors must occasionally tell students that they have made a factual error, or misunderstood something, or that their contributions are wanting in some other way. This may be discouraging to students and make them unmotivated to participate (Rees-Miller 1999). The face wants of both instructors and students may also come into play. Face wants can be quite complex in an academic context (Tracy 1997, Tracy & Baratz 1993, Rees-Miller 1999). Instructors may wish not to appear to be assuming a higher status than the one they actually have (Tracy 1997, Tracy & Baratz 1993) and they may wish to show solidarity with students while at the same time demonstrating that they are competent professionals. This may be complicated by the discussion context, in which sometimes the instructor is trying to maintain the idea that the participants are all equal. Students would also like to be seen as competent. In the case of a discussion in one of the soft disciplines, the student

is exposing not only his or her grasp of the subject but thinking and reasoning processes, and extra care might need to be taken for face concerns in this context.

Because of these disparate pedagogical and interpersonal goals, there is a variety of forms that negative feedback can take. The hard sciences seem to use more product elicitation (Mehan 1979), in which factual information is elicited, and the resulting negative feedback tends to be more direct. Direct negative feedback can be mitigated in various ways, described in more detail below. In the soft disciplines, where students are likely to be participating in a discussion, teacher questioning frequently takes the form of process elicitation (Mehan 1979a), where students are asked for an opinion. In this case, negative feedback is less blatant, and frequently takes the form of questioning. Repeating or restating questions, multiple questions, and asking the student to expand an answer were all found to be ways of subtly suggesting that a student's answer is not adequate. Negative feedback, unlike praise, was also found to be frequently followed by uptake from the student, to indicate acknowledgement or understanding.

8.2 DISCUSSION

The results of this research give support to the idea that feedback is a complex process in which face and pedagogical goals, disciplinary differences, and other factors come together. Negative feedback may be stated indirectly, or mitigated in various ways, therefore requiring more effort on the part of the instructor to convey it and the student to comprehend it. Positive feedback, while relatively simple, also has issues of face and status differences, and must work with pedagogical goals.

In this section, we will briefly review the feedback exchange in terms of what kinds of factors are at play when an instructor makes choices about elicitation or feedback, and what possibilities exist for each move. Then, the pedagogical and practical implications, and suggestions for further study will be discussed.

8.2.1 The feedback exchange

This framework uses Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) IRF exchange as a basis, although it should be noted that not all feedback occurs as part of the IRF pattern. This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7.

EVALUATION SEQUENCES: ORIGINS OF VARIETY FRAMEWORK –
for each teacher move

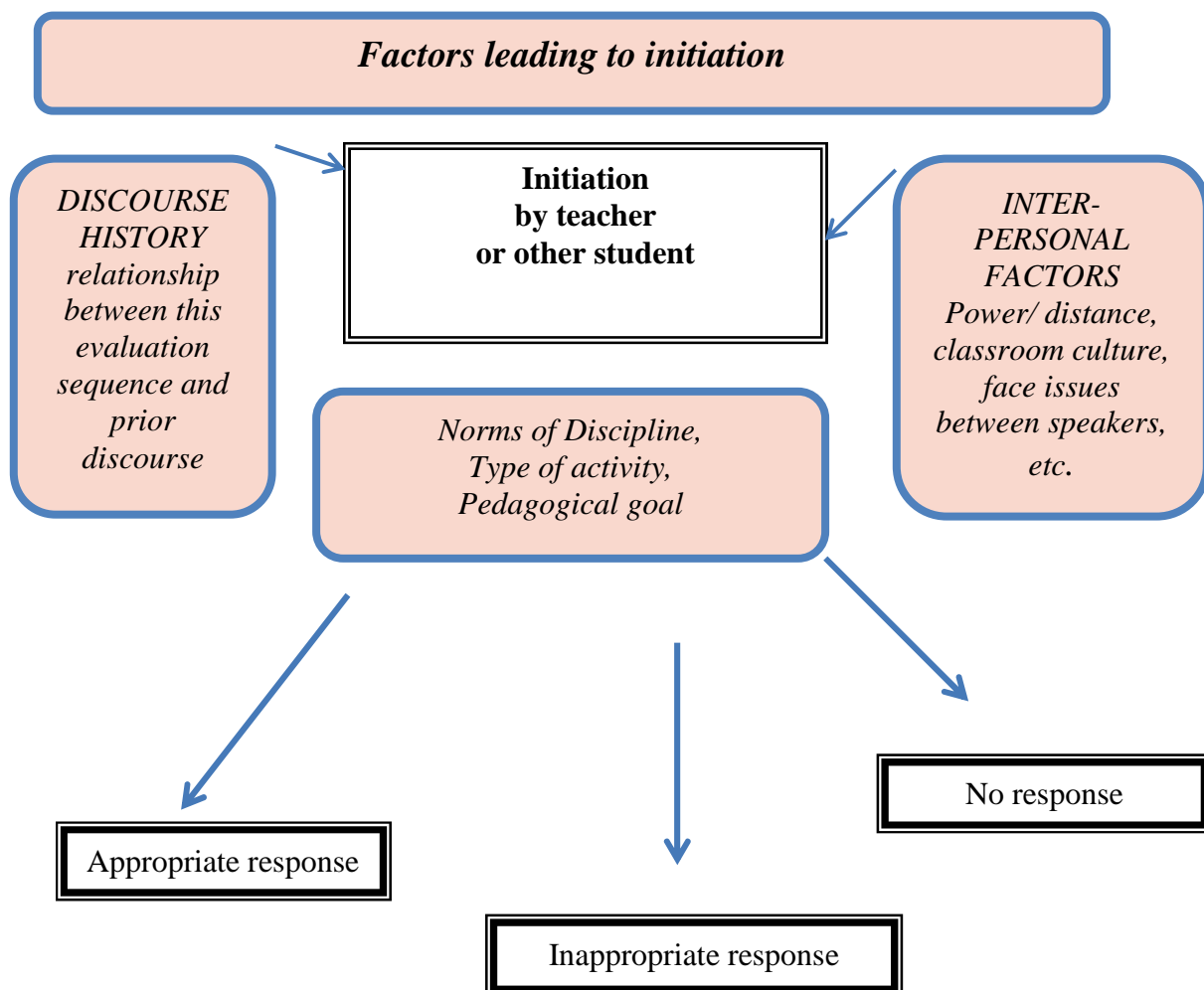


Fig.1

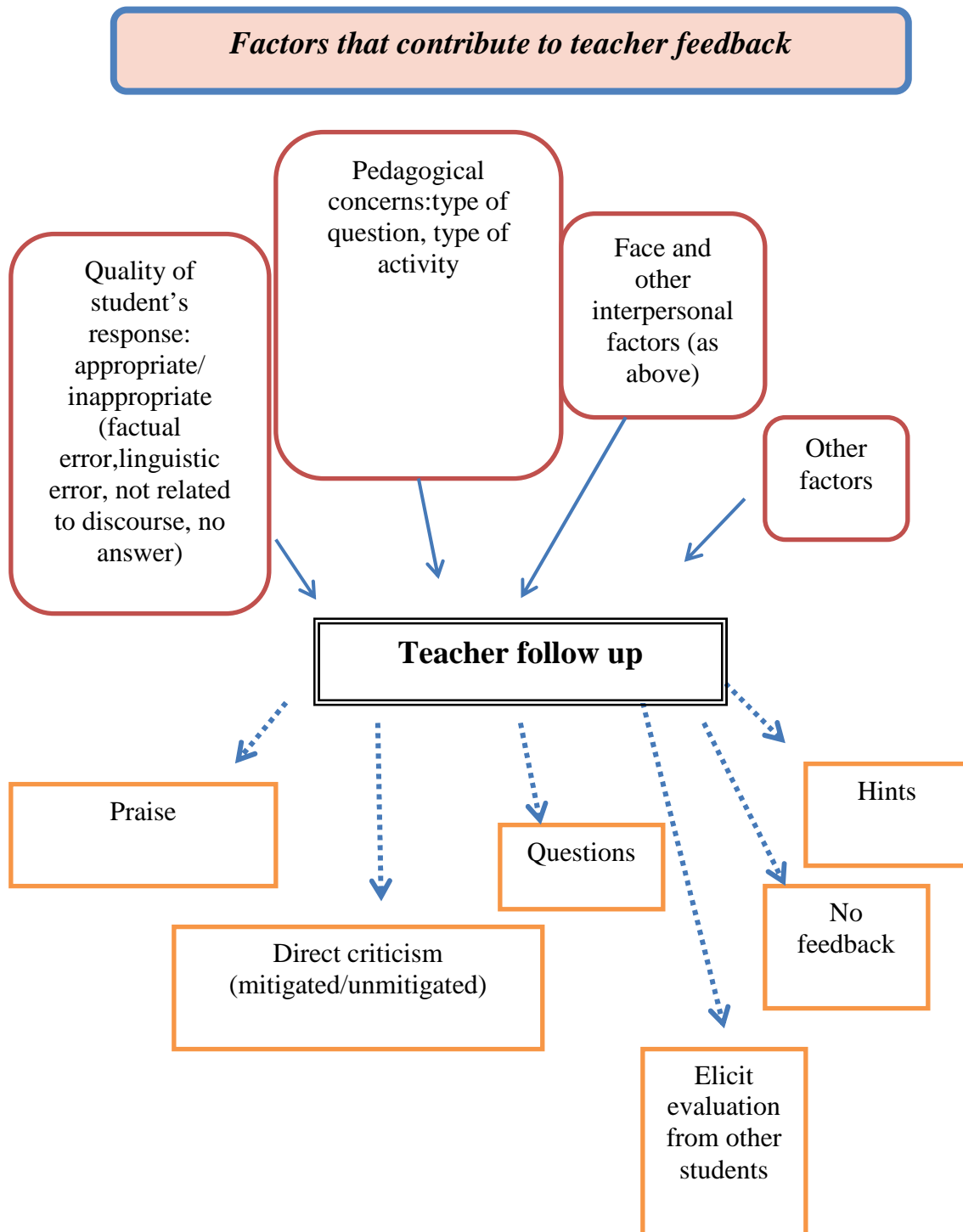


Fig. 2

8.2.1.1 *Factors affecting the choice of I-move*

At the first stage of the evaluative exchange, several factors affect the instructor's choice of Initiation move type. Pedagogical goals of course are very important. The move can be affected by the norms of the discipline, with hard disciplines tending more toward product elicitations. Interpersonal and face concerns also play a role. Face concerns combined with pedagogical goals can affect a teacher's choice of, for example, whether to call on a single student or wait for students to bid. The type of elicitation may also be affected by face considerations, as product elicitations seem to be less face threatening for the student. The type of activity has a bearing on this move as well. (See Fig. 1).

8.2.1.2 *The student's R-move*

If the move is not adequate, there are several reasons for which it may be inadequate. First, it may be factually incorrect. This usually follows a product elicitation from the instructor, but occasionally students will include factually incorrect information when answering a process elicitation, as part of supporting their opinion or for some other reason. In comparison with an ESOL class, there are fewer instances in which a response would be inadequate for linguistic reasons, but linguistic reasons for inadequacy do exist. In this case, linguistic problems usually refer to either a response that is not appropriately academic in form, or, in a composition course, word choice or grammar that for some reason the instructor considers inadequate. (In the case of a composition class, this is not strictly speaking an R-move in IRF format, but the composition itself can be considered a response to the instructor's initiation of a prompt). The response by the student may lack detail or may not be clearly tied to the subject or question under discussion. The content of the response may not be clear for some reason. Lastly, there may be no response. A "no response" R-move might consist of no response at all, although no examples of silence

following an instructor's I-move were found in either MICASE or BASE, possibly because of transcription issues. However, a students' indicating hesitation, or certain kinds of facetious answers might also be considered no response.

8.2.1.3 Factors affecting the choice of F-move

Face wants of instructors and students, as described in Chapter 7, affect the giving of feedback. Feedback will also be affected by pedagogical goals—if the instructor is trying to encourage class participation, for example, feedback may be given in a less direct form than if the instructor expects students to give short answers. Other factors may also be at play. Gender and age, for example, were beyond the scope of this research but may have an influence on the type of feedback that is given. Other factors such as the instructor's personality may also have an effect. These things, together with the quality of the R-move, help to determine the type of F-move that the instructor does. If the R-move is adequate, the instructor can give words of praise, she can repeat or restate the response, or she might not give any clear follow-up. If the move is not adequate, she can give direct criticism, either unmitigated or mitigated by hedges, adding words of praise, or expression of the criticism as the instructor's personal opinion. This is more common with a factually inadequate response. She can give a question in the F-move, asking for elaboration or for the student's response to be tied more clearly to the subject. She can ask a clarification question. Hints, multiple questions, and repeating the same question are possibilities if the R-move is inadequate and also if there is no student response. For an inadequate response, an instructor might also not do an F-move. Calling on other students immediately is one way that the instructor might avoid Follow up. (See Fig. 2).

8.2.1.4 Options for student uptake

Teacher feedback can be followed by uptake by the student. In the case of praise, no uptake is the most likely response, although a few facetious examples of uptake were also seen. With direct negative feedback, some kind of uptake is usually found. The student may give minimal uptake, such as “OK,” he may ask another question, apologize, or argue. In some cases he may offer a brief account. If the negative feedback is in the form of a question, then the question is usually answered, by the same or another student.

Although, as has been mentioned, the current research was not able to provide an exhaustive list of all possible forms of negative feedback, it is hoped that this list will give an idea of options for each move and the different aspects of the class, the instructor and the student that go into such choices.

8.3 PEDAGOGICAL APPLICATIONS

In this section the implications of the findings on teaching of English language learners will be discussed. From looking at research that has been done in foreign language classrooms, it seems that some adjustment is necessary for students who are moving from an English language learning environment into a university. In addition to these students, International Teaching Assistants (ITAs) are another group that may benefit from these findings.

Evidence suggests that when students move into an academic environment from an intensive English program or other English-learning environment, the way that instructors give feedback to their responses in class may change as well. Several studies have examined feedback in foreign language classroom, both linguistic feedback (Lyster & Ranta 1997), and feedback also focusing on content (Cullen 2002). However, it is difficult

to compare feedback in the language classroom with feedback in a seminar, because of the different pedagogical foci and activities. Language classes which are more similar to seminars—such as a discussion in an intensive English program for advanced level students—might yield the same type of praise. From the evidence that we do have, however, feedback styles seem to be different.

One challenge for students might be the differing use of recasts and reformulation in ESL and university classrooms. As Lyster and Ranta (1997) point out, these are a common way of pointing out error in the speech of a foreign-language student, although of the feedback types that they found, recasts are least likely to lead to student uptake (which they define as the student's verbal reaction to the teacher's feedback). However, in the university classroom, reformulation and repetition are often used to indicate a correct answer. An instructor's repetition of an answer ratifies the answer and makes it audible to the whole class. Reformulation has been seen in the form of what was called "boosted repetition" in which the instructor repeated the student's answer with the addition of emphatic words like "certainly." Reformulation therefore seems to be one form of teacher feedback which differs in meaning depending on whether it is given in an ESOL classroom or a university classroom. Particularly, recasts such as this example in Lyster and Ranta:" (student) "*L'eau érabable?*" (teacher): *L'eau d'érable. C'est bien*" (p.47) The positive words at the end of the exchange make this feedback very similar in form to an acknowledgement of a positive answer that one might find in a university classroom, although it is fact a recast meant to point out an error.

It should be pointed out that since Lyster and Ranta (1997) mention this as being the form with the least student uptake, so it is possible that even when used to indicate an

incorrect answer it is not very salient to students, and thus would not be a problem in a discussion section or seminar. One of the reasons that recasts result in so little uptake may in fact be that students are used to hearing their answers reformulated by teachers, usually with a positive meaning, in their first language classrooms, and thus have not learned that this type of feedback needs special attention in the foreign language classroom.

Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to examine this point in depth, another aspect to consider when teaching non-native speaking students about praise and criticism in an English speaking academic environment is how much the instructors' praise and criticism may vary culturally. It is not only the form that praise or criticism may take, but the values it expresses. In his assessment framework, Martin (2005) notes "One way to think about **judgement** and **appreciation** is to see them as institutionalised feelings, which take us out of our everyday common sense world and into the uncommon sense worlds of shared community values. (p.46). In Martin's typology *judgment*, being an appraisal of human behavior, is probably the type that includes most praise and criticism as described here. Hunston also believes that "evaluation [. . .] takes place within a social and ideological framework (2010: 12). Since, as Hunston has also noted, evaluation is contextual, one of the necessities for understanding the praise or criticism that one is given in the classroom is understanding what sort of behavior is likely to be praised. The young woman described by Hyland and Hyland (2001) whose writing was critiqued as being mostly summary and responding by adding extra summaries to the other sections was fundamentally handicapped by not understanding the values of American academic writing, beyond the difficulties of understanding the instructor's indirect language.

It may be difficult for non native speaking students to understand criticism. However, since negative criticism tends to be mitigated and altogether not as easily identifiable as praise, this probably is not only true of international students. (Mauranen 2001 offers anecdotal evidence that, specifically in the case of American students, this may be true). In the product elicitations that we examined above, negative evaluation may be fairly simple to understand, because instructors are giving direct feedback, albeit usually mitigated to some degree. However, when it comes to a discussion section, where students may be asked to give opinions or relate personal experiences to the topic of the lesson, things become more complex.

Participating in a discussion section with native speakers can be quite difficult and intimidating for non-native English speaking students. In addition to possible language deficits, students may simply not be used to this method of learning. This was obliquely referenced in the faculty interviews for the BASE corpus, in which faculty members are asked what international students can do to get the most out of a seminar. In their responses, the faculty showed that they understood the difficulty that students are having with such things as comprehending the flow of the conversation and not being self-conscious about speaking. Faculty, therefore, seem to be generally aware of difficulties of being an international student in a seminar, although they may not be aware of specific problems having to do with feedback. It might be difficult for non-native speaking students to understand the difference between being asked to elaborate, being asked to tie the contribution to the subject, or being asked for a completely different answer.

Therefore, teachers in intensive English programs and the like which aim to prepare students for study in English speaking countries should be aware of different styles

of feedback and make these part of the student's preparation. This makes it important that for at least some of the time the student is getting feedback on the content of his answers, and not the form. This is thought to be pedagogically advantageous for many reasons. However, instructors must take care to evaluate the student's answers in terms of quality—how well the responses advance the discussion and acknowledge the responses of other students—and give follow-up that indicates when the responses are lacking. Anecdotal evidence suggests that experienced EFL teachers may automatically praise any well-formed response, so care must be given for this aspect of the class. This is also one of the pedagogical purposes to which the MICASE corpus might be put. With carefully selected examples, advanced students may be able to articulate why an instructor is giving a certain piece of feedback, or how the student's response could be improved. Another place where the results of this research might be usefully applied is in the training of International Teaching Assistants (ITAs). With respect to classroom teaching, the English level of these ITAs has been considered problematic in recent years (Bailey 1983 is an early influential study on problems with, and attitudes toward, ITAs). This has led to the formation of special training courses at some universities.

The majority of ITAs are studying and teaching in fields such as engineering and science (Plakans 1997, Chiang 2009). The findings of this research suggest that ITAs who teach discussion sections in such fields would be giving product elicitations; that is, asking students for previously learned information and evaluating it on factual correctness. This research also suggests that this is a relatively easy thing to evaluate, with most instructors giving direct, though mitigated, criticism. However, some ITAs may also be leading discussions in the soft disciplines, which involves more complex feedback as has been seen.

It has been suggested that some ITAs, particularly those from Asia, may be unfamiliar with the more interactive style of U.S. classrooms and thus less comfortable with them (Chiang 2009, Kuo 2002). Gorsuch (2003) reminds us that diagnoses of ITA problems based on stereotypes of the ITAs home culture should be avoided, and that ITA difficulties may be due to language problems and unfamiliarity with the U.S. university classroom. LoCastro and Tapper (2006) point out as well that the problems of adjustment to U.S. classrooms are more complex than simply moving from a Confucian system of education to a Socratic one.

So, although the background and attitudes of the ITAs must be examined and the specific type of class that they will be teaching carefully considered, there is some evidence to suggest that ITAs may have trouble with giving feedback in U.S. classrooms, particularly if they are teaching in the soft disciplines. The reason for this is that ITAs may think of status and face differently, and this is a particular concern with discussion in the soft disciplines. Gorsuch (2003) in a piece of survey-based research comparing ITAs' attitudes with those of faculty members, found that while faculty rated such behavior as scolding or warning students, or having them stand to answer questions as undesirable, ITAs were more ambivalent, with opinions divided. These behaviors all seem to reinforce the status difference between instructors and students, and suggest that some ITAs may see the status difference between them and the students as being more clear. In terms of the face concerns involved with giving feedback in the soft disciplines, this could be problematic. There is evidence to suggest that it is not a problem with the hard sciences, however. LoCastro and Tapper (2007) in a close examination of the classroom discourse of one outstanding ITA in the sciences, show that he gave direct criticism to students, little

praise, and tended to use negative politeness strategies. He was ranked far above his fellow TAs in terms of “respect and care for students,” so at least in this particular context, direct criticism may be appropriate and even preferred.

For those ITAs serving in the soft disciplines, however, it may be best to specifically address feedback. As has been mentioned, even students who teach in the same context in which they have been educated, who are presumably required to give the same sort of feedback that they have been hearing for years, may find it hard at first to give any sort of evaluation in the classroom. Considering how much more difficult it may be for ITAs, who are teaching in a completely new environment and perhaps in a foreign language, it would seem prudent for ITA training programs to address feedback directly. The framework developed through this research (Fig. 1) can be beneficial in this process. The pedagogical benefits of softened or mitigated feedback—that students will remain motivated to participate in discussion—should be stressed, as an emphasis on face concerns may be alienating and run the risk of stereotyping the ITAs. As with international students, ITAs could use selected MICASE and BASE transcripts to analyze different sorts of feedback in terms of what the instructor’s goals are and the possible effects on the students. They could also practice developing discussion questions, thinking about how specific questions would address their pedagogical objectives and how they could guide a discussion toward them. Certain situations which seem to frequently occur, for example a student’s giving mistaken factual information, or giving a personal anecdote whose connection to the subject is not clear, could be practiced. Although this is something that is probably learned best from experience, by making the ITAs aware of this issue, their learning may be faster and more smooth.

8.4 FURTHER STUDY

One intriguing subject which this research was unable to treat was the instructor's thought process in giving evaluation. To what extent are instructors consciously choosing their words, particularly in the case of criticism? If this question were explored, it could add a great deal to the pedagogical study of feedback. This question could possibly be best addressed by studies combining discourse analysis with interview data. Interview data would also help with understanding spoken feedback from the students' perspective, another very important issue. Are students aware that they are being criticized? Do they prefer one type of criticism? Do they notice the type of praise they get? Although interview studies are problematic for reasons noted earlier—the difficulty of getting enough data and the possibility that the teacher or student will not remember accurately—they would seem to be a logical next step in the exploration of praise.

As has been mentioned before, it is relatively difficult to collect examples of either praise or criticism, and directly asking instructors about their feedback behavior may not yield much useful information. Therefore, further studies of feedback may have to wait until there is quite a bit more academic spoken English data available to the public. However, there are several questions that would benefit from further study when and if it is possible.

An obvious question is the role of gender in feedback behavior. Gender seems to have some sort of influence on complimenting behavior in ordinary conversation, although the extent of this is still controversial (Manes & Wolfson 1981, Knapp, Hopper & Bell 1984, Tatsuki & Nishizawa 2005). A corollary to these studies would be a study of the amount of praise that female instructors give, the amount that female students get, and

how this compares with male instructors and students. Whether or not the praise differs in quantity, variation, or subject would also be an interesting target of research. To adequately research this question, a larger corpus with an even number of male and female instructors would be necessary. It might be postulated from the results of the present study that little variation would be seen, but this is not certain. If there were as little variation found between the sexes as there is among the disciplines or other factors, then this would support the idea that praise serves an important discourse function and thus must be easily recognizable. Likewise, although the current study found both male and female instructors using direct and indirect means of giving negative feedback, it would be fruitful to find out if one gender favors one way of criticizing. Any differences found would add to our understanding of the differences between men's and women's speech.

The pedagogical import of praise is a subject which was beyond the scope of the current project. Although praise was assumed to be a supportive move by the instructor, and to have a didactic purpose in that it acknowledges and encourages correct answers, whether or not it succeeds in this purpose is unknown. Further study, perhaps using interview data, could clarify the types of praise that students appreciate most, whether they think praise is generally sincere or believe, like Hyland and Hyland's (2001) subjects, that it is given for other purposes, and whether it does in fact encourage them, would be very useful subjects of study.

A study of the pedagogical effects of different types of criticism would be of great use for students and teachers. Hyland and Hyland (2001) show that indirect feedback can be confusing and easy to misunderstand for non-native speakers of English. This raises the question of how students in discussion sections understand the type of feedback they

are given. As well, the interpersonal effects of the criticism would be a good subject of study. If students are strongly demotivated by criticism, or if they would prefer it be clearer and more easy to understand, these insights would be helpful to teachers in leading discussions. Finally, the question of how difficult it is for non-native English speaking students in discussion sections should be addressed. Participating in a discussion section is one of the most challenging aspects of the university context for students who are not native English speakers. It might make the experience easier and more useful if they were more easily able to interpret the feedback they are getting. The question of how to teach them to interpret the feedback is a natural corollary.

8.5 CONCLUSION

This study was inspired by the researcher's own students, non-native speaking teacher trainees who showed a puzzling inability to give praise in English despite the fact that they received it all the time. Although feedback is one of the teacher's most important tasks, shaping students' learning as it builds a relationship with them, it is something many of us do unconsciously. Further study of feedback in many different contexts can help us to better support and motivate our students, make the class content more clear, and ready them to give useful and respectful evaluation themselves.

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Appendix A: transcribed seminars in BASE used in the analysis

title of class	abbreviation	department
Black British Writing	ahsem001	British and Comparative Cultural Studies
Greek and Roman coins	ahsem002	Classics and Ancient History
The Cuban revolution	ahsem003	Comparative American Studies
Modes of Writing: Poetics	ahsem004	English and Comparative Literary Studies
Nietzsche	ahsem005	Philosophy
Beauty and 'The Thin Red Line'	ahsem006	Film and Television Studies
Institutional Critique	ahsem007	History of Art
The medical market place	ahsem008	History
Analysis Exercise: Merry Christmas Mr Lawrence	ahsem009	Japanese Studies
Arts Sponsorship	ahsem010	Theatre Studies
Third-year student presentations	lssem001	Biology
Trauma	lssem002	Medicine
Clinical Methods	lssem003	Medicine
Shock	lssem004	Medicine
Bone and Joint Infection, Chronic Painful Hip, Low Back Pain	lssem005	Medicine
Polyarthritis	lssem006	Medicine
Haematological Malignancy	lssem007	Medicine
Anaemias, Purpura and Venous	lssem008	Medicine

Thrombosis		
Heart Failure	lssem009	Medicine
Polyarthritis	lssem010	Medicine
Radiation and Photochemistry	pssem001	Chemistry
First Activity - Pipeline	pssem002	Chemistry
Second Activity - Blindfold Numbers	pssem003	Chemistry
Third Activity	pssem004	Chemistry
Water for developing countries	pssem005	Engineering
Introduction to Health Service Statistics	pssem006	Statistics
Engineering project meeting	pssem007	Engineering
Preparing a literature review	pssem008	Engineering
Observing Clouds from Space and the Ground	pssem010	Meteorology
Using video tapes in ELT	sssem001	Centre for English Language Teacher Education
Gender and Globalisation	sssem002	Gender Studies
Industrial Economic Analysis	sssem003	Economics
Curriculum English: Teaching Short Stories at Key Stage 2	sssem004	Education
Globalization and the Environment	sssem005	Development Studies
Criminal Law: Accomplice Liability	sssem006	Law

Built-in Social Behaviour in Territoriality and Sexual Behaviour	sssem007	Psychology
Contemporary Health Issues: Unemployment and health	sssem008	Social Policy
Logistics and Operation Management Production	sssem009	Manufacturing
Japan and The Gulf War Crisis	sssem010	School of East Asian Studies

Appendix B: total praise found in the corpus, by general disciplinary category and subject

<u>Soft Pure Subjects</u>		
<i>British and comparative cultural studies (Black British writing)</i>		
Main activity: lecture		
No praise found		
<i>Classics and Ancient History (Roman coins)</i>		
Main activity: lecture		
Guest speaker: no praise found		
<i>Comparative American studies (the Cuban Revolution)</i>		
Main activity: oral reports + discussion		
Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
good	students are ready to present	1
good do you want to sort of summarize	oral reports	1
i thought both sides did a very good job at putting forward a coherent argument i was impressed by your structure i mean i thought you both had good good form to your presentation but i think what we should be doing now	oral reports	34
so what other things from your side i mean you've done a good you did a good sort of appendix to what they were saying you said some things about stuff you thought they could have made more of as a in terms of successes i'd be interested to hear	reports	18 21

from Miriam because she actually thought she was in the wrong group and then actually seemed to become to grow into the role		
bunch well i think i think this has been a very funct i think fruitful area i mean i think you did a very good job at really researching a number of different positions and i don't know if you found that i think you did a very good job at moving through these different positions and avoiding er painting yourself into ideological corners that you didn't i thought you did a good job at sort of looking at the different sides of the same question and talking around them i thought that was very impressive i thought you did a very good job i was going to my intention to was to refer going back to the question of	reports	18 62
		154

English and Comparative Literary Studies (Poetics)

Main activity: discussion

Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
that was very good	student's poem	4
that particular message that you just said there which was very good	student's poem (?)	4
so good very good	student's choosing another student (?)	3
good	student's poem [these are extemporaneous poems in a form suggested by the instructor, students then choose next person]	1
very good very genius	poem	4
good	student's reporting that she likes her own poetry	1
well done	poem	2
very good	poem?	2
: it certainly isn't yeah that's that's that's right it's not associated	student's answer	3
mm-hmm that's very good yeah	answer: what are your poetics	3
two very good strong ones yeah	as above	5
interesting very interesting	as above	3
very interesting you can see why all these people are on this course it's a bit like the interview you see	as above	13
mm-hmm well make sure you hold on to that	as above	8

yeah yeah fascinating er idea too of course	as above	5
yeah excellent now hold on to those yeah	as above	6
true	as above	1
mhm very good	as above	2
mhm very interesting very good	as above	4
mhm ambitious but good	as above	3
i'm very impressed by er all your poetics i'm also very impressed by the word respect turning up so often	as above	22
that's very interesting	as above	3
very interesting yeah hold hold those very hard	as above	7
: mm-hmm yeah fair enough	as above	3
it's it's fine they're good they're good	as above	4
mm-hmm it's good it's good it's a good it's a good it's a good poetic	as above	4
		122
English and Philosophy (Nietzsche)		
Main activity: <u>discussion</u>		
Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
that sounds plausible	student's answer (opinion)	3
i think what you're pointing to is an interesting question	student's contribution to discussion	10
yeah that's right	discussion	3

	contribution	
that's right	discussion contribution	2
that's right	discussion contribution	2
i think that's right	discussion contribution	4
yeah i think that's exactly right	discussion contribution	6
that's right	discussion contribution	2
i think that's right	discussion contribution	4
no i think that's quite right	discussion contribution	5
yes that's right that's right	discussion contribution	5
		46

Film and Television Studies (Thin Red Line)

Main activity: discussion

Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
right kind of mysticism and	discussion contribution	1
you you yeah you quite right	discussion contribution	3
		4

<i>History of Art (Institutional Critique)</i>		
Main activity: <u>discussion</u>		
Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
yes that's absolutely true but do you think it's	discussion contribution	4
absolutely because it's so	discussion contribution	1
yeah that's a very interesting point but we we er it actually by questioning it almost re-emphasises	discussion contribution	5
		10
<i>History (Medical Marketplace)</i>		
Main activity: <u>presentation +discussion</u>		
Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
yeah so that's right	prepared presentation	2
yes no i think i think that's right	discussion contribution	6
yeah that's right what i was arguing there really was	discussion contribution	3
yeah the entrepreneur yeah that's probably right	discussion contribution	3
yeah yeah so basically that's right	discussion contribution	4
yes yes you have it was all part of the same pattern absolutely	discussion contribution	4
i mean no that's your argument that seems to be er it's inte-, it's interesting	discussion contribution	2

inoculation would be the very good example of that yeah	discussion contribution	9
yeah that's right	discussion contribution	3
yeah i think they are yeah i think that's right i think	discussion contribution	10
: no no good point yeah	discussion contribution	2
yes Wellcome and Roche can play er control the marketplace yeah that's right	discussion contribution	2
: Yeah no i think that's a good point yeah but i think so i think	discussion contribution	6
[laughter] excellent hi-ho silver away yes that's right	discussion contribution	4
yeah so that's right so a charlatan isn't a	discussion contribution	3
		63

Japanese Studies (Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence

Main activity: presentation +discussion (mostly presentation)

Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
we have seen the essays and by and large they are super so i'm very very pleased with your results some of you have done simply outstanding and almost everyone has done very well so er on that cheerful positive note	submitted essays	29

well done	prepared presentation	2
		31
<i>Theatre Studies (Arts' sponsorship seminar)</i>		
Main activity: <u>discussion</u>		
Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
: right that's one thing yeah that's one argument yeah but the oth- i mean another argument	discussion contribution	8
absolutely a a and i i it depends	discussion contribution	1
i think that's absolutely the case and i think that is the	discussion contribution	6
		15
<i>English and comparative literary studies (preparing a literature review)</i>		
Main activity: <u>going over papers in class/discussion</u>		
Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
yes now i think that-, that's a good point but what you want to do is to make that point but note also that er that the other two	discussion contribution	4
well see that's good you've got the final draft on paper before the er	discussion contribution	2
but er anyway well done that's a pretty good piece of work	student presentation of own (essay?)	9
okay thank you very much and now ah you're getting applause from this side of the room er	same as above	4

do you four want to make some some comments on on that er well i think its good too		
er no i mean tha-, that represents er a very good attempt at sort of compressing and differentiating between th-, th-, the books	student's essay	21
		40
<i>Centre for the study of women and gender (Gender and globalisation)</i>		
Main activity: <u>discussion</u>		
Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
that's that's a really interesting idea actually isn't	discussion contribution	5
yeah but i i think Kathleen's point is really important	discussion contribution	7
yeah and again that's that's interesting because it shows that the effects of globalisation aren't even	discussion contribution	2
yes and the examples you've just quoted are very significant because they you know they're mass produced commodities aren't	discussion contribution	9

yeah that's right i think that's true er and also i mean i think you now the example you've showed is very significant	discussion contribution	13
		36
<i>Globalisation and Regionalism (Globalisation and the environment)</i>		
Main activity: <u>discussion</u>		
Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
right er thank you very much George and Shigeru two very er wide-ranging presentations of the following material er especially Shigeru's presentation is quite er quite theoretical er very interesting	presentations	18
okay that's i mean that's a very interesting question i think we'll come back to that a little later in the discussion	discussion contribution	8
yeah yeah i mean it's a good point i just want to i just want to ask i want to ask Luca here and again i'm not i'm again i'm not trying to label you as as being the developed world or being whatever i	discussion contribution	6
		32

<i>East Asian Studies (Japan and the Gulf War)</i>		
Main activity: <u>presentations + discussion</u>		
Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
i thought they were quite contrastive in the in the way you presented em the undergraduate	presentations?	16
: good start good start	discussion contribution	4
think we should feel quite pleased with the way in which those presentations went	presentations	15
it was an impressive presentation	presentation	5
a really clear position there	discussion contribution	5
		45

<u>Hard Pure Subjects</u>		
<i>Chemistry (Radiation and photochemistry)</i>		
Main activity: <u>Teacher questions students</u>		
Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
you generate E-minus with pulse radiolysis of water that that's absolutely true	answer to T's Q	3
it would attract yeah absolutely right it would	answer to T's Q	3
yeah it's a pro-, i-, it that's right basically er if you	answer to T's Q	2
iron yeah iron-one yes that that that that's that's a good	answer to T's Q	9

answer iron-one		
well ac-, well actually it's it's not a it's not a bad answer	answer to T's Q	11
that was the that was the picture that er would would have been as it were a a very complete answer with all of these questions	student presentation (answer to pre-set questions)	25
right that's excellent	?? S hands T paper with answers on it	3
yeah yeah the electron that's absolutely right the electron is er in a th-, it	answer to T's question	3
yeah er yeah put a polar group on it er is a suggestion that is that is a good suggestion actually	answer to T's Q	14
yeah that that that's absolutely right	answer to T's Q	3
yeah not a bad not a bad assumption	answer to T's Q	4
it's quite a good quite a good answer but it's not exactly right	answer to T's Q (same as above0	8
hydrogen extraction yeah that's very good	answer to T's Q	3
okay that's that seems all right so	answer to T's Q	4
		96
Chemistry (Pipeline)		
Main activity: <u>game</u>		
Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
the four the six of you were facing inwards and you	pipeline teamwork activity	5

appeared to be kind of listening to each other so i was impressed by that i thought for your first shot you you kind of started to act as a		
if forgetting about the task which i think you did very well actually what kind of how	teamwork activity	8
that's good so in	students' self-evaluations of how they did on the teamwork activity	2
that's cool that works well too er	performance on teamwork activity	5
er because you already work well as a group i did i thought that you were quite impressive as a group	performance on teamwork activity	21
and everybody carried on planning which was quite quite good so the reaction is easiest is pleased	performance on teamwork activity	5
		46
<i>Chemistry (Blindfold numbers)</i>		
Main activity: <u>game</u>		
Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
alright pretty good and what's your number	performance on team-building activity	2
but it's it's often very difficult to achieve all the objectives but you can feel good about	performance on team-building activity	13

having got some of the way there		
: that's right that was quite good and i thought in your plan you realised that there could be a zero that's something that not many people realise you realised there could be high numbers okay	performance on team-building activity	13
i thought your plan was fantastic completely different	performance on team-building activity	6
-, that's really good that's the thing with good things if they happen the team tend to make them make things work okay what was bad sorry what could we have done better	performance on team-building activity	21
yeah you were well on the way to a good plan and you ach-, you were well on the way to achieving your objectives	performance on team-building activity	20
er its coming great so far	performance on team-building activity	5
again i think the one thing you did much better this time was actually assimilate the information okay so you had things you had realised that the numbers were not necessarily going to be one to six and	performance on team-building activity	36

that's interesting that's what we talked about in the first task about assuming things then but you you were accurate and that had come from assimilating the information	performance on team- building activity	11
if you feel like you're not contributing other people think you're contributing but you obviously	performance on team- building activity	5
that that's really good so er i'm very impressed with both of those er so so well done on	ending class	12
144		
Chemistry (Toxic waste)		
Main activity: <u>game</u>		

Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
i thought it was a very brave and elegant attempt yeah and you were really close it could've worked right it could've worked yeah yeah	performance on team-building activity	25
thought that that watching you that the team plan planning and everything it was it was impressive to	performance on team-building activity	21

watch actually but anyway		
i thought it was brilliant you were reviewing all the time that's what's going wrong an-, and changing the plan an-, and going absolutely you were really really good yeah that was really positive any any other particular positive aspects	performance on team-building activity	14
you were working as a team	performance on team-building activity	6
yes that's that's really true	students' self evaluation of performance on team-building activity	4
er any other comments on on that i genuinely it was really really good to watch and it was a really elegant solution and i wish it had worked but it was great and your planning and review and everything was just was was exemplary very good very good indeed	performance on team-building activity	16 21
were still you were already thinking about how about how you were working together and	performance on team-building activity	26

that's more important than actually getting the contents of a bucket		
well thankyou very much Laura okay who else excellent thank you very much has anyone got any comments or questions for group one and two great i think it was really clear that's why you don't have any questions and i agree with everything you said i think okay er group have we got a group two	students' self-evaluation	14
yeah we do excellent group three is it in there somewhere	students' self-evaluation	1
		149

Hard Applied Subjects

Engineering (Q & A)

Main activity: questions and answers

Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
right it's a low valued crop er and its	answer to T's Q	1
its two-hundred metres right	answer to T's Q	1
: yes i suppose so perhaps you don't put a valve on the bottom that can be closed too fast which would create shock waves over ten kilometres actually that's quite long isn't it [coughs]	answer to T's Q—seems to be understating for comic effect—repeats exactly what the student has said	4
you need that yes right	answer to T's Q	1
right		1
right		1
right		1
		10

Statistics (Introduction to Health Service)

Main activity: computer practice with SPSS

Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
that right just always one always one always one	?? student's utterance not transcribed, suggestion by student?	
great what's up with namex	student's assertion that s/he is "fine"	1
okay great how you getting Ben Richard okay great Farah	no student input? inaudible? T. may be looking at Ss'	3

good	computers	
i am sorry Ben that's great exactly right so that so	student's question	4
exactly right exactly right we'll	no idea	4
that's good that's great that's	??looking at Ss' computers	4
good for you that's great its little bit of mind- boggling at times but it's er	student is "fine"	5
your change worked did it that's fine	looking at computer screen?	2
okay that's great fine that's good	Ss telling T what they are doing	5
that's okay you can do it you can do it alright	T explaining how to fix a problem	9
		37
Engineering (Project meeting)		
Main activity: <u>faculty evaluating Ss' planned project</u>		
Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
it sounds it sounds fine from my point of view	Ss telling Ts about report which is part of their project	10
yes sounds sounds okay	same as above	4
no actually that's a good point	not clear. discussion of how to do project, student's contribution	6
that's great	student reports s/he "got it working last night"—but this could be commiseration	2
that's a good idea	discussion of how to do project	4
		26

<i>Meteorology(observing clouds from the ground)</i>		
Main activity: <u>lecture</u>		
No student talk		
<i>LWMS (Trauma)</i>		
Main activity: <u>presentation +questions from teacher</u>		
Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
yeah so you've heard his presentation it was extremely interesting comprehensive	student presentation	5
smoking that's not one i know about it could be makes sense maybe	answer to T's Q	6
yeah i don't know that's interesting anyone got any information about that no i'd like to know that's interesting okay	answer to T's Q	4
okay someone's got it compound that's what i'm getting at yes	answer to T's Q	10
: right on either end of the long bones yes er and	answer to T's Q	1
that's brilliant okay have a seat	student's anatomy drawing	2
good and what about the one that	drawing also?	1
you're absolutely right	answer to T's Q	3
right so that's a that's a sort of big word really	answer to T's Q	1
yeah that's a good description	S's answer to another S's question	4

now that's exactly what he won't be able to do	answer to T's Q (this is basically repetition, but boosted)	8
good onto the floor and	answer to T's Q	1
costs very good trauma is probably the most expensive health	answer to T's Q	2
		48
Primary care and general practice (consultation skills)		
Main activity: <u>presentations + questions from teacher</u>		
Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
i thought it was absolutely fascinating you've raised such an important subject	discussion contribution	12
you have you have touched on a very serious issue	discussion contribution	10
		22
LWMS (pre-op assessment)		
Main activity: <u>presentations + questions from teacher</u>		
Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
yeah go on give them a clap	student presentation	4
okay well done thank you the pre-operative assessment that was excellent of a patient	same as above	5
well thanks very much guys that was an excellent presentation well done	student presentation	7
acute circulatory failure not bad	answer to T's Q	2

yeah there are lots of actual definitions thank you that was well done	answer to T's Q	4
er not quite no good effort septic yeah	answer to T's Q	2
neurogenic fantastic	answer to T's Q	1
excellent	answer to T's Q	1
Little's Area excellent	answer to T's Q	1
nasal excellent	answer to T's Q	1
yes that's it heat and moisture exchange	answer to T's Q	3
rate yes absolutely	answer to T's Q	2
nearly there nice one well that's good effort	answer to T's Q	8
yeah yeah yeah right i would like to thank the medical students who presented you did two excellent presentations thank you very much	answer to T's Q	5
		46
<i>LWMS (Bone and joint infection)</i>		
Main activity: <u>presentations +questions from teacher</u>		
Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
right you've used all the right words i'm not sure in the right order	??? inaudible/not transcribed	14
		14
<i>LWMS (polyarthritis)</i>		
Main activity: <u>presentations +questions from teacher</u>		
Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
it's a reasonable reasonable it's a	(???) previous utterance not	21

reasonable thing to ask for that's a good it's a g-, good thing to suggest	transcribed	
yes i mean that that's a reasonable thing to consider with a CRP of sixty	T's Q	10
alcohol brilliant who said alcohol very good	T's Q	3
absolutely most people say do an x-ray so here's a normal x-ray er mostly useless in acute monoarthropathy and absolutely right you'd aspirate the joint	previous utterance not transcribed	3
		37
<i>LWMS (Hematological malignancy)</i>		
Main activity: <u>presentations+questions from teacher</u>		
Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
we've got some er very good er talks that er some of your colleagues have prepared	presentation (before the fact)	16
seven to ten days good okay	answer to T's Q	2
well er you're right some er patients	students question	2
right okay so portal hypertension	T's Q answer	1
		21
<i>LWMS (anemias)</i>		
Main activity: <u>presentations + questions from teacher</u>		
Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
parietal cells good that's excellent somebody's awake	answer to T's Q	8

and alive good er s		
terminal ileum excellent good	answer to T's Q	2
: a schilling test right excellent	answer to T's Q	2
it is good excellent	answer to T's Q (?untranscribed, but seems clear from context)	2
yes well certainly if you've had any surgery to the terminal ileum that would certainly put you at risk and what other surgery a	answer to T's Q	18
good effort but er nil points	answer to T's Q (incorrect)	2
i'd like to thank all our speakers er who've all given us a very good talk	ending class, not directly after the presentations	16
		50
LWMS (heart failure)		
Main activity: <u>presentations + questions from teacher</u>		
Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
yes i think that's one of the best ones right	seems to be an answer to T's question, but inaudible. "One of the best ones" refers to a symptom	9
that's right it's hardening	answer to T's Q	2
well done no never the heart muscle cells do not duplicate	answer to T's Q	2
yes very good low birth weight	answer to T's Q	3
yes i'm sure it does yeah yeah yeah	answer to T's Q (context doesn't seem to be opinion question)	4
right no M-I good	answer to T's Q	2

that's an interesting one but i think that comes later	answer to T's Q	4
: Heberden well done and	answer to T's Q	2
: kidney right	answer to T's Q	1
		29
LWMS (continual assessment)		
Main activity: <u>meeting clarifying procedural changes</u>		
no praise		
Economic (Industrial Economic Analysis)		
<u>discussion</u>		
Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
that's er yeah i guess that's that's right although i mean you might i mean you might there are obviously examples of competition	discussion contribution	8
right yeah i mean er well i guess it's certainly clearly a a question of market definition	discussion contribution-	17
you i i think otherwise th-, the point you made the points you made about contestable markets were good	discussion contribution (presentation?)	13
think you're right to point out the problems	as above	9
yes no i i er er your your argument's right i think but but but you've come to the a differ-,	discussion contribution/presentation	5

different conclusion yes so		
yeah i think i think the reasoning you've got here is right actually er this this is what i i had expected	discussion contribution/presentation	9
that's that's a really interesting idea actually isn't it	discussion contribution	6
that's a really interesting comparison	discussion contribution	5
think i think actually you were very sensible to look at it in this way	discussion contribution	7

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Soft Applied Subjects

Centre for English language teacher education (Using videotapes in ELT)

Main activity: game or similar activity + discussion

Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
no i mean i like the idea yeah it's an invasion by another genre isn't	students are suggesting a scene	7
well okay well done	same as above—right before ending the activity	3
i'm going to give that three points i think that's quite a good one three points for the Jumping Bananas	suggestion for the sort of game thingy	7
well i mean i	ending the activity	14

thought your answers were pretty good considering er the difficulty of that i		
		31
<i>Education (teaching stories)</i>		
Main activity: <u>discussion</u>		
Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
that's right you've got to be more direct	discussion contribution	2
right it's got to it's got to have a sort of integrity	discussion contribution (praise?)	1
well there's a good question how short is a short story what do you think	discussion contribution	4
oh that's right so it's it's as though he is play acting	discussion contribution	2
yes yes that's right look how economically it's done there and	discussion contribution	2
yes that's right and again look just a sentence	discussion contribution	2
that's right	discussion contribution	2
lovely and again it's picking up	contribution to activity (making/finishing a story)	1
that's a super analysis there well done that table er the things you could do with the children	discussion contribution	7
that's an interesting one and i this short story doesn't actually	discussion contribution?	4
		27

<i>Law (Criminal law)</i>		
Main activity: <u>discussion</u>		
Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
mm thanks James that's a great point er one thing about	discussion contribution	4
well er i mean that's an argument although it is slightly odd isn't to base criminal liability on a duty	discussion contribution	5
that's right	discussion contribution	2
good okay a coup	discussion contribution	1
mm yeah well that's the way Stephanie's suggested and its i think its its almost the natural way of doing it i think Laura's way er is probably the better way	discussion contributions	19
okay le-, let's cut through this we're having great arguments for the defence and the prosecution here and these are exactly the sorts of arguments that we'd hear in court in this case but of course when we're doing the problem our job is to play the role of the judge	discussion contributions	27
yes that's right so so the manslaughter	discussion contribution	2
that's right yes er	discussion contribution	2
ah very good has he	discussion	2

coer itted (sic)	contribution	
well good the case is Bainbridge the	discussion contribution	1
good yeah it doesn't matter if he's indifferent	discussion contribution	1
good yeah and what does advertent recklessness	discussion contribution	1
good okay we have a time framing problem here	discussion contribution	1
good yes well we've looked at sources end	discussion contribution	1
yes good point	discussion contribution	2
that's right started the fire accidentally	discussion contribution	2
he can't can he you're right the law is uncertain in this area	discussion contribution	2
		75

Psychology (territoriality and sexual behaviors)

Main activity: discussion (+game?)

Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
territory good for you	in the context of game, student's choosing "territory" over "sex"	3
i mean you're right if you	discussion contribution	4
that's a good point as well	discussion contribution	6
that is a good point there	discussion contribution	4
that's a good point er are	discussion contribution	4
well that's i mean that's a good that's a good point again	discussion contribution	12
well there's a good	discussion	8

point made there about	contribution	
right yeah that's a good point humans	discussion contribution	4
well perhaps you're right perhaps	discussion contribution	3
good yeah go on	discussion contribution	4
that's a good point actually	discussion contribution	5
that's a good i mean that's a good point a	discussion contribution	9
		66

Social policy and social work (unemployment and health)

Main activity: discussion

Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
right so that's a good so let's follow that example through because that's actually a good one	discussion contribution	14

Manufacturing (production simulation)

Main activity: unknown

Words of praise	situation	number of words used in praise
that's it alright very nice so everybody	segue—some sort of classroom activity	2

Biology

Biology (student presentations)

Main activity: presentations

No praise found

Appendix C: Semantic Analyses

Appendix C -1 Adjectives found in adjectival praise and the nouns they modify(number of occurrences)	
accurate	
awake	
alive	
(not) bad (3)	answer asumption
best	ones
better	way
brave	attempt
brilliant (4)	
clear (2)	position
cool	
elegant (2)	attempt solution
excellent (14)	presentation(s) 2
exemplary (1)	plan
fascinating (2)	idea
fine (4)	
fruitful	area
genius	
good (104)	answer (2) piece of work talk job (3) example suggestion question (2) one point (12) thing description idea poetic sort of appendix plan effort (2) start form
great (11)	point arguments

important (4)	subject (2)
impressive (5)	
interesting (18)	question (20) idea question comparison point one (2)
lovely	
natural	way of doing it
nice (2)	one
OK	
positive	
right (80)	things words track (“You’re on the right track”)
sensible (3)	
significant (2)	analysis
strong	ones
super (2)	
true (4)	
adjectival praise: 280 33 different adjectives used	

Appendix C-2 Verbs used in verbal praise

impress (6)
like (2)
be pleased (2)
verbal praise: 10 3 different verbs used

Appendix C-3: Adverbs used in adverbial praise, with the nouns they modify

well (12)	voiced
clearly	voiced
outstanding	done
great	coming
eloquently	
adverbial praise 22 5 different adverbs used	

Appendix D: Syntactic Patterns

INTENS
absolutely (5)
total: 5

(INTENS)	(ADJ)
	brilliant (2)
	excellent (9)
	fine
	good (29)
	great
	interesting
	lovely
	not bad
	right (25)
	true
very	good (12)
very	genius
very	interesting (5)
absolutely	right (2)
pretty	good
very	sensible
very	nice
total: 99	

(INTENS)	ADV
well	done (10)
total: 10	

ADJ	NP
fascinating	idea
good	point
good	effort
good	point
nice	one
good	start
total: 6	

DET	(INTENS)	ADJ	NP
two	very	strong	ones
lots of		right	things in there
total: 2			

(I	think)	NP	COP	(INTENS)	ADJ
(i	think)	your argument	s		right
i	think	it	s		good,
i	think	that	s		right (4)
		that	was		excellent
i	think	that	s		true
i	think	that	s	exactly	right
i	think	that	s	quite	right
i	think	it	was	really	clear
i	think	it	represents	a very	good
i	think	you	were	very	sensible
i	think	that	s	quite	a good
i	think	kathleen's point	is	really	important
I	think	the example you've showed	is	very	significant
i	think	the reasoning you've got here	is		right
i	thought	it	was	absolutely	fascinating
i	thought	your answers	were	pretty	good
i	thought	it	was		brilliant
i	thought				impressive as a
	that	you	were	quite	group
i	thought	watching the team planning and			
	that	everything	was	very	impressive
I	think	you	were		right
I	thought	that	was	very	impressive
I	thought	your plan	was		fantastic
i	think	you	re	on the right track	
		it	was		impressive
		it	s		interesting
		it	was		great
		that	s		brilliant
		that	s		cool
		that	s		excellent (2)
		that	s		fine (2)
		that	s		good (5)
		that	s		great (5)
		that	s		interesting (2)
		that	s		lovely wonderful
		that	s		right (29)
		that	s		true
		they	are		super
					interesting,
		it	was	extemely	comprehensive
		it	sounds	fine	
		that	was	quite	good
		that	s	really	good (2)
		it	was	really	good to watch

	that	was	very	good
	that	s	very	good (2)
	that	s	very	interesting
	that	was	really	positive
	that	s	absolutely	right (2)
	that	seems	all	right
	that	s	probably	right
	that	s	absolutely	true
	that	was	quite	impressive
	that	would seem	very	sensible
	which	was	quite quite	good
	which	is	really	good
	which	was	very	good
	you	were	really	close
	you	re	absolutely	right
	you		quite	right
	you	re		right (2)
	you	were	accurate	
	you	re	right	
	you	were	really really	good
		sounds		okay
	somebody	s		awake and alive
	your planning and review and everything	was		exemplary
	the examples you've just quoted	are	very	significant
	the points you made about contestable markets	were		good
	total: 113			

(I	think)	NP	COP	(DET)	(INTENS	ADJ	NP
		that	s			good	effort
		that	s	an		interesting	one
		that	s	a		good	answer
		it	s not	a		bad	answer
		that	is	a		good	suggestion
		that	s	a		good	question
		there	s	a		good	question
		that	s	a		good	one
		that	s	an		interesting	one
		it	s	a		good	point
		that	s	a		good	point (8)
		there	s	a		good	point
		that	s	a		good	thing to suggest
		that	s	a	very	interesting	point
		that	s	a		good	description
		that	s	a		great	point
		that	was	an		excellent	presentation
		it	s	a	(quite)	good	answer
		it	was	a	really	elegant	solution
		that	s	a		good	idea
		that	s	a	pretty	good	piece of work
		that	s	a	really	interesting	idea
		that	s	a	really	interesting	comparison
		that	s	a		super	analysis
		that	s	a	very	interesting	queston
				a	really	clear	position
		it	s	a		good	poetic
i	think	that	s	one of the		best	ones
i	think	laura's way	is	the		better	way
i	think	this	has been	a	very	fruitful	area
		innoculation	would be	a	very	good	example of that
i	think	that	s	a		good	point
		total: 40					

(I	think)	NP	VP	(DET)	(INTENS)	ADJ	(NP)
		you	ve done	a		good	
		you	did	a		good	sort of appendix
		you	ve raised	such an		important	subject
		you	haved touched	a	very	important	subject
		you	did	two		excellent	presentations
		who	ve given us	a	very	good	talk
		you	were well on the way to	a		good	plan
		you	ve used	all the		right	words
		we	re having			great	arguments
i	thought	it	was	a	very	brave and elegant	attempt
i	thought	both sides	did	a	very	good	job
i	thought	you both	had			good good	form to your presentation
i	think	you	did	a	very	good	job
I	thought	you	did	a		good	job (2)
i	thought	you	did	a	very	good	job
i	think	what you're pointing to	is	an		interesting	question
		total:19					

I	(INTENS)	LIKE	(NP)
i		like	that bit
i	'm very	impressed	by all your poetics
i		m impressed	by the word respect turning up
i	"m very	impressed	
i		was impressed	by your structure
i		like	the idea
i		was impressed	by that
i	"m very	pleased	with your results
we	should feel	quite pleased	with the way these arguments went
i	was impressed	by that	
	total:10		

(I	think)	NP	VP	ADV	
		you	voiced it there	very well	clearly
		you	have it		
		some of you	have done	simply outstanding	
		almost everyone	has done	very well	
		someone	s got it		
		that	was (done)		(well)
		that	works		well
		you	works		well
		it	s coming		great so far
I	think	you	did	very	well
					eloquently
I	think	the one thing	you did	well	
I	thought	the one thing	you did	much better	
		total: 13			

Others:

You were well on your way to achieving your objectives

Other people think you are contributing

You were working as a team

I'd be interested to hear from Miriam because she actually thought she was in the wrong group and then actually seemed to become to grow into the role nearly there

that's something that not many people realize

that's the thing with good things if they happen the team tend to make them happen

you had realized the numbers were not necessarily going to be one to six

you were still you were already thinking about how you were working together and that's more important than actually getting the contents of a bucket

two very wide-ranging presentations of the following material

well er I mean that's an argument

it's almost the natural way of doing it

these are exactly the sorts of arguments that we'd hear in court.

hold on to those

go on, give them a clap

Appendix E: List of classes, main disciplinary areas, and main activity

name of class	name of course	BASE category	disciplinary area*	activity
Black British writing	British and comparative cultural studies	AH	SP	Guest speaker
Greek and Roman Coins	Classics and ancient history	AH	SP	Guest speaker
The Cuban Revolution	Comparative American Studies	AH	SP	group presentations + discussion
Modes of writing:Poetics	English and comparative literary studies	AH	SP	poetry activity + group discussion
Textual Studies:Nietzsche	English and philosophy	AH	SP	group discussion
Beauty and The Thin Red Line	Film and television studies	AH	SP	group discussion
Institutional critique	Art History	AH	SP	group discussion
The medical marketplace	History	AH	SP	presentations + discussion
Analysis exercise: Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence	Japanese studies	AH	SP	presentations + discussion
Arts' sponsorship seminar	Theatre Studies	AH	SP	discussion
Not analyzed: Third-year student presentations	Biology	LS	Biology	presentations
Trauma	LWMS	LS	HA	presentations + discussion
Consultation skills research	Primary Care and General Practice	LS	HA	guest speakers + discussion
pre-operative assessment: shock	LWMS	LS	HA	student presentations+ discussion
Bone and joint infection, chronic painful hip, low back pain	LWMS	LS	HA	student presentations + discussion
Polyarthritis	LWMS	LS	HA	student presentations +

				discussion
Haematological malignancy	LWMS	LS	HA	student presentations + discussion
Anaemias, purpura and Venous thrombosis	LWMS	LS	HA	teacher presentation + student presentation + discussion
Heart failure, hypertension	LWMS	LS	HA	student presentations + discussion
Continual assessment for the critical methods course	LWMS	SL	HA	teacher presentations + discussion
not analyzed: Radiation and photochemistry	Chemistry	PS	HP	review for test with prepared questions
not analyzed: Pipeline	Chemistry	PS	HP	cooperation gameno
not analyzed: Blindfold numbers	Chemistry	PS	HP	cooperation game
not analyzed: Toxic Waste	Chemistry	PS	HP	cooperation game
Q & A	Engineering	PS	HA	review with prepared questions
Introduction to Health Service	Statistics	PS	HA	students practicing with SPSS
M. Engineering project meeting	Engineering	PS	HA	students present project and get feedback from instructors
Preparing a literature review	English and comparative literary studies	PS	SP	going over student writing in class
Not transcribed: Current weather	Meteorology	PS	HP	(unknown)
Observing clouds from space and the ground	Meteorology	PS	HP	lecture
Using video tapes in ELT	Centre for English Language Education	SS	SA	discussion
Gender and Globalisation	Centre for the study of women and gender	SS	SA	discussion
Industrial	Economics	SS	SA	presentations +

economic analysis				discussion
Curriculum studies: teaching short stories at key stage 2	Education	SS	SA	discussion
Globalisation and the environment	Globalisation and regionalisation	SS	SA	discussion
Criminal law: accomplice liability	Law	SS	SA	discussion
“built in” social behaviours in territoriality and sexual behaviours	Psychology	SS	SA	discussion
Contemporary Health Issues: Unemployment and Health	Social policy and social work	SS	SA	discussion
production simulation	manufacturing	SS	SA	discussion
Japan and the Gulf War Crisis	East Asian studies	SS	SP	discussion

*AH= Arts and humanities

LS= Life and Medical Sciences

PS= Physical Sciences

SS= Social Sciences

**SP= soft pure

HP= hard pure

HA=hard applied

SA=soft applied