# "LIKE DANCERS FOLLOWING EACH OTHER'S STEPS": AN ANALYSIS OF LEXICAL CUES IN STUDENT WRITING FOR DIFFERING AUDIENCES

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by

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled

"LIKE DANCERS FOLLOWING EACH OTHER'S STEPS":
AN ANALYSIS OF LEXICAL CUES IN STUDENT WRITING
FOR DIFFERING AUDIENCES

presented by Sharon Robideaux, a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,

and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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Dr. Roy F. Fox

# DEDICATION

This work would not have been possible had it not been for the unflagging support of my family. I especially am grateful to my husband, Douglas Robideaux, for all the fast-food runs, all the proofreading, all the patient explanations of statistics, and all the gentle nagging. I also wish to acknowledge the contributions of my sons Stephen and Daniel and my daughters-in-law Heather and Wendy. Thank you for believing that Mama could do it. Thank you for not being angry about the visits I've had to miss with you all.

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## ABSTRACT

This empirical study examines the role of lexical priming in first-year college student writers' abilities to consider multiple audiences. The writing topic assigned to all 165 students is identical except for the audience for whom the students were directed to write. One-third of the students were directed to write a persuasive letter to an authority figure about the topic; one-third were directed to write a persuasive letter to a close friend about the topic; and one-third were not given an audience assignment, but were instructed to write a persuasive essay about the topic. Their responses were analyzed for evidence of Audience-Sensitivity Traits and further analyzed for evidence of lexical priming, i.e., phonological strings composed of collocation and colligation-related sets that can indicate awareness of audience.

Results suggest that student writers are generally able to consider and write to their audiences in appropriate ways. In the letters to the authority figure, student writers use more requests and citations and quotations than their counterparts use in the letters to their close friends. However, students writing to the authority figure rank lowest in their uses of reasoning and logic and of appeals for inclusiveness and empathy. Students writing letters to close friends on the same topic rank highest of all three groups in the writers' textual interactions with readers, such as directly addressing their readers and referring to specific reader traits. Writers of Close-Friend letters also rank highest in language that expresses positive thought and positive emotional affect. The essays (no audience assigned) rank highest in reasoning and logic and use of public commonplaces and lowest in textual interactions with readers. These results confirm hypotheses regarding audience intimacy behavior such as those proposed by Vincent Puma, who has

argued that writers alter the intimacy levels of their writing in rough approximation to speaking or writing stances.

Although some specific variables yielded inconclusive results, overall, it can be concluded that student writers effectively “primed” their readers to read as the writers directed, that they effectively used lexical priming and audience-sensitivity indicators to write within assigned genres, and that most of the writers did not display overt egocentrism. Further, this study furnishes evidence of the usefulness of computerized text-tagging software to aid the rhetorician in textual analysis, even as it exposes some problems with such software.

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Basic to the teaching of writing is understanding the relationship among writer, text, and reader/audience. However, defining and understanding "audience" is no easier today than it was when Plato told Phaedrus that a hearing audience was to be preferred over a reader of written words (*Phaedrus,* 276, trans. Hamilton); or when Aristotle delineated in Book II of *Rhetoric* a list of the "various types of human character," a list that has inspired theories of audience throughout the millennia (12, trans. Roberts). Further complicating a simple definition of audience was the "social turn" in the second half of the twentieth century. Is the audience a reader, a hearer, an entire discourse community, an activity system, or a genre system—and, if one of the latter terms, is it possible to distinguish the writer and the text from the larger social system?

While older theories of writing may have understated social variables and overstated the independence of textual structures, some contemporary social theories of writing may do just the opposite. Needed in the early twenty-first century is a socially sensitive theory of writing that does not overlook textual features as a legitimate unit of analysis. Needed, in particular, is a socially sensitive theory that can describe the particular ways in which writers use text to cue audiences.

The issue has not gone unaddressed. While North American genre theorists might insist that we cannot ascertain meaning by looking at written texts alone, genre theorists from the Australian, or Sydney School, might suggest that the text does provide ample evidence of the meaning(s) the writer intends, the writer's plans for his or her readers' interpretation(s) of the text, and the meaning(s) readers themselves bring to the text.

In this study, I argue that we can analyze texts, using methods derived from M. A. K. Halliday's systemic functional linguistics, and draw some conclusions about the ways in which college writers use text to cue their audiences. While this study describes a body of textual features, the study has implications for the learning and teaching of writing, as well. In making my case, I may be accused of sharing an affinity with the Sydney School of genre theorists (i.e., theorists in the Australian system-functional school of genre theory), "that meaning is carried in the text structure and that individual language users construct reality through discursive structures" (Coe and Freedman 140). Unlike the proponents of the Sydney School, however, I believe, as well,

> that students need to understand writing as social action, as situated and strategic, and as occurring in significantly different discourses and genres. This assumption challenges the notion that there is any such universal thing as "good writing" except in relation to particular situations and contexts. . . . (Coe and Freedman 143)

With the assistance of computerized textual-tagging software whose development was heavily influenced by Halliday's functional sentence perspective, I show that student writers select textual features that provide clues to meaning, clues that their readers adequately decipher. The theoretical basis for this work is **lexical priming,** a theory largely based upon analysis of word clusters called collocation and colligation.

Collocation is a collection of words that co-occur more frequently than would be expected by chance. For example, we might find the words *inevitable* and *consequence* occurring frequently together. A colligation is a special type of a collocation; it is a group of words that link a particular lexical term with a particular grammatical one. In one study, for instance, the word *consequence* occurs within the studied corpus as head of its nominal group 98 percent of the time (Hoey, *Lexical Priming* 49). As an example, in the

sentence “A *consequence* of the fires is that pressure throughout the field will fall,” the word *consequence* is the head of its nominal group (48). However, the word *consequence* almost never appears to be used as a premodifier of a nominal group. In the study referred to, *consequence* is used as a premodifier in only one instance in the studied corpus—0.06 percent (49). That use appears to be specifically related to a profession’s jargon: “. . . and *consequence* modelling and risk estimates and risk contours can be produced” (48).

Researchers Michael Hoey and David Kaufer utilize the concept of collocation to account for lexical priming. In fact, Hoey’s theory of lexical priming originated as a way “to account for collocation” and for its “pervasiveness” (*Lexical Priming,* 1). Kaufer writes, “Coherence collocation indicates an empirical co-occurrence relation between words (e.g., *stamp + on the notarized letter)*” (*The Power of Words,* 23). Kaufer explains collocation’s relevance to his priming theory in this fashion: “Words in use prime an audience’s experience and different words prime different experiences” (*The Power of Words*, xvii).

I use the computerized textual-tagging software to show how “lexical strings” are abundantly employed by student writers to “prime” designated audiences to read their texts in specific ways. By my using the textual-tagging software to code verbal data, this study contributes to composition research, in part by using empirical tools that are applicable to a social view of writing.

In an analysis of 165 writing samples composed by first-year composition students at the University of Missouri in Winter Semester 2001, this research addresses a number of problems concerned with writers’ abilities to write for their audiences. This

study employs a linguistics- and rhetorical-based approach to discourse analysis, using both qualitative methodology and text-tagging software[1]. This study does not assume that students are inherently egocentric, incapable of adequately imagining and addressing a specified audience, as some of the cognitive studies of writing suggested in the 1980s. This research describes the textual cues and conventions that student writers use, sometimes quite effectively, to prime a variety of audiences. Arguably, college freshmen are aware of the potential to use text to prime multiple and complex audiences.

If, as some social theorists maintain, student are socially constructed, then students may acquire a good deal of textual sophistication simply by living in a particular culture. Arguably, most college freshmen have some sense that writing does not occur in a vacuum, and that different textual strategies are appropriate for different audiences. Instead of describing the degree to which students fail to meet the conventional expectations of the audiences named in their writing prompts, it seems fruitful to describe the degree to which students use textual cues effectively to appeal to particular audiences.

Thus, among the questions addressed in this research is this essential question: **Given the textual evidence exhibited in their writing, how have student writers "primed" or "cued" their audience(s)?** Results of the study indicate that student writers do indeed utilize specific conventions and cues—lexical priming strings—that directly address varying conceptions of audience. However, seldom does a student writer maintain a clear address to only one audience (self or other). Instead of being a problem, this may suggest that student writers are aware at some level that audience is multilayered, multiple, and complex, and that their audience is at once themselves, as

[1] DocuScope® developed by David Kaufer and others associated with Carnegie Mellon University's English Department. Used by licensed agreement with copyright holder Carnegie Mellon University.

well as others: teachers, classmates, and authority figures, all of them simultaneously real, fictionalized, and socially constructed.

The real problem, in fact, is not that student writers cannot "consider their audiences"; the problem is that so many audiences are simultaneously multipresent that student writers must learn to focus attention, via using cues and conventions that prime the readers, only upon the audiences that are most relevant for each rhetorical situation, and to "close their eyes" to others. In turn, teachers of composition must become cognizant of the many audiences always already present to student writers, and must help student writers learn to select the best strategies—including cues, conventions, and primings—for analyzing and addressing those audiences.

According to some social theorists, our students have spent their entire lives being "written by" their language and cultures, suggesting that no one has to tell students that the audience is important. Even when students fail to address a given audience effectively in the first draft of writing, many students can revise the text and address the audience more effectively in a second draft. This may happen more often than we are willing to admit, given our "gate-keeping" functions.

Not surprisingly, this study does uncover some "miscues," or "missed primings," points in the text in which the writer seems to address an audience inappropriately—for example, writers who address the close friend designated in their prompt as "To Whom It May Concern"—but in this study, those instances are comparatively rare. Of course, there are instances of vague antecedents. But this study documents many, many other instances in which a given writer demonstrates an awareness that her audience may not know to what or whom she refers, by providing appropriate antecedents.

In this study, I argue, via computer-aided textual analysis, that student writers are aware of audience, use appropriate conventions that indicate such awareness, and, in general, understand how to cue—or *prime*—their readers in ways that facilitate readers' understanding. The theoretical basis upon which this research rests is that of lexical priming, a theory attributable in part to Michael Hoey (2005) and, using different terminology, to David S. Kaufer, et al. (2004). Essentially, Hoey studies the ways in which words "interact with other words in common patterns of use" (Hoey, *Lexical Priming*, back cover). Kaufer and his co-authors, Suguru Ishizaki, Brian Butler, and Jeff Collins[2], write that "we use priming in its vernacular sense to describe a speaker or writer's implicit knowledge relating strings of English and ways of predisposing audience experience through language" (*The Power of Words,* xvii).

Thus, this study asks for a description of the ways in which a particular group of college students use textual cues to prime one of three imagined audiences. Related questions are the following:

- Are student writers able to use conventional textual cues that offer direction as they write and read?
- Are both writers and readers "primed" to expect words and phrases to appear together because of regularly occurring use?
- Can we link particular patterns of lexical priming with texts addressing particular audiences?

If indeed we answer the above affirmatively, then we may wish to reevaluate the composition/writing classroom. For many years, the call for greater attention to writing conventions (be they academic or other) has been debated; however, for the last several

[2] David S. Kaufer is the primary author in a number of texts that use and explain the theory of "word strings" (Hoey's "lexical priming"). For the sake of readability, I will introduce his co-authors for various sources the first time each work is cited; afterwards, I will simply refer to Kaufer and the book or article title.

years, the call has been merely a whisper, drowned out by other concerns, such as cultural criticism. With this research, I argue for more attention to the textual conventions of writing, for three reasons:

1. Because they are socially constructed members of discourse communities with already applicable Common Knowledge, student writers already know many of the conventions of academic writing. To teach other conventions is a matter of building on what they already know.

2. Just as writing classrooms based upon reading literature, or writing classrooms based upon grammar drills, mean less time for actual writing, writing classrooms that are other than student-text-centered may mean less time for actual writing.

3. The problematical construct of Teacher as Audience can be partially solved by admitting the teacher as one of the many multiples into which audience can be constituted. When a teacher, as an experienced member of an academic discourse community, introduces her students to academic conventions and assists them in using conventions they already have partially mastered, she is showing her students how "the surface language used to prime audiences" is part of the "contextual, historical, and ideological frames of interpretation" (Kaufer *The Power of Words*, 10).

Finally, at the heart of most discussions of audience is the genuine human need to understand and to be understood—to communicate. As we now know, communication means much more than a simple encoding, transmission, and decoding of linguistic symbols. Perhaps we are written by language as much as we write it. Perhaps our cultures and discourse communities and their inherent conventions prescribe what will "work" and what will not and thereby influence what we do when we write. However, writers may exercise some choices about the textual resources available to them to appeal to particular audiences. Textual and discourse analysis may help to provide a methodology by which the connections between writer, text, and reader can be examined.

The next chapter, a brief review of relevant literature on audience, will also address the flaws inherent in a cognitive development perspective. It further examines the Audience Addressed/Audience Invoked debate, which leads to an examination of the concept of multiple audiences. The argument established by Elbow for ignoring audience is countered, and the teacher-as-audience problem is explained. The influence of social constructionism on audience is delineated, the chapter culminating with a brief discussion of discourse community and other terms by which audience has been known and discussed. The purpose for this review of audience is to establish that no one prior theory of audience has "solved the problem," as it were, and that a theory of audience bereft of examination of the cues and conventions shared between writer and reader via text cannot be comprehensive.

# CHAPTER TWO: AUDIENCE LITERATURE REVIEW

> An "awareness of an audience," wrote Albert Kitzhaber in his influential 1953 dissertation, *Rhetoric in American Colleges, 1850-1900*, "keeps rhetoric functional and vital" (141).

The history of the study of audience is fascinating and well-documented. Most readers are aware of Plato's and Aristotle's contributions, as well as those of Cicero and Quintilian, and those who seek to know more will find excellent scholarship in standards such as Bizzell and Herzberg's *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*; Covino and Jolliffe's *Rhetoric: Concepts, Definitions, Boundaries*; Corbett and Connors' *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student;* Porter's *Audience and Rhetoric;* Reiff's *Approaches to Audience;* and Kirsch and Roen's *A Sense of Audience in Written Communication,* and many others. (See Works Cited for suggested reading.) For more information regarding classical rhetoric's effects on American rhetorical tradition, there are Kitzhaber's *Rhetoric in American Colleges*, Berlin's *Writing Instruction in Nineteenth-Century American Colleges*, and Johnson's *Nineteenth-Century Rhetoric in North America,* among others.

Information about audience in the twentieth century is abundant in Crowley's *Composition in the University;* and Bloom, Daiker, and White's *Composition in the Twenty-First Century: Crisis and Change* and their more recent *Composition Studies in the New Millenium.* Additionally, a torrent of studies on audience in the 1970s and 1980s provided such seminal essays as Bartholomae's "Inventing the University"; Berkenkotter's "Understanding a Writer's Awareness of Audience"; Ede's "Audience: An Introduction to Research" and "On Audience and Composition"; Ede and Lunsford's "Audience Addressed/Audience Invoked: The Role of Audience in Composition

Pedagogy"; Elbow's "Closing My Eyes As I Speak: An Argument for Ignoring Audience"; Flower's "Writer-Based Prose"; Kroll's "Writing for Readers: Three Perspectives on Audience"; Long's "Writer-Audience Relationships: Analysis or Invention?"; Mitchell and Taylor's "The Integrating Perspective: An Audience-Response Model for Writing"; Ong's "The Writer's Audience Is Always a Fiction"; Park's "The Meanings of `Audience'"; Pfister and Petrick's "A Heuristic Model for Creating a Writer's Audience"; Thomas' "Mutual Knowledge: A Theoretical Basis for Analyzing Audience"; and others less well known but sometimes equally insightful. Among the latter are Andersen's "A Sense of Audience or Conventional Wisdom?"; Armstrong's "Reader-Based and Writer-Based Perspectives in Composition Instruction"; Susan Miller's "The Student's Reader Is Always a Fiction"; and Neel's "Readers, Writers, and Texts: Writing in the Abyss." Suffice it to say, virtually every approach to audience, from Plato, the Sophists, and Aristotle onward, seemed to have been covered by the end of the 1980s.

Since that time, however, the concept of audience has vacillated from being considered clear and easily comprehended, to being totally ignored, to being so complex that it seems impossible to define or utilize practically in the writing classroom. The "clear and easily comprehended" camp is explicated as one perspective in Barry Kroll's 1984 "Writing for Readers: Three Perspectives on Audience." Kroll lists numerous textbooks that "provide lists of general human characteristics," much as Aristotle did, to help inexperienced writers "decide which of the characteristics—intelligence, socio-economic status, occupation, educational level, and so forth—are most relevant for reaching a particular audience in a particular rhetorical situation" (173).

Cited in Kroll's article, and in fact often included as an example of Aristotelian-style list-making, is Fred Pfister and Joanne Patrick's "A Heuristic Model for Creating a Writer's Audience." In this article, the authors advise that students "must construct in the imagination an audience that is as nearly a replica as is possible of those many readers who actually exist in the world of reality and who are reading the writer's words" (214). But just four years after the 1980 Pfister and Patrick article was published, Lisa Ede asked, "To whom are we referring when we ask our students to analyze their audience? Are we alluding to real people or to the intended audience as defined and created by the author and implied by the text?" ("Audience" 143).

<u>Audience Addressed, Audience Invoked</u>. To the satisfaction of many, Walter Ong had already answered Ede's question. In his seminal 1975 article, "The Writer's Audience Is Always a Fiction," Ong asks, "What do we mean by saying the audience is a fiction?" His answer:

> Two things at least. First, that the writer must construct in his imagination, clearly or vaguely, an audience cast in some sort of role. . . . Second, we mean that the audience must correspondingly fictionalize itself. A reader has to play the role in which the author has cast him, which seldom coincides with his role in the rest of actual life. (12)

This article inspired a debate that Lisa Ede and her frequent co-author Andrea Lunsford attempted to mediate nearly a decade later in "Audience Addressed/Audience Invoked: The Role of Audience in Composition Theory and Pedagogy," one of the most frequently referenced articles in audience-related scholarship.

Ede and Lunsford succinctly divide scholarship on audience into the two camps, addressed (real) and invoked (imagined), while arguing that neither side has adequately realized "1) the fluid, dynamic character of rhetorical situations" or "2) the integrated,

interdependent nature of reading and writing" (156). Into the "addressed" camp they place the heuristics proposed by Pfister and Petrik, as well as research by Mitchell and Taylor ("The Integrating Perspective"), who serve as their representative examples of this half of the dichotomy. According to Ede and Lunsford, "Those who envision audience as addressed emphasize the concrete reality of the writer's audience" and "encourage what is called `real-world' writing" (156). The latter problematically leads to potential "pandering to the crowd" (159).

On the "invoked" side, they cite Walter Ong and Russel Long, both of whom hold the view that yes, real readers exist, but "that writers simply cannot know this reality in the way that speakers can" and thus must rely upon "provid[ing] cues for the reader—cues which help to define the role or roles the writer wishes the reader to adopt in responding to the text" (160). Ede and Lunsford suggest that the problem is more complicated than the "audience invoked" proponents recognize: "Every writer must indeed create a role for the reader, but the constraints on the writer and the potential sources of and possibilities for the reader's role are both more complex and diverse than Ong [or Long] suggests" (162). They add that audience-invoked research also "distorts the processes of writing and reading by overemphasizing the power of the writer and undervaluing that of the reader. . ." (165).

Ede and Lunsford's solution to the dilemma is a synthesis of the two viewpoints (167). Both invoked and addressed viewpoints are correct, they feel, as long as one decides that "the term *audience* refers not just to the intended, actual, or eventual readers of a discourse, but to *all* those whose image, ideas, or actions influence a writer during the process of composition" (168). As a result, the authors add that "writers create

readers and readers create writers. In the meeting of these two lies meaning, lies communication" (169).

With the postmodern reconsideration of the Sophistic philosophy, the debate has grown only more complex. As a result, as Ede and Lunsford point out, neither the term nor concept of "audience" is transparent. "Audience" is not merely a listener or group of listeners, and it never was. In its simplest definition, a writer's audience is any person or persons who will read what the writer has written. However, thanks to the "audience invoked" argument, and because social constructionist theorists now posit a more complicated epistemic view, it can be argued that a writer's audience exists prior to the writing, that the audience, in essence, writes the writer.

Therefore, though Ede and Lunsford's expanded definition of audience initially seemed thorough, even that definition needed further elaboration, which the authors themselves realized. In 1996 Lunsford and Ede revisited "Audience Addressed/ Audience Invoked" in an article entitled "Representing Audience." While adhering to most of their previous assertions, the authors called upon a new awareness of "multiple understandings" of the earlier essay (169). They indicated that they had not previously been fully aware of "the ways in which audiences can not only enable but also silence writers and readers" (170). Further, they realized that they had sanctioned a "focus on successful communicative negotiation" without recognizing that "misunderstanding, miscommunication, disagreement, resistance, and dissent" need not be "failure" (173).

Similarly, James Porter suggests the impossibility of one and only one definition:

> "Audience" in rhetoric and composition means many things and serves many purposes. The term floats and slides, means one thing here, another there. The more it is used the less we are capable of *seeing* it: the term

> sometimes becomes transparent. In fact, there is no clear, simple, or single connection between the signifier "audience" and the signified. (7)

He notes, as well, "Locating audience within inscribed texts takes on different forms. Audience has been treated," he writes, as any or all of the following: "as a property of style; as a set of inventional principles; as stereotyped characters or psychological types; as a textual fiction; as genre conventions"; and "as a field, or discourse community." He adds, "Frequently, audience is treated in more than one of these senses at one time, and in actuality the approaches are not mutually exclusive. . . . Rather, they represent different emphases" (8). In short, audience is a **multiple** construct. It is audience-as-multiple-construct that forms the basis of the current research, as will be illustrated in subsequent chapters.

As Porter suggests, audience not only is not transparent, but it also has continued to be a problematical part of rhetoric—such a problematical part of rhetoric that, for various reasons, it has sometimes been relegated to the sidelines and virtually ignored. For instance, for a number of years (the 1960s to, in some cases, the present), many expressivistic pedagogical approaches backgrounded attention to audience in their important concerns with authorial voice and self-expression. Some theorists of the expressivist camp have suggested that many writers are hindered, rather than helped, by paying attention to audience and would be better served by ignoring it altogether, or at least until the invention phase is over and revision has begun. Peter Elbow's insightful article "Closing My Eyes As I Speak" is probably the best known example of this viewpoint.

Audience Ignored. Few if any voices call for a total disregard of audience, but the voice that comes closest is that of Peter Elbow, in "Desert Island Discourse: The Benefits

of Ignoring Audience" (co-authored with Jennifer Clarke) and in "Closing My Eyes As I Speak: An Argument for Ignoring Audience" (which extends the argument of "Desert Island Discourse"). Elbow asserts that attending to audience, especially in the early stages of a draft, can cause a negative effect on writing quality. Although he makes a strong case for ignoring audience at least until the revision stage, noting that some audiences can intimidate even experienced writers, he is also careful to proclaim that his "argument for writing without audience awareness is not meant to undermine the many good reasons for writing *with* audience awareness some of the time" ("Closing My Eyes" 50).

Elbow argues, especially in his earlier work, that thinking about audience should be a part of revision, but not part of the earlier stages of writing ("Closing My Eyes" 52). Admittedly, Elbow's warning about the stultifying effects of considering audience too soon is important: "An audience is a field of force. The closer we come—the more we think about these readers—the stronger the pull they exert on the contents of our minds" (51). He is also careful to separate the kinds of audiences who are "*inviting* or *enabling*" from those who are "powerfully *inhibiting*—so much so, in certain cases, that awareness of them as we write blocks writing altogether" (51). However, what Elbow and others cannot counter is the argument that writers are already written by their audiences; thus, it is moot as to whether writers at any given moment find themselves enabled or inhibited by "considering the audience." At least some of these multiple audiences are always already present within writers as they progress through the various processes of writing.

Cognitive Approach. Researchers have also interrogated the cognitive behaviors of writers themselves, asking whether younger or less experienced writers might be too

egocentric to write effectively for an audience other than themselves, giving rise to divisions of "writer-based prose" versus "reader-based prose" (Flower). The term "egocentrism" comes from the work of child psychologist Jean Piaget. Broadly speaking, Piaget's use of the word refers only to the tendency to see things from one's own point of view; it does not connote self-centeredness because the children Piaget studied were, he believed, innocently unaware that other viewpoints existed. According to Barry Kroll, in "Cognitive Egocentrism and the Problem of Audience Awareness in Written Discourse,"

> "Egocentrism" has often been misunderstood to mean a selfish attitude; on the contrary, in Piaget's theory "egocentrism" is a technical term which denotes a cognitive state in which the "cognizer sees the world from a single point of view only—his own—but without the knowledge of the existence of other viewpoints or perspectives…." (271)

However, despite his clarification, Kroll notes that other researchers tend to emphasize the presumed willful self-centeredness of inexperienced writers in their inability to adequately take into account readers' needs. Kroll cites, for example, James Moffett, John Trimble, and Mina Shaughnessy, who all have penned some variation of this conclusion: "many of the college writer's problems stem from self-centeredness" (qtd. in Kroll "Cognitive" 271)). Although Kroll states that he believes that "even quite young children (two-year-olds) adjust their speech or behavior to audiences" ("Cognitive" 272), in a later work presented at the 1979 Conference on College Composition and Communication, he notes that post-Piaget work in the United States has "continued to explore the effects of egocentrism on communication" and to focus upon "the cognitive limitations of the knower." He adds, "There are still many controversies in this field" ("Adapting" 5), yet he appears willing to side with the cognitivists who focus on the writer's limitations. He notes, "Many of our students—even college students—

appear to lack a well-developed sense of audience" ("Adapting" 6). He continues in his conference address to speculate about the "causes and cures of lack of audience awareness in student writing" ("Adapting" 9).

Richard Haswell in *Gaining Ground in College Writing* has a different point of view. He acknowledges that "the frame pictures human development as progressing, for instance, from ego-centered feeling during childhood to other-centered abstracting during adulthood" (267). Resultingly, some students "entering college fall toward the childish side of this frame. . . . So they are declared `developmental'. . ." (267). Such a judgment, Haswell writes, is "a travesty of current knowledge about human development" (268). Nevertheless, theories concerned with students' cognitive development have influenced much scholarship about student writing, ranging from the relatively objective and benign to the potentially harmful. Sondra Perl, for example, in "The Composing Processes of Unskilled College Writers," reports that the students in her study

> wrote from an egocentric point of view. While they occasionally indicated a concern for their readers, they more often took the reader's understanding for granted. They did not see the necessity of making their referents explicit, of making the connections among their ideas apparent, of carefully and explicitly relating one phenomenon to another, or of placing narratives or generalizations within an orienting, conceptual framework. (37)

In contrast to Perl's descriptive and relatively nonjudgmental tone, other researchers have used the concept of egocentrism as a less helpful tool for judgment-passing and gatekeeping. For instance, Patricia McAlexander, in "Ideas in Practice: Audience Awareness and Developmental Composition," seems to perceive lack of audience awareness in student writers as an issue of respect and politeness toward their teachers. One of the desired writing subskills she lists is a writer's ability to take the perspective of

the reader.  After the sample passages of student writing she provides, McAlexander notes, “I would argue that . . . each of these passages indicates, on the part of the writer, some kind of disregard for the reader (particularly the teacher reader).  In short, we could say that these passages lack *audience awareness*” (28).

A kinder and less critical way to look at the samples, perhaps, would be to note that most of the student writers seem *intently* aware of audience; the writers have possibly created inappropriate personas, but they may have done so deliberately for any number of reasons—to show off to their peers, to seize authority back from an overly controlling teacher, or to reflect a culturally influenced response to the writing prompt.

McAlexander appears quite concerned with the role of the teacher as both audience and educational authority, which may be one reason that the students’ writing samples seem to her to be aimed personally at their teacher-reader: “The usual audience that college composition students write for is, of course their teacher, who will read and evaluate their paper” (28).  Thus, egocentric writers are those who “seldom think of any reader at all.” McAlexander believes that such students are “[i]nvolved almost solely in their own language and thoughts, [so] with no imagined feedback from any audience, they write for themselves alone.” As a result, she argues, “their language or content is inappropriate for their academic audience:  their teacher” (29).

In effect, McAlexander’s use of Piaget’s work on egocentrism seems a prime example of the sort Mike Rose has warned us against in “Narrowing the Mind and Page: Remedial Writers and Cognitive Reductionism.”  It is not possible, he maintains, for such studies to be “value-free (that is, they highlight differences rather than deficits in thinking), but, given our culture, they are anything but neutral” (324).  Patricia Bizzell’s

words, in “Cognition, Convention, and Certainty: What We Need to Know about Writing,” also caution us against the misuse of cognitive research, reminding us that students who appear to engage in egocentric writing may really be “unaware that there is such a thing as a discourse community with conventions to be mastered” (379). In other words, so much more is at play than merely a student writer’s ability to decenter. Bizzell notes in another article that “certain typical problems students have with writing in college should be regarded as problems with accepting the academic community’s preferred world view, and not necessarily as problems with achieving `normal’ cognition” (“William Perry and Liberal Education” 304). Such a warning, perhaps, is useful to keep in mind even while evaluating one of the most influential ideas from the cognitivist movement: writer- and reader-based prose.

Writer- and Reader-Based Prose. The clearest and most useful definitions of the terms “writer-“ and “reader-based prose” come from their originator, Linda Flower, in “Writer-Based Prose”: “In *function*,” she writes, “Writer-Based prose is a verbal expression written by a writer to himself and for himself. . .” (“Writer-Based” 19). However, “[i]n its *structure*, Writer-Based prose reflects the associative, narrative path of the writer’s own confrontation with her subject.” The *language* of writer-based prose “reveals her use of privately loaded terms and shifting but unexpressed contexts for her statements.” However, Flower’s preferred Reader-Based prose “is a deliberate attempt to communicate something to a reader. To do that it creates a shared language and shared context between writer and reader. . . .” In contrast to writer-based prose, the language and structure of Reader-Based prose “reflects the *purpose* of the writer’s thought; Writer-Based prose tends to reflect its *process*.” Flower defines “good writing” as being “the

cognitively demanding transformation of the natural but private expressions of Writer-Based thought into a structure and style adapted to a reader" ("Writer-Based" 20). The egocentric aspects of writer-based prose are again emphasized in Flower's "Revising Writer-Based Prose," in which Flower summarizes her prior definitions ("Revising" 63).

Flower does emphasize that writer-based prose "is not evidence of arrested cognitive development." Rather, all writers write to and for themselves at some point; the key is revision. A writer must be open to revision, willing to exchange that which is understood primarily by the writer him- or herself, for that which will also be understood by a broader audience ("Revising" 63).

Not withstanding that caveat, not all scholars find Flower's definitions apt. For instance, Cherryl Armstrong, in "Reader-Based and Writer-Based Perspectives in Composition Instruction," argues that the two terms are backwards because writer-based prose often is deliberately created by skilled writers as part of their prewriting note-taking or drafting, yet unskilled writers are not deliberate in their creation of writer-based prose. They may, in fact, feel that they have created reader-based prose, primarily because so many unskilled writers have spent so much time during the writing process focusing on correctness (84-85). She questions Perl's own conclusions about her work with basic writers: "[Perl's] research indicates that rather than disregarding the needs of their audience while composing, these students concerned themselves so much with what they thought their readers wanted that their writing abilities were impaired" (85). Essentially, in misjudging (or, unfortunately, correctly judging) the expectations of the teacher-audience, these students focused on surface-level correctness to the detriment of other elements of writing. "Ironically," Armstrong notes, "students who turn in essays of what

we're used to calling writer-based prose have probably not been writing for themselves at all, while students who turn in reader-based prose more likely have" (85).

Armstrong surmises that only those more skilled writers who are capable of ignoring the surface issues of correctness in favor of focusing on the content of their personal thoughts and ideas will have the self-confidence to write writer-based prose. Unskilled writers, too absorbed in what their teacher-audience may think about spelling and grammar—and too worried about the grade they will receive—are more inclined to compose reader-based prose (85-86). She is also concerned that these less skilled writers may see their teacher-audiences as "examiners" who are already "expert in the subject matter" and thus have no need for the student writer to add clarifications and amplifications (87). It is precisely such additional information that Flower describes as characteristic of revised reader-based prose.

Whether one chooses to approach writer- and reader-based prose from Flower's definitional basis, or Armstrong's, clearly both scholars see the problem through a cognitive development lens: writers who are less skilled are writing for either themselves alone, or for the teacher-audience (and for a grade rather than for the expression of ideas). That is to say, more skilled writers will have either a more accurate, more fully developed sense of what the teacher wants, or else they will have matured enough that writing done for themselves is adequate, as well, for others. Either way, the problems with cognitive development theory still pertain. That theory is not without its critics.

Joseph Harris, for instance, in "Egocentrism and Difference," argues against the cognitivist view. The "cognitivist view," Harris says, implies that students are "stuck" in a stage of early development that causes them to be unable "to decenter in their thinking,

to look at their ideas and writing from the viewpoint of another" (2). A better approach, he suggests, is to look not at students' thinking/reasoning skills, but at their lack of familiarity with academic writing conventions (2-3). Students must "invent the university," as David Bartholomae has so succinctly described it ("Inventing" 134). Harris argues that the first draft (the writer-based one) is not egocentric; "it simply differs from the kind that goes on in most English classes" ("Egocentrism" 8). It is not egocentrism, but "acculturation" at work: "[W]hat we see the writer learning to do here is to shape her prose not for *a* reader but for a *different* reader than she wrote to before" ("Egocentrism" 9).

Harris dislikes even the word *egocentric*: "The term is dismissive. It implies that such writers have somehow failed to master the rudiments of ordinary adult discourse, that their ideas and writing are still immature, self-focused" ("Egocentrism" 9). He also dislikes the terms "writer-based" and "reader-based" because they also "mistake, however unwittingly, the conventions of academic writing for the processes of thought. Flower's reader-based prose is really another name for a privileged form of discourse. . ." ("Egocentrism 11). In its own way, reader-based or academic writing, Harris argues, is also egocentric (11).

Thus, while work in cognitive development can provide teachers and researchers with insight into some aspects of student writing, such work must be used with great caution and with full knowledge that no writer can write outside his or her original discourse communities without practice in the differing conventions of the chosen new discourse community. Such is the footing upon which this research is based. While admitting that students' writing changes as students mature, I am unwilling to see these

changes as deficits being corrected. Instead, coming from the point of view that students already exhibit the ability to produce "reader-based" prose, I nonetheless admit that as their discourse communities enlarge—as, for instance, they enter the workplace—writers will need to add to their current competencies. However, because the process of attaining writing competency is for any individual an ongoing process, one imbued with social awareness and reflectivity, I cannot ignore the theory of social constructionism.

Social Construction. As William Covino and David Jolliffe note in *Rhetoric: Concepts, Definitions, Boundaries*, "A social constructionist perspective discounts the possibility that truth/reality/knowledge exists in an *a priori* state. It emphasizes the role that language plays in constructing what cultures regard as knowledge or truth" (83). Kenneth Bruffee's explanation is often cited as especially relevant:

> A social constructionist position in any discipline assumes that entities we normally call reality, knowledge, thought, facts, selves, and so on are constructs generated by communities of like-minded peers. Social construction understands reality, knowledge, thought, facts, texts, selves, and so on as community-generated and community-maintained linguistic entities—or, more broadly speaking, symbolic entities—that define or "constitute" the communities that generate them. ("Social Construction" 774)

As Donald L. Rubin writes in the introduction to *The Social Construction of Written Communication,* there are four ways that written communication is socially constructed:

> (1) Writers construct mental representations of the social contexts in which their writing is embedded; (2) Writing as a social process or system can create or constitute social contexts; (3) Writers—in some senses *all* writers—create texts collectively with other participants in discourse communities; (4) Writers assign consensual values to writing and thus construct a dimension of social meaning. (2)

What Rubin's explanation means for this research can be summed up in his third point: Writers "create texts collectively" with members of their discourse communities.

One discourse community to which all native speakers, readers, and writers of English belong is reflected in the educational backgrounds that we tend to share. Because of the unifying effects of both private and public education, no one in the English-speaking world attempts to write or read from right to left. No one attempts realistically to write or read from the bottom of the page to the top. No one attempts to write English words and sentences that they expect to be understood by others if in writing, they use cuneiform or the Cyrillic alphabet.

Even more, from infancy we learn to put words together in ways that our hearers (and later, our readers) interpret as conventional. Not even the youngest English-speaking child would say, "A may I piece candy have of?" This gigantic discourse community of speakers and writers of English has solidified conventions of syntax and semantics that enable us to listen to virtually any speech, to read virtually any text. Admittedly, we don't always understand everything in that speech or in that text—but that's true of even the best educated, most intelligent among us. As Hoey argues, there will be "missed primings" because inevitably "writing suffers from undersignalling or mis-signalling" (*Textual Interaction* 168). But those missed primings seldom cause complete lack of communication. Hoey writes that "communication takes place, [so] there must be harmonising principles at work to ensure that each individual's primings do not differ too greatly from those of others" (*Lexical Priming* 11). A more thorough explanation of lexical priming is provided in the next chapter.

<u>Social Constructionism vs. Cognitive Constructivism.</u> Most theorists maintain that there is a difference between a social constructionist perspective and a cognitive constructivist perspective: Although Dias agrees that "[b]oth paradigms—constructivism

and social constructionism—deny that knowledge mirrors an objective reality independent of the knower or that knowledge somehow exists fully formed, ready to be acquired; rather, they maintain, the construction of knowledge is an active process," he argues that "constructivists and social constructionists diverge in where they locate the site of such knowledge making." Citing Patricia Bizzell's well-known constructs of inner- and outer-directed (75-103), Dias explains that "*inner-directed"* relates to "the sense that constructivists regard individuals as more or less autonomous agents of knowledge, focusing on their cognitive operations as they interact with physical and social reality. . . ." In contrast, "*outer-directed"* means "that social constructionists assign knowledge making to communities and subcommunities. . ." (287).

James Porter feels that the cognitivist position can be an ally of the social constructionist one, that "the two approaches are mutually supportive": "The development of the individual writer (at least as an *ethos*) can be, indeed has been, linked to the social perspective. We can talk about the writer's growth within the social framework" (110). Nevertheless, he affirms that the cognitivist focus on the "genius or cognitive functioning of the individual" is not akin to the audience-focused social constructionist position: "The audience in fact is seen as coauthor, as a virtual participant in the production of discourse" (83).

Victor Villanueva, C. Jan Swearingen, and Susan McDowall agree: "source materials for social constructionist views of identity-voice have emphasized that society constructs voice, that identity is shaped by social forces beyond any individual's control" (175). In fact, "[a]s discourses and rhetorical conventions are made explicit, students begin to understand what are sometimes ephemeral rules for what they are: socially

derived conventions" (179-180). They argue that "as students are taught how to identify rhetorical conventions for what they are, they are able more readily to understand the nuances of a particular language" (180). While Villanueva, et al., doubtless did not have in mind the theory of lexical priming as they composed the previous argument, lexical priming is nonetheless a factor in what they have referred to as "socially derived conventions." However, because each of us belongs to many discourse communities at once, and in many instances, the socially derived conventions change slightly (usually enough to be a nuisance but not enough to be a hindrance to communication[3]), we must be aware of not only the multiple audiences for our words, but also of the fact that we ourselves bring socially constructed multiplicity to others' words.

Multiple Audiences. Jack Selzer, in "More Meanings of Audience," argues that "what is needed in understanding audience [is] a tolerance of complexity and a commitment to a pluralism that does justice to the multiple senses of *reader* and *audience*" (173). Mary Jo Reiff seizes upon Selzer's argument and advocates "that compositionists embrace a social model of audience that accounts for the multiple and shifting roles of readers as they participate in social groups"("Rereading `Invoked' and `Addressed' Readers"). Both she and Selzer work to provide a "definition of multiple readers, noting that these various readers are not just defined by their place or role in the organization, but by `the multiple tasks or multiple reading behaviors that various readers may require of a text' (170)" (qtd. in Reiff "Rereading").

[3] For example, the conventions of document citation or the conventions of genres can cause problems, but seldom if ever do they cause problems of such severity that the written text cannot be comprehended.

Reiff believes, as do I, that a "multiple-audience situation is much more dynamic and fluid than prevailing audience adaptation models, models which portray readers as static and homogeneous." In practical terms, Reiff suggests,

> Writers may draw on their knowledge of real readers and their knowledge of community values, beliefs and conventions in order to construct an audience, and, in turn, the real readers may use their knowledge of the community and its discourse conventions to help them navigate a text. ("Rereading")

However, I do not believe that Reiff goes quite far enough, not even in her recent book *Approaches to Audience* (2004). She feels that the social constructionist perspective toward audience is perhaps too "textual" and does not extend to include real readers (108). She writes, "With its emphasis on common goals and shared values, the social constructionist view of audience may fail to recognize the varied and shifting roles of individual readers within a community" (114). As a result, the social constructionist view tends to create a "homogeneous" view of audience—i.e., all members of a discourse community are more or less the same (108).

I do not agree that social constructionism implies homogeneity of audiences. Rather, I am inclined to agree more with Reiff's conclusion, which seems oddly to contradict her assertion about audience homogeneity:

> Ultimately, a recognition of the multiplicity of audiences accounts more fully for the truly complex and social nature of communication and enlarges and enriches both our own and our student's [sic] understanding of the complicated rhetorical feature known as audience. (*Approaches to Audience* 141)

Clearly, to define audience simply or conclusively is difficult, if not impossible. Such a lack does not impede this research, though; rather, it emphasizes the point that writers inevitably bring to the act of writing both conscious and unconscious

manifestations of audience, and that these multiple manifestations can be discerned through close analysis of writers' texts, of the conventions they embrace, of their lexical selections, of their genre choices.

Discourse Community. The term "audience" has often been supplanted by terms that are arguably more exact and more inclusive of some of the meanings we have come to associate with audience. The most prevalent of these is "discourse community." The earlier uses of the term are generally attributed to Patricia Bizzell ("Cognition, Convention, and Certainty") and to David Bartholomae ("Inventing the University"). Though some scholars (notably Joseph Harris and Marilyn Cooper) have been critical of discourse community theory, the term has caught on for various reasons. For example, Bennett Rafoth, in "Discourse Community: Where Writers, Readers, and Texts Come Together," suggests "that *discourse community* may be conceptually more useful than audience for capturing the language phenomena that relate writers, readers, and texts." His reasoning is that "[w]hereas the audience metaphor tends naturally to represent readers or listeners as primary, and to admit writers and texts only as derivatives, discourse community admits writers, readers, and texts all together" (132).

Porter strikes a similar note in *Audience and Rhetoric:*

> [T]he discourse community can be viewed as an aspect of audience. . . . [I]n the same sense the discourse community is as much the author as the audience—and it may be within the concept of discourse community that the traditionally separate roles of writer and audience come together. (84)

However, Porter prefers the term "forum" as a replacement for "discourse community," which he finds too fuzzy (96); he defines forum as "a concrete locale, a physical place for a discourse activity—such as a journal" or "a conference, a corporation, a department." He adds, "[Forums] represent conventional, sociological boundaries, where several

discourse communities may intersect" (95). However, in a review of *Audience and Rhetoric*, Kristin R. Woolever notes that the term "forum" (and the "forum analysis" that Porter recommends) is not unlike the "audience analysis" of older approaches to audience that Porter disparages as "managerial." Though Porter seeks to have the concept of forum represent "a concrete locale where several discourse communities intersect" (Woolever), the term is perhaps too specific. As Karin Evans writes in "Audience and Discourse Community Theory," "In current composition theory, the term *discourse community* encompasses both writers and their potential readers" (2).

Another term often heard, Stanley Fish's "interpretive community," is an important variation to the concept of audience because of its connections to reader-response theory. In *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*, Fish writes,

> [I]t is interpretive communities, rather than either the text or the reader, that produce meanings and are responsible for the emergence of formal features. Interpretive communities are made up of those who share interpretive strategies not for reading but for writing texts, for constituting their properties. In other words, these strategies exist prior to the act of reading and therefore determine the shape of what is read rather than, as is usually assumed, the other way around. (14)

As Bennett Rafoth explains, "Fish went on to conclude that what is seen as real and normative is a function of a particular interpretive community, and that there is no such thing as a natural or correct reading, only `ways of reading that are extensions of community perspectives' (pp. 15-16)" (135).

There are many other terms that refer to audience in some manner, but for purposes of this research, the not-so-simple word "audience" will predominate.

"Discourse community" will also be used, especially as reference is made to interpretive conventions used by members of particular groups.

Therefore, this research, while adhering to a social constructionist theoretical basis, does not seek to dismiss the "realness" potential of an audience, nor the concept that writers do indeed fictionalize readers. This research further steps beyond the inherent negativity of the cognitive approach, which tends to regard student writers as lacking something—experience, empathy, maturity—yet it reflects agreement that more experience and maturity generally do bring about positive changes in student writers' writing. Additionally, this research briefly confronts the problem of teachers as audience and suggests ways to effectively utilize the virtually unavoidable influence that they have on their students' writing.

In short, I argue for a view of audience as a multiple construct, i.e., a plethora of readers from past and present experiences, both "real" and imagined, and suggest that the real problem is twofold: first, of recognizing that writers are written by their audiences, that they write their audiences, and thus multiple audiences are always already present; and second, the value of attending only to specific audiences, those whose presences (be they real or imagined) will enable writers, rather than hinder them, to participate fully in the discourse communities of their choosing. In order to flesh out such a position, I must attend to the role that genre plays in audience theories.

Genre. Anne Freadman notes in "Anyone for Tennis?" that "[t]he question of genre is tied to the question of audience, and thus to the question of expectations and predictions . . ." (52). She argues, as well, that "a text can be fruitfully studied for the way it constructs its audience positions" (60). Similarly, Richard Coe writes, "If rhetoric is the

study of verbal persuasion, then the rhetoric of genre is the study of how generic structures influence (i.e. 'persuade') both writers and readers"; he adds that "an auditor's or reader's recognition of a particular utterance of text as belonging to a particular genre influences her or his strategies of comprehension and response" (182).

Kathleen Jamieson agrees: "Expectations are created both in the rhetor and in the audience when the . . . genre is employed" (166). Further, "[g]eneric classification creates expectations of the work in the audience" (167). Carolyn Miller, in her widely quoted study of genre, "Genre as Social Action," also implies that genre is not just a formal, textual arrangement, but an activity, a regularized set of behaviors responding to the same occasion and directed at an audience. Miller suggests that "an understanding of genre can help account for the way we encounter, interpret, react to, and create particular texts" (23). She refers to genres "as typified rhetorical actions based in recurrent situations. . ." (31). Miller writes,

> The understanding of rhetorical genre that I am advocating is based in rhetorical practice, in the conventions of discourse that a society establishes as ways of "acting together." It does not lend itself to taxonomy, for genres change, evolve and decay; the number of genres current in any society is indeterminate and depends upon the complexity and diversity of the society. (36)

Her explanation leads us to understand that typifications are materialized with textual elements and imply an audience.

Additionally, the connections between genre and register are apparent. For example, Ellen Barton writes that "a register typically has a set of co-occurring features associated with it," whereas a genre is "a conventionalized variety of text structure in a language"; the relationship between the two is that some "discourse analysts see the

terms as describing virtually the same phenomenon of oral and written varieties within a language" (58).

John Swales in *Genre Analysis* also notes the connection between register and genre, clarifying that *register* is the term preferred by linguists: "linguistics as a whole has tended to find [the term] genre indigestible. The difficulty seems to derive from the fact that *register* is a well-established and central concept in linguistics, while *genre* is a recent appendage found to be necessary as a result of important studies of text structure" (41). Like Barton, Swales refers to linguists who subsume one category within another (40) in addition to linguists who treat them as separate entities (41). Because the terms *register* and *genre* are intertwined, the next segment of this chapter discusses both register and semantic abbreviation. Additionally, three studies that call attention to one aspect of register, the perceived intimacy between writer and audience, will be outlined.

**Register.** Halliday and Hasan in *Cohesion in English* define register as "the set of meanings, the configuration of semantic patterns, that are typically drawn upon under the specified conditions, along with the words and structures that are used in the realization of these meanings." They add, "In general, if a passage hangs together as a text, it will display a consistency of register" (23). Frank Smith explains register by using the illustrative example of our speaking in different ways to different people; he notes that audience, purpose, subject matter, and proximity between speaker and hearer or writer and reader can affect register (77). Smith also emphasizes that "written language has different registers from speech" (78). Most importantly, he argues that most of these differences have more to do with convention than with the factors of audience, purpose,

etc. (78). Writers who use the conventions expected by a particular audience will be "writing in the appropriate register" (79).

Colleen Donnelly explains, "Register is determined both by the situation and the audience; it is primarily determined by the social atmosphere of the situation" (229). In situations in which a writer seeks to have his or her "authority recognized as legitimate" (Stillar 55), a writer's "language will be more elaborate," but in less formal situations, it will be "more restricted"; in either case, the writer "will choose the code appropriate for the situation" (Donnelly 229).

Similiarly, in "Relationships between Writer-Audience Proximity, Register, and Quality in the Essays of First-Year College Students," Vincent Puma suggests that "writers who assume intimate relationships with readers adopt the register of a psychological speaking stance" and that "writers who assume distant relationships with their readers may adopt the register of a psychological writing stance . . . the language of distance" (8-10). Puma feels that "writing in response to school-sponsored audience-specified writing tasks, students may be punished for doing what comes naturally in everyday language use"—using the more intimate, casual registers (23-24). Puma's work was influenced by two other important studies, that of Bracewell, Scardamalia, and Bereiter, and that of Barry Kroll.

**Bracewell, Scardamalia, and Bereiter.** In 1978, Robert J. Bracewell, Marlene Scardamalia, and Carl Bereiter introduced the term "context-creating statements" to explain a writer's use of "language that informs the reader of the general nature of the information to be given without imparting specific details" (4). The theory behind context-creating statements is that "the writer is concerned not just with what he has to

write, but in addition with what the reader's needs for understanding are" (5). Thus, the writer deliberately provides cues for readers that enable them to situate themselves comfortably within the text. Other terms they use for the same phenomenon are "overview statements" and "audience-oriented statements" (1, 4).

The function of context-creating statements is three-fold: to "name the topic"; to "orient the reader"; and to "establish the range of information to be presented" (4-5). According to the authors, their context-creating statements reflect Halliday's "three metafunctions of language, the ideational, the interpersonal, and the textual" in that naming the topic supports the ideational function; orienting the reader, the interpersonal function; establishing the range and organization of information, the textual function (5).

**Kroll.** In 1984, Barry Kroll conducted a similar study in "Audience Adaptation in Children's Persuasive Letters." He too found that children could direct letters to different audiences by using context-creating statements. In addition to such statements, Kroll added two other types of analysis: descriptive information and persuasive appeals. Kroll concluded, "Considered together, the results for context-creating statements, descriptive information, and appeals indicate that these nine-year-old children were, on the whole, fairly successful in producing letters adapted to their audiences" (417).

**Puma.** As previously mentioned, Vincent Puma conducted a related study in his 1986 dissertation, "The Effects of Degree of Audience Intimacy on Linguistic Features and Writing Quality in the Audience-Specified Essays of First-Year College Students," as well as in a related monograph, "Relationships between Writer-Audience Proximity, Register, and Quality in the Essays of First-Year College Students" (1986). His student subjects wrote two letters: "The tasks invited the subjects to write persuasive letters to

readers with whom they had been acquainted, Task A to a prospective employer, Task B to the editor of a student newspaper" ("Relationships" 11). (Note: Though both letters were persuasive, the purposes of the two letters were different, yet the audiences may have been too similar.)[4] Puma's general research question was "Do linguistic features and writing quality vary consistently with audience proximity?" ("Relationships" 11).

Puma had concluded that "a) student writers internalize different psychological versions of singular assigned audiences; b) registers vary consistently with psychological proximities assumed by writers; and c) choice of register and proximity affects quality ratings" ("Relationships" 2). He stated that "students adopt relationships of varying proximities with assigned audiences." Further, they "adjust the semantic features and the amount of modification in their texts toward patterns that are typical of dialogic spoken or monologic written language depending upon their perceptions of the psychological proximity of their audiences" ("Relationships" 26).

**Semantic abbreviation.** One audience-related element that Puma studies is semantic abbreviation. The concept of semantic abbreviation is this: The closer the relationship between the writer and reader, the less explicit the writer needs to be because the writer can assume that the reader will be able to fill in the blanks using knowledge that the two have in common. James L. Collins and Michael M. Williamson, frequently cited for their work with semantic abbreviation, borrow the term from Vygotsky, who uses it to refer to inner speech, but their use is, perhaps, different. In "Assigned Rhetorical Context and Semantic Abbreviation in Writing," Collins and Williamson use

[4] In my own study, I chose audiences with greater dissimilarity than Puma's potential employer and student newspaper editor. By keeping the topic the same (Puma's topics for his two letters differed), I believed that I could achieve greater control over the differing ways students would write to their audiences.

the term "semantic abbreviation" to refer to writing that is too "inexplicit": "Such writing suggests what the writer means, but it does not state that meaning adequately" (285). The reader is burdened with the need "to complete the writer's meaning" to add "cultural or social contexts that are needed if the meaning is to be understood" (285, 289). They explain that when the writer knows the audience well, such as one might know a parent, the semantic abbreviation rate is likely to be higher than if the writer does not know the audience well: "The more intimately known audience needs less explicit writing" (293).

Summary. Audience is so complex that literally no one has been able to provide an enduring definition of who our readers are. From the days of Plato's examination of "soul," to today's argument over whether the term "audience" means the same as "discourse community," the concept of audience remains amorphous, at times as narrow as the one addressee of a letter, at times so broad as to admit all readers and writers, past, present, and future. What an audience is—when it is—may be a subject of discussion eternally. All of these approaches have value, yet to some degree, their supporters have tended to minimize, if not discount, the contributions of the other approaches, treating their own as the last word, so to speak. Such limits serve only to reduce the value inherent in a more inclusive approach, one that accepts the usefulness of at least some aspects of all the different ways of considering audience.

With each new wave of analysis, however, one concern will likely surface: How do we teach student writers to write with their (multiple) audiences in mind? One possible answer, the one suggested by this research, is that we may not need to teach student writers to do what they arguably already are at least partially able to do, given their knowledge of convention and genre and their ability to use lexical priming.

As one might imagine, the road to such a position is not straight. Lexical priming, as espoused by researchers such as David Kaufer and Michael Hoey, reflects the ways in which writers use convention and genre to compose. The next chapter tackles these additional concerns.

# CHAPTER THREE: LEXICAL PRIMING
# LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, genre is expanded to include the concepts of lexical priming and phonological strings. I show that Halliday's collocation and colligation usefully provide a link between lexical priming and phonological strings. Further, because criticism of text analysis casts some doubt upon the efficacy of the technique, those criticisms are countered.

Genre and Lexical Priming. Kaufer and co-authors note in *The Power of Words* that genre plays a large role in the concept of lexical priming: "Since Carolyn Miller's (1984) influential essay about genre, many language scholars have come to view genre as fundamentally a rhetorical notion: genre is an indication of how a text performs action in the world." They add, "It should thus not be surprising to learn that our approach to English strings may offer powerful insights in the study of textual genres" (214). In fact, they "began their research into priming strings by studying genre-based corpora" (Oakley, Introduction to *The Power of Words*, x).

Additionally, in a course developed by Kaufer and his colleagues, students were asked to write three essays in differing genres. In the first, students introduced themselves to their classmates. In the second, students were required to describe their dormitory rooms. In the third, they were asked to teach their readers how to do something that they themselves knew how to do. Kaufer et al. note, "This demonstration exercise not only helps the students understand a rhetorical basis of genre, but it also supports our notion of patterned aggregations of English strings contributing to readers' deep understandings of texts and their rhetorical operation in the world. . ." (217).

Kaufer and his fellow researchers suggest the following about lexical priming (or phonological strings) as it relates to genre:

- it can distinguish fiction from nonfiction;
- it can distinguish narrative-based genres such as histories, memoirs, and mysteries from information-based genres such as academic, religious, and government documents (45);
- the use of affective language can differ from genre to genre (83);
- argument texts tend to have high numbers of negative affect strings, possibly because "arguments are the genre of discontent" (86);
- in workplace genres, strings indicating requests and task assignments are common (151);
- inner-thinking strings may occur often in genres such as journals, diaries, memoirs, and reflections;
- descriptive strings may be used often in genres such as nature writing;
- relational strings that help build social ties to the audience may be frequent in journalistic and popular-science writing (214).

In short, they argue, "The speaker or writer's genre and rhetorical plans affect the audience experience one wants to seed across a planned communication" (8). Kaufer et al. state, "As rhetoricians interested in the study of genre have consistently indicated, many aspects of the rhetorical situation affect genre" (217). That belief leads them to further state that "writers must operate within and against a genre when composing texts" but that "genres are also built by the writers acting in the moment and evolve (or dissipate) with each new writing" (217).

They echo Carolyn Miller when they describe how new genres emerge through the actions of writers who "combine elements of pre-existing genres, putting the language dimensions together in new ways," ways that may or may not be used by other writers

(219). Most importantly, Kaufer et al. claim that "we have begun to discover genres as varying combinations of priming strings" (219).

Hoey also references genre in *Lexical Priming*, arguing that "every speaker/writer will be primed in some way for the domains and genres with which they are familiar" (61). He uses the term "domain" as a partner to genre and states that his priming hypotheses (listed in Appendix C) are "constrained by domain and/or genre. They are claims about the way language is acquired and used in specific situations" (13). He concludes *Lexical Priming* by suggesting, "Lexical priming, given its individual nature and its genre and domain specificity, would seem to offer a dynamic mechanism for change worthy at least of exploration" (188).

Hoey and Lexical Priming. In *Textual Interaction*, Michael Hoey explains, "Whenever we read a sentence it sets up expectations in our mind and those expectations shape our interpretation of what comes next." He adds that proof of an audience's having expectations of text can be found "every time we are surprised or disconcerted by the direction a text takes" (22). In a somewhat poetic analogy, he writes,

> Reader and writer are like dancers following each other's steps, and the reader's chances of guessing correctly what is going to happen next in a text are greatly enhanced if the writer takes the trouble to anticipate what the reader might be expecting. . . . (*Textual Interaction* 43)

More plainly put, because writers and readers share common knowledge based upon their experiences of the world, they bring specific expectations of each other's roles to the process of written communication. Hoey calls this expectation "priming," in particular, "lexical priming." We learn to synchronize our primings, he argues, because of the "harmonising effects of education, social pressure and the media . . ." (*Lexical Priming* 47).

Theoretically, then, we enhance our acquisition of language by assimilating words and phrases into our own experiences, making them meaningful because of the similar associations they develop for each of us from our similar uses and experiences. Or, as James D. Williams puts it in "Rule-Governed Approaches to Language and Composition," language processing involves "an elaborate, interactive matching procedure that connects linguistic input and output with internalized models of reality" (557). We are comfortable both with juxtapositions of words and of sentences: "We take it for granted that the juxtaposition may have a range of meanings and normally have no difficulty in interpreting the juxtaposition, even if it happens that we have not accurately anticipated what will come next" (Hoey, *Textual Interaction* 24-25). The reason is that "we look to the context of our world knowledge to clarify the relation in places where the juxtaposition is not expected" (*Textual Interaction* 25).

Hoey argues that "every word is characteristically primed for a range of genre, domain, and situationally-specific features, which cumulatively account for, and contribute to, what have traditionally been treated as the syntax, semantics, pragmatics and discoursal features of a language" (*Lexical Priming* 165). This experience differs for each of us, he admits, but "every user is primed, more or less specifically, to use every familiar word in every familiar situation in particular ways . . ." (*Lexical Priming* 165-166). So powerful are these primings that "[a] sentence that overrode all its reader's primings would only be a sentence by virtue of starting with a capital letter and ending with a full stop . . ." (*Lexical Priming* 177). This theory does not imply that all of us are always capable of communicating clearly, without confusion and misunderstandings. In fact, Hoey claims that "the primings we have may serve us in one situation and fail us in

another," since "priming is the result of a speaker encountering evidence and generalising from it" (*Lexical Priming* 185).

Hoey does note, "Some writing suffers from undersignalling or mis-signalling" (*Textual Interaction* 168); nevertheless, "our experience of language suggests that communication takes place, [so] there must be harmonising principles at work to ensure that each individual's primings do not differ too greatly from those of others" (*Lexical Priming* 11). That is to say, in general, people are able to communicate effectively. For native speakers of English, even when sub-cultures differ, if we have been brought up to hear English, to speak English, to read English, and to write English, much of what we know and do will reflect conventional usage. That is why lexical priming appears especially valid as a theory of language use, despite general criticism of text analysis itself.

Text analysis. Chris Anson has written that the essential problem with text analysis is that its "theoretical principle" is "that some examination of the nature and organization of a written text can yield linguistic insights that either extend or stand beyond the propositional 'content' or meaning of the text." He challenges that theoretical principle, noting that the "assumption itself is problematic because, as reader-response theorists have pointed out, meaning (literal or nonliteral) resides partly in readers and is a function of what they bring to a text; it is not only what exists in some essential way in the text itself." Therefore, he argues, one cannot use only text analysis to derive meaning because audience-derived meaning will be missing (323-324). However, Anson admits,

> This paradox is somewhat weakened by the argument that the infinite interpretative possibilities in a text are constrained by its linguistic structures and conventions—or, as [Thomas] Huckin points out, that "texts contain observable patterns of language usage that come to mean certain

> things to the members of a given community" ["Context-Sensitive Text Analysis"] (86). (qtd. in Anson 324).

In fact, something else Huckin says about text analysis is even stronger and clearer, and even more significant to a theory of lexical priming:

> There are no two ways of saying exactly the same thing; thus, even minor details of language usage can be significant in interpreting the meaning of a text. …. Over time, the different usages become conventionalized. …. [I]f a writer uses a certain word in favor of another nearly synonymous word, there is probably a reason for it. If a pattern of language usage appears in a writer's text, there is probably a reason for that. ("Context-Sensitive Text Analysis" 88)

Huckin explains in the same essay that all writers want to be comprehended, which is why they use language conventionally: "writers try to use language in ways that will be recognized and understood (i.e., in conventional ways . . .), and that, if writers are competent, many if not most of their intended readers will be able to glean their intended meaning" (87).

Huckin also argues, "Writers try to use language in cognitively efficient ways. All writers labor under short-term memory limitations. Therefore, they need to use language as efficiently as possible, maximizing expressiveness while minimizing cognitive effort." He adds that in order to minimize cognitive effort, writers "[rely] heavily on linguistic conventions, which encode a relatively rich body of community knowledge yet are easy for both writer and reader to access" (87). It is important to emphasize what Huckin writes next:

> All language users have extensive experience with this strategy, using it in daily speech all their lives, so they can be expected to know the basic principle. Epistemologically, this is one more reason to expect that writers' and readers' efforts at communication will be governed largely by linguistic patterns and conventions and that errors and other infelicities often have good reasons behind them. (87-88)

Would reader-response theorists, as Anson claims, be unsatisfied with such an argument? Huckin feels that they ought to be satisfied. He writes, "Even Stanley Fish … and other reader-response theorists seem to agree that interpretation cannot take place except through interpretive communities." The crux of the matter is that "such communities are formed and maintained around a body of tangible, linguistically constituted texts, and that these texts contain observable patterns of language usage that come to mean certain things to the members of a given community" (86). Given that it is highly unlikely that any reader can "bring to the text" substantive meaning that was not somehow influenced by the conventions of the various interpretive or discourse communities of which that reader is a part, lexical priming is arguably a theory with substance.

At this point, admittedly, there is little research from compositionists on lexical priming[5]. In fact, David Kaufer and his co-authors in *The Power of Words* counteract criticisms of text analysis when they argue that recent scholars have tended to "resist looking at isolated words or strings of words because they are not, it is alleged, as rich as context, culture, and history to support interpretation" (10). They note that such criticism is flawed, "an unstated nonsequitor, which [assumes] that the surface language used to prime audiences somehow competes with, rather than works alongside, contextual, historical, and ideological frames of interpretation" (10). The truth is "that surface primings routinely collaborate, rather than compete with, deep interpretation" (Kaufer et al., *The Power of Words* 10).

[5] Lexical priming is, however, an area that concerns cognitive linguists and neuroscientists, who have reached similar, though more tentative conclusions, than Hoey and Kaufer. For instance, Ledoux et al. have shown that the "processing of a word has thus been shown to benefit from the prior presentation of an identical or associated word in the absence of a contraining context. An examination of such priming effects for words that are embedded within a meaningful discourse context provides information about the interaction of different levels of linguistic analysis" (p. 107, "Reading Words in Discourse: The Modulation of Lexical Priming Effects by Message-Level Context," *Behavioral and Cognitive Neuroscience Reviews* 5.3 (Sept. 2006): 107-127.)

Kaufer believes, “Words in use prime an audience’s expectations and different words prime different experiences” (*The Power of Words*, xvii). He and his co-authors “use priming in its vernacular sense to describe a speaker or writer’s implicit knowledge relating strings of English and ways of predisposing audience experience through language” (xvii). Because language is, in one sense, linear (word follows word follows word upon the printed page), it’s like a river down which a reader floats. In order to determine where she’s going (i.e., toward the unfamiliar), the reader must keep tabs on where she’s been (i.e., the familiar). If the reader loses her sense of either, she will become lost or confused: “Too little sense of the familiar can cause the audience to find the stream unnavigable; too little sense of the unfamiliar can bore the audience and make the stream too predictable to want to follow further” (Kaufer et al., *The Power of Words*, 139). Thus, writers must utilize lexical priming cues as readers’ navigational tools (139).

Kaufer attributes one of the theoretical bases for *The Power of Words* to his and Butler’s previously published work, *Designing Interactive Worlds with Words: Principles of Writing as Representational Composition*, in which writing is compared to visual art:[6] Art uses “brush stroke and size, weight, texture, color, perspective, and placement” to “present viewers with experiences of three-dimensional worlds of objects, light, shading, shadow, and viewer angle” (Kaufer and Butler 6). They write, “Just as a painting must define perspective to give viewers an orientation to look, texts must give readers a perspective from which to read,” leading them to argue, “Writers must cue readers about their role within the reading experience” (Kaufer and Butler 165). For writers and readers, these cues are, of course, textual.

[6] James D. Williams also insists that language is representational because humans “are especially good at pattern matching, and we seem to be able to quickly settle on an interpretation of an input pattern. . .” (557).

Collocation and colligation. Despite slight differences in terminology, both Michael Hoey and David Kaufer rely in useful ways upon the concept of collocation. Hoey writes, "Collocation is, crudely, the property of language whereby two or more words seem to appear frequently in each other's company. . ." (*Lexical Priming* 2). More to the point, he adds,

> We can only account for collocation if we assume that every word is mentally **primed** for collocational use. As a word is acquired through encounters with it in speech and writing, it becomes cumulatively loaded with the contexts and co-texts in which it is encountered, and our knowledge of it includes the fact that it co-occurs with certain other words in certain kinds of context. The same applies to word sequences built out of these words; these too become loaded with the contexts and co-texts in which they occur. (*Lexical Priming* 8)

Michael Hoey further seeks to credit Halliday and his colleague Hasan in *Lexical Priming* when he states that they "refer to collocation as a cohesive device and describe it as a `cover term for the kind of cohesion that results from the co-occurrence of lexical items that are in some way or other typically associated with one another, because they tend to occur in similar environments' (287)" (qtd. in Hoey *Lexical Priming* 4). Hoey notes that Halliday and Hasan refer to the "way [words] are regularly encountered in similar textual contexts." He adds that their reference "places collocation where it belongs—as a property of the mental lexicon" (*Lexical Priming* 4).

Colligation, on the other hand, also a term which Hoey borrows from Halliday, is explained as lexical priming in conjunction with grammatical function: "The basic idea of colligation is that just as a lexical item may be primed to co-occur with another lexical item, so also it may be primed to occur in or with a particular grammatical function" (Hoey, *Lexical Priming* 43). The inverse is also true: lexical items "may be primed to avoid appearance in or co-occurrence with a particular grammatical function" (43). Hoey

explains that Halliday extends the idea of colligation to include "the positioning of a word or word sequence within the sentence or paragraph and even its positioning within the text as a whole" (43). In essence, Hoey's interpretation of Halliday creates a definition of colligation as having the following features:

> 1. the grammatical company a word or word sequence keeps (or avoids keeping) either within its own group or at a higher rank;
>
> 2. the grammatical functions preferred or avoided by the group in which the word or word sequence participates;
>
> 3. the place in a sequence that a word or word sequence prefers (or avoids). (43)

Hoey states, "I would hypothesise that all words are primed for one or more collocations, semantic associations and colligations" (116). He argues that "traditional generative grammarians have derived their goals, if not their methods or descriptions, from Chomsky. . . . They have not been interested in probability of occurrence, only in possibility of occurrence" (152). Hoey prefers the approach of corpus linguists: "These linguists have typically seen their goal as the uncovering of recurrent patterns in the language, usually lexical but increasingly grammatical" (152).

Similarly, in *The Power of Words,* Kaufer and co-authors appear to use the same concepts of collocation and priming, but to some degree, divest themselves of linguistic terminology: "our interest in adjacency relations can and does overlap with relations that are well defined in the literature of corpus linguistics." They readily admit, "Strings in our catalog can involve colligation, collocation, and semantic prosody relationships," but, they emphasize, "They are not restricted to any one such relationship. The overriding concern for us was how the string primes the audience's experience, not the mechanism by which it came to hold together as a multiple word unit" (*The Power of Words* 23).

Nevertheless, similar to Hoey, Kaufer considers linguist Michael Halliday's work in systemic-functional grammar to be one of the theoretical bases for the work that DocuScope does. In *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, Halliday says that word classes are semantic, but also paradigmatic and syntagmatic—forming the "textual metafunction" of language, or the "enabling or facilitating function" (38, 30). Additionally, he describes "relationships of a lexical kind (collocations and sets). . ." (38). "The measure of collocation," Halliday explains, "is the degree to which the probability of a word (lexical item) increases given the presence of a certain other word (the **node**) within a specified range (the **span**)." He also writes, "Paradigmatically, lexical items function in sets having shared semantic features and common patterns of collocation" (40).

While Halliday's work on collocation seems clearly used as a basis for the priming theory espoused by Kaufer and colleagues, they give him greater credit for his work with ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions (Kaufer, *The Power of Words,* 53). Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion in English,* explain these metafunctions as being "functional-semantic components"; the first, the ideational, "is that part of the linguistic system which is concerned with the expression of 'content,' with the function that language has of being ABOUT something" (26). In the ideational, the speaker is an observer (27). The second metafunction, the interpersonal, "is concerned with the social, expressive and conative functions of language, with expressing the speaker's 'angle': his attitudes and judgments, his encoding of the role relationships in the situation, and his motive in saying anything at all" (26-27). In this role, the speaker is an intruder (27). In the third metafunction, the textual, Halliday and Hasan are referring to "the text-forming

component in the linguistic system," i.e., "the resources that language has for creating text. . ." (27).

Kaufer and colleagues borrow primarily from the interpersonal metafunction, which is then transformed into their "relational perspective" (54). In addition to the metafunctions of language, Halliday and Hasan's work with collocation and cohesion is relevant to the theory behind *The Power of Words*. Thus, though the language of linguistics is perhaps not used in *The Power of Words* in the same way it is used in Hoey's *Lexical Priming*, clearly "priming" is deeply connected to collocation. (See Appendix D for a chart of the influences on Kaufer and colleagues' theory.)

Hoey refines the definition of collocation to be an "association between words . . . up to four words apart [that] is evidenced by their occurrence together in corpora more often than is explicable in terms of random distribution" (*Lexical Priming* 5). He argues that the only way to explain the "recurrent co-occurrence of words" is "**priming**, albeit tweaked slightly" (7).

To clarify these tweaks, Hoey first notes that a word or group of words is not forever primed necessarily in just one way since continuing use of the word or word group will either "reinforce" the existing priming, or "weaken" it by using the word or word group in an unfamiliar way. That weakening or change in meaning, he calls "a drift in the priming," and notes that it may be temporary or permanent (*Lexical Priming* 9). Second, "each individual's experiences of language, and the primings that arise out of these experiences, are unique" (*Lexical Priming* 11). Third, he also acknowledges that "words spoken by a close friend are likely to affect our primings more directly than those spoken by someone to whom we are indifferent" (*Lexical Priming* 12).

Collocation, Hoey argues, "can only be accounted for in terms of priming"; as a result, he believes that "priming is the driving force behind language use, language structure and language change" (*Lexical Priming* 12). Priming is so powerful and meaningful as an explanation of language use that Hoey formulates ten hypotheses[7] that support this thesis: "Every word is primed for use in discourse as a result of the cumulative effects of an individual's encounters with the word. If one of the effects of the initial priming is that regular word sequences are constructed, these are also in turn primed" (*Lexical Priming* 13).

One key factor in Hoey's theory is the distinction he makes between one individual's primings versus those of a group of people represented by a collection of texts (a corpus). By definition, a corpus "represents no one's experience of the language" (*Lexical Priming* 14). Instead, what "a corpus can do is indicate that certain primings are likely to be shared by a large number of speakers, and only in that sense is priming independent of the individual" (*Lexical Priming* 15). For this reason, computers are useful:

> the computer corpus cannot tell us what primings are present for any language user, but it can indicate the kinds of data a language user might encounter in the course of being primed. It can suggest the ways in which priming might occur and the kinds of feature[s] for which words or word sequences might be primed. In other words, it can serve as a kind of laboratory in which we can test for the validity of claims made about priming. (Hoey *Lexical Priming,* 14).

Such a "laboratory" seems to be ideally devised by DocuScope®, the creation of David Kaufer and colleagues at Carnegie-Mellon.

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[7] A list of Hoey's hypotheses is included in the Appendix.

DocuScope®. Based upon the language theory of representational composition, Kaufer and Jeff Collins designed a computer software program called DocuScope (DS) that could "let people visualize and understand representational effects in texts" (Collins and Kaufer 2). Because "representational composition attempts to draw attention to the linguistic choices authors make that lead readers to have particular experiences with texts" (3), DocuScope searches texts for patterns of words it has been programmed to find. The tagging program "then displays its findings in ways that help users see the representational patterns. . ." (2). DocuScope is therefore described as "text tagging and visualization software" (2) whose goal is to locate and mark the patterns of language "by first isolating and categorizing the strings responsible for the effects and then presenting this information in a useful way" (5). Table 3-1 lists the clusters of strings with abbreviated names; a fuller explanation will be provided in a later chapter.

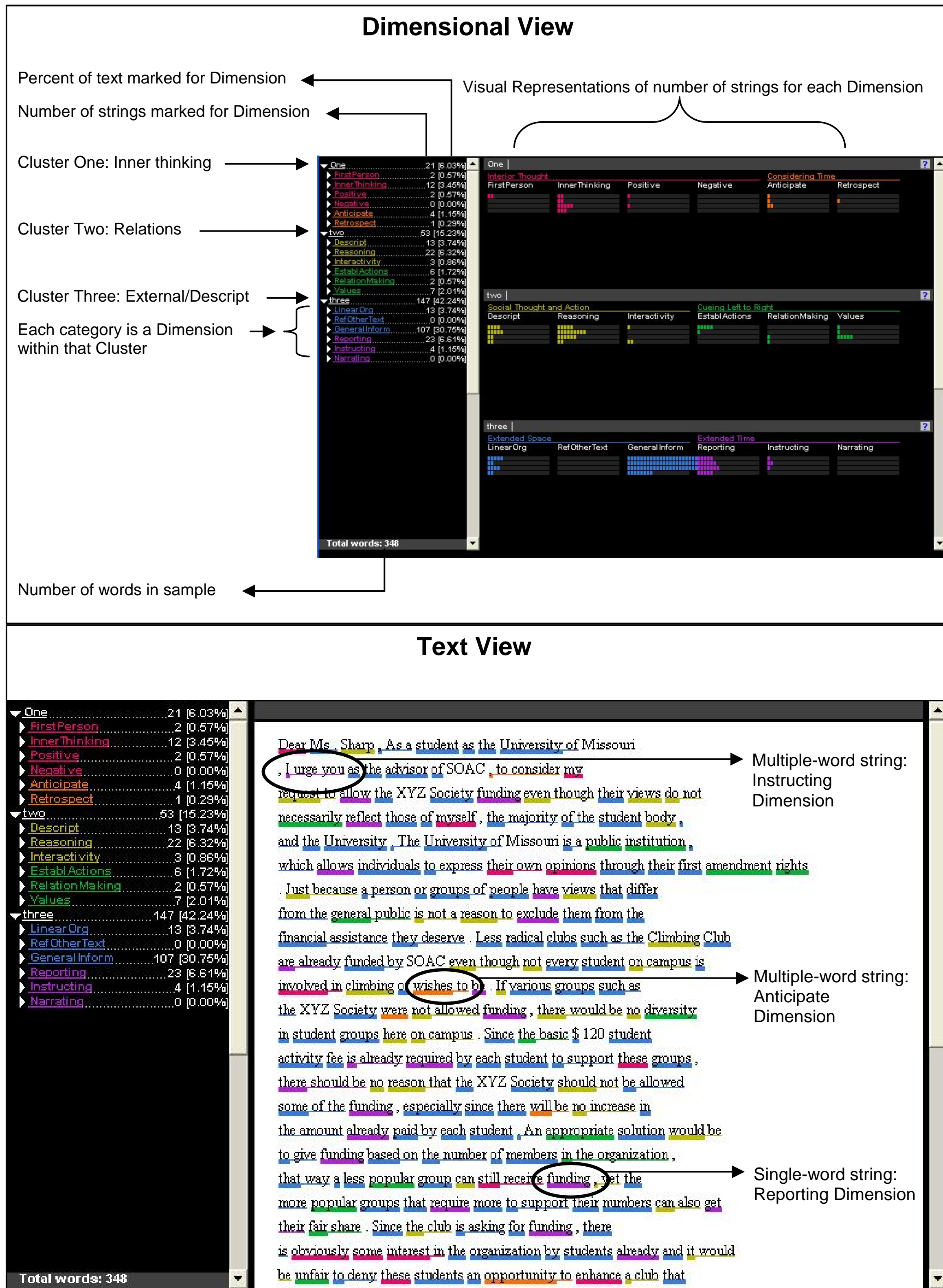
As can be seen in Illustration 1, DocuScope is unusually helpful in this task of visualization because of the way it uses color to code the linguistic strings. The strings are matched to one of six families and color-matched to the family. For example, a string that primed a reader for an expression of values would be coded green to match the second family of the second cluster. A string that cued a reader for reasoning would be coded yellow to fit with the first family in the second cluster The visualization techniques are reported to be so easy to understand that second-grade teacher Alexis Tuckfelt (Pittsburgh Public Schools) used a version of the color codings to help her young students understand the elements within nonfiction genres (188). However, for reasons outlined in the limitations of DocuScope, Tuckfelt's success may be more attributable to her own simplification of the color codings and taggings.

Table 3-1: **Clusters of String Classes Used by DocuScope**

| **Cluster: Inner Thought** | Class: willHBVed | Class: PosFeedback |
|---|---|---|
| *Dimension: FirstPerson* | Class: willHBVing | Class: NegFeedback |
| Class: FirstPer | Class: wouldPast | *Dimension: Interacting* |
| Class: SelfThinking | Class: wasToV | Class: BasicInteract |
| Class: SelfDisclosure | Class: wasToBVing | Class: OralInteract |
| Class: Autobio | Class: wasToBVed | Class: Question |
| *Dimension: InnerThinking* | Class: wasToHVed | Class: FAQs |
| Class: Private Thinking | Class: wasToHBVed | Class: Direct Address |
| Class: Confidence | Class: wasToHBVing | Class: Curiosity |
| Class: Uncertainty | Class: ToHVed | Class: Confront |
| Class: Disclosure | Class: ToHBVed | Class: Request |
| Class: Intensity | Class: ToHBVing | Class: Open Query |
| Class: Immediacy | **Cluster: Relations** | *Dimension: Notifying* |
| Class: Subjective Time | *Dimension: Reasoning* | Class: Report VP |
| Class: Subjective Percept | Class: Assert That | Class: VerbState |
| Class: Contingency | Class: Reason Forward | Class: Specifications |
| Class: Apology | Class: Reason Backward | Class: Definition |
| *Dimension: ThinkPositive* | Class: Direct Reasoning | Class: Sequence |
| Class: PosAffect | Class: Insist Reasoning | Class: Time Date |
| *Dimension: ThinkNegative* | Class: ConfirmedThought | Class: Update |
| Class: NegAffect | Class: Generalization | Class: Innovations |
| *Dimension: Think Ahead* | Class: Example | *Dimension: LinearGuidance* |
| Class: Project Ahead | Class: Support | Class: MetaDiscourse |
| Class: mayV | Class: Comparison | Class: Aside |
| Class: mayBVing | Class: Transformation | Class: Concessive |
| Class: mayHto | Class: Cause | Class: Follow Up |
| Class: inOrderToV | Class: Exceptions | Class: Citations |
| Class: AboToV | Class: Substitution | Class: Quotation |
| Class: isAboToV | Class: Refute That | Class: Dialog Cues |
| Class: isAboToBVing | Class: Deny Disclaim | Class: Pronoun Focus |
| Class: willB | Class: Resistance | Class: Lang Ref |
| Class: willV | Class: Standards Neg | Class: Communicator Role |
| Class: willBVed | *Dimension: ShareSocTies* | **Cluster: Description** |
| Class: willBVing | Class: Precedent | Dimension: WordPicture |
| Class: willFut | Class: CommonAuthorities | Class: PersonProperty |
| Class: wouldFut | Class: PriorKnowledge | Class: Sense Property |
| Class: isBecmingVed | Class: Received POV | Class: Sense Object |
| *Dimension: Think Back* | Class: Inclusive | *Dimension: SpaceInterval* |
| Class: ProjectBack | Class: Standards Pos | Class: Space Relation |
| Class: Used to | Class: TimePStandard | *Dimension: Motion* |
| Class: wasA | Class: Resemblances | Class: Motions |
| Class: HavePast | Class: Promise | Class: Motion Interval |
| Class: mayHB | Class: Reassure | *Dimension: Past Events* |
| Class: hasB | Class: Reinforce | Class: VedWord |
| Class: hadB | Class: Acknowledge | Class: VedPhrase |
| Class: hasVed | *Dimension: Direct Activity* | Class: wasVing |
| Class: had Ved | Class: Imperative | *Dimension: TimeInterval* |
| Class: HVed | Class: Insist Act | Class: Time Duration |
| Class: HBnVed | Class: Task Assignments | Class: Bio |
| Class: HBnVing | Class: Procedures | Class: Mature Process |
| Class: mayHVed | Class: Move Body | Class: Generic Events |
| Class: mayHBVed | Class: Move Body | Class: Recurring Events |
| Class: mayHBVing | Class: Error Recovery | *Dimension: Shifting Events* |
| Class: willHVed | Class: Feedback | Class: Scene Shift |
| | | Class: Time Shift |

Kaufer, David, Cheryl Geisler, Suguru Ishizaki, and Pantelis Vlachos. "Textual Genre Analysis and Identification." *Ambient Intelligence for Scientific Discovery*. Ed. Y. Cai. LNAI 3345. Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 2005. 141.

**Illustration 3-1: Annotated Single-Text Visualizer (STV): Dimensional and Text Views**



DocuScope is further "described as a flexible string-matching software" that "can match strings [of words] up to any length" (Collins and Kaufer 12). "Strings" are merely "series of words" (12). (Michael Hoey similarly states that "priming begins with the phonological string" (*Lexical Priming* 171). One example given in DocuScope that clarifies the need for the ability to match word strings of varying lengths is this:

1. On one hand there was *a freckle*.
2. On one hand there was *evidence of fraud*.

Kaufer and Collins explain that these two sentences represent "extremely different experiences for the reader, but the strings do not start to disambiguate until the sixth word" (12). In other words, if DocuScope worked only with individual words, it could not account for the differences between the two sentences once the reader reaches the words "a freckle" or "evidence of fraud." However, the concept works with individual words, as well, if they can be disambiguated at the single-word level. An example provided by Hoey is also useful to understand the concept: "a listener, previously given the word *body*, will recognise the word *heart* more quickly than if they had previously been given an unrelated word such as *trick*; in this sense, *body* primes the listener for *heart*" (*Lexical Priming* 8).

In *The Power of Words*, the researchers claim to have "catalog[ed] over 500 million unique English strings across a range of audience experience categories" (xviii). The advantage of using strings of words, rather than singular words, is further explained in a presentation made by Cheryl Geisler and David Kaufer at the June 2004 meeting of the Rhetorical Society of America: "In most text analysis systems, matches are made between single words and a dictionary of terms of interest" (2). However, for two

reasons, they disavow the practice: “First, rhetoricians know that single words seldom carry the burden of rhetorical meaning” and “Second, rhetoricians know that rhetorical analysis concerns itself with what a text *does*, as well as what it *says*” (2). Although Geisler believes that a rhetorician working alone with “small and well-defined sets of texts for close analysis . . . probably has no need for technological assistance,” she affirms that DocuScope is effective and accurate used with large analyses (23).

Thus, the microscope for Hoey’s laboratory is provided by Collins and Kaufer’s DocuScope. They explain:

> English phrasal patterns are extremely difficult to store or manage on paper or even in standard databases. Different English patterns can share multiple words. What we needed was an information system to manage and differentiate rhetorical knowledge from naturally occuring English patterns. This required a system with the flexibility to categorize English patterns differently, even when they overlapped substantially. (“Description of DocuScope” 11)

Table 3-1 replicates one version of the categories used in DocuScope.

Theories behind Lexical Priming and DS. In addition to representational composition, the theories behind the development of the text-tagging and visualization software are these: (1) the previously mentioned work of linguist Michael Halliday, (2) the work of rhetorician I.A. Richards (Collins and Kaufer 5), and (3) the work of Richard A. Lanham on looking “at” and “through” language (Kaufer et al., “Textual Genre Analysis and Identification” 131). From Richards they have taken “the powerful divide between language turned outward and inward” (Kaufer et al., *The Power of Words,* 53). However, there is little expansion of this idea in the short space devoted to Richards in *The Power of Words*; a more complete sense may be found by turning to Ann Berthoff’s edition of *Richards on Rhetoric: I. A. Richards: Selected Essays (1929-1974)*. In “A

Study of Misunderstanding and Its Remedies" Richards has written that the only way to "account for understanding and misunderstanding" is "to renounce, for a while, the view that words just have their meanings and that what a discourse does is to be explained as a composition of these meanings—as a wall can be represented as a composition of its bricks." He notes, "Bricks, for all practical purposes, hardly mind what other things they are put with. Meanings mind intensely—more indeed than any other sorts of things" (qtd. in Berthoff 106-107).

In another essay, "Motivation" (from *Interpretation in Teaching*), Richards describes how the writer selects from a sphere of words to form a nucleus of relatively stable words and meanings. Each sphere outwardly leads to increasingly unstable meaning: "vast ranges of these free or unimplied factors must still be somehow ordered so as to secure some correspondence between those active in the reader and in the writer" (qtd. in Berthoff 125). Indeed, Richards seems awed that verbal communication is possible: "our wonder must be that understanding is achieved so often and goes so deep, not that it so often fails" (qtd. in Berthoff 126).

In "Some Glances at Current Linguistics," Richards somewhat tartly dispenses with the idea "that language is 'creative,' that people are incessantly saying things that no one has said before, instead of merely repeating phrases they have heard" (qtd. in Berthoff 202). He quotes from one such [Chomskyan?] linguist:

> A fluent speaker's mastery of his language exhibits itself in his ability to produce and understand the sentences of his language, *including indefinitely many that are wholly novel to him* (i.e., his ability to produce and understand *any* sentence of his language). (qtd. in Berthoff 203)

Richards' reaction to that linguist's statement is this: "Anyone faced with a sentence wholly novel to him is in the position of the beginner in a new language who has met

none of its words before nor any of the constructions in which they are being used" (qtd. in Berthoff 203).

What Richards prefers instead is a kind of linguistics that he says is thus far nameless, "but it can be readily described. It is the art of conscious comparings of meanings and of the explicit description of them through linguistic signs" ("Powers and Limits of Signs," qtd. in Berthoff 211). He describes it as "the dependency of meanings on the meanings of other words surrounding them in the setting as well as upon other factors in the ambience. What should be brought out is how what a word does is changed by a change made elsewhere in a passage" (211-212). He argues that "any change in the phrasing entails some change in the meaning of a sentence. Sometimes it is a change that matters, sometimes not" (212). As a final tenet, he proclaims, "Occasions differ, speakers differ, recipients differ. In spite of which human communication can somehow be maintained" (213). His argument seems quite sympathetic to that of lexical priming.

The final theorist whom Kaufer et al. cite as influencing the development of lexical priming and DS, Richard Lanham, provides a theory of close reading:

> Lanham has sought to explain the mutual dependence of content-dependent and –independent methods of close reading by distinguishing two parallel and complementary actions of close reading—looking through text and looking at it. Looking though [sic] text involves reading for content. Looking at text involves reading for the surface signals that bear on how content is distributed in ways that affect the reading experience itself. ("Textual Genre Analysis" 131)

Looking "at" text is generally something that critics do; the rest of us, Lanham argues, are content to follow the Aristotelian dictate that "clarity" is the highest virtue of writing (*Analyzing Prose* 189). Thus, we look "through" writing, paying little or no attention to the building blocks of writing, the words themselves. Somehow, in this "transparent"

state of looking through language, "Ideas are just 'out there,' self-standing and absolutely real. We use words to reveal ideas or point to them, but not to construct them." Because of this attitude, Lanham writes, students seem to be saying, "'Don't bother about my words, teacher. Look at my wonderful ideas!' Ideas are things, bottom-line grown-up stuff. Words are sissified and artistic." Nevertheless: "As soon as you look *at* a verbal surface, though, rather than *through* it, this independence of ideas comes into question." In fact, Lanham insists, "Ideas seem to depend on the words that express them" (*Analyzing Prose*, 205).

Summary. Michael Hoey states that "priming is what happens to the individual and is the direct result of a set of unique, personal, unrepeatable and humanly-charged experiences." He argues that speakers and writers "have enough control of the situation in which [they] speak [or write] to use words as if [they] were in a particular context, thereby contributing to the creation of such a context (or of a different context that references such a context" (*Lexical Priming* 178). Earlier in the same text, he expresses his belief that priming exists because all of us have a similar experience: We can observe communication taking place, so there must be some "harmonising principles" that enable us to share similar primings to other people that contribute to our being able to communicate (11).

Similarly, David Kaufer and his colleagues argue, "Words in use prime an audience's experience and different words prime different experience" (*The Power of Words* xvii). They note that their interest lies in "making a theoretical case for a systemic and understudied micro-layer of language through which speakers and writers control the audience experience" (xix). They believe that writers have an "implicit knowledge" that

allows them to "prime readers" and that this "know-how" is "a priming art speakers and writers tacitly rely on to direct audiences" (xxi). The latter part of *The Power of Words* is devoted to a number of studies that put their theory to work.

For example, a study of priming strings in Shakespeare's comedies and histories reveals that "the comedies have more positive affect priming strings than the histories," whereas the histories, "with their tales of regicide and combat," have "more 'think negative' than the comedies" (209). Additionally, "the comedies have more strings priming 'reasoning' than do the histories," possibly because of the comedies' use of "the masking and unmasking of characters and the tangling and resolution of deceits necessit[ating] reasoning between the characters" (209). Kaufer et al. "hypothesize one reason behind this finding to be that Shakespeare's histories generally have fewer situations where explicit reasoning and explanations need to be shared with the audience" (212).

One of the co-authors of *The Power of Words*, Jeff Collins, based his dissertation upon two huge corpora of "written American English, known as the Brown and the Frown corpora"; these corpora are "parallel, million-word" collections "each comprised of 500 texts, sorted into some common fiction and non-fiction genres of professional writing" (qtd. in Kaufer et al., *The Power of Words* 214). He found that the non-fiction texts show more frequent use of strings related to "social ties with the reader" than did the fiction works (215). Such a finding "tends to support Kaufer and Butler's (2000) argument that overtly building ties with readers is a necessity for much information and instructional writing" because writers of "explicit arguments depend on social ties, directives to the audience, and reasoning cues to achieve the engagement needed to bring

an audience along on the writer's rhetorical journey" (qtd. in Kaufer et al. *The Power of Words* 215). In contrast, fiction writers "compose from external perspectives significantly more frequently than do authors of nonfiction" and "make more use of strings priming visual imagery" (216).

In studies of Presidential Inaugural Addresses, Kaufer et al. explore the connection of genre: "many aspects of the rhetorical situation affect genre. Genres are not static categories of text, but are built of texts generated by readers' and authors' responses to previous texts and current situations" (218). In essence, "genres guide writers—writers must operate within and against a genre when composing texts—but genres are also built by the writers acting in the moment and evolve (or dissipate) with each new writing" (218). As a result, Kaufer and his fellow researchers "have begun to discover genres as varying combinations of priming strings" (219). In an examination of Presidential Inaugural Addresses, they found that "inaugurals delivered by a president who had already delivered one tend to be less positive yet more invested in referencing 'time intervals.' The subsequent addresses also tend to use fewer markers of explicit reasoning" (222). Kaufer et al. put forth tentative hypotheses based on their study of the inaugural addresses, but conclude that a full and "satisfying explanation would need to extend far beyond the study of the texts themselves . . . and would need to be placed in the context of the political and linguistic changes in the United States since its establishment" (229).

In addition to genre, Kaufer and his students studied differing writing styles of authors engaged in writing in the same genre. They looked at opinion articles written by two professional columnists who write on similar political topics from similar political

perspectives and found that one author tends to withhold her "internal perspective and involvement with the audience," whereas the other author's "mind is visible in his texts and that visibility is part of a signature style." The latter writer used frequent "first person coupled with thinking verbs, subjective perception, and interactive questions" as a way to be "in his audience's face" (*The Power of Words* 230).

To summarize the perspectives of Hoey and Kaufer et al., then, one could say the following concepts are stated or implied:

- All of us—writers and readers alike—are primed to use language in similar ways as well as in ways that are idiosyncratic and personalized.
- Both writers and readers take implicit advantage of priming effects on language.
- A writer's choice of genre is both affected by that writer's priming and affects the future primings for writers in that genre.
- Individual writers' styles are both affected by their primings and affect future primings for both those writers, their readers, and future writers.
- Analysis of priming alone cannot account for complete interpretations of texts. To interpret fully, one needs to account for social, cultural, political, and historical factors. However, analysis of priming within texts is one method by which to begin to account for the writer's effect upon the reader's experience.

This chapter has rather broadly provided the theoretical background for lexical priming, as well as a partial justification for implementing computer-aided textual analysis in examining lexical priming. In Chapter 4: Research Design and Methodology, the research study based on the theory of lexical priming is outlined and described.

## CHAPTER FOUR:
## RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The first part of this chapter describes the participants in the study, the writing tasks that were required, and the procedures that were followed. The second part explains a form of evidence of audience awareness that investigates, among other traits, context-creating statements, and suggests its applicability as an additional measure of audience sensitivity. A third segment explains in greater depth the computerized text-tagging tool, DocuScope, delineates how it is used in this study, and investigates its value as a tool to aid text analysis.

### Part I

#### Participants

Participants were 165[8] writing students in eleven sections of the Winter 2001 semester of English 20, the one-semester required composition course at the University of Missouri-Columbia, a large Research I university in the midwest. English 20 is designed for the majority of enrolling first-year students. In contrast, students who qualify for honors classes enroll in separately marked sections, and students who need more help with writing (based on their scores on the essay portion of their college entrance examination) are usually routed toward classes called "stretch," for which additional tutoring is supplied. Students for whom English is a second language are advised to take specially designated English 20 classes. All others take the regular English 20 class, which may or may not be held in a computerized classroom. Because these students were second-semester students, it is possible that some students had

[8] Initially, 167 sample texts were counted. However, it was discovered that one student wrote two samples, perhaps due to a misunderstanding of the assignment. The other error is due to duplication of a sample.

previously taken English 20 in the fall semester and were repeating it to earn a higher grade.

The 165 students did not volunteer to participate in the study; rather, their instructors did. The instructors of record replaced their own diagnostic writing prompts with the writing prompts used in the study. Because knowing that the diagnostic writings were going to be used to analyze for audience differences could potentially have biased the participants, they were not informed. All relevant identifying data were removed from the students' writing samples before they were given to the researcher. Thus, no violations of students' rights occurred. The University of Missouri Institutional Review Board granted the project an Exempt status, indicating that there was no concern about negative consequences to any of the students.

Writing Task

A *writing prompt* (topic and explanation to inspire writing) tailored to three different audiences (Authority Figure, Close Friend, and Unspecified Essay) was administered to the eleven different sections of English 20. Eight graduate instructors teaching these eleven sections volunteered to administer the prompts as a diagnostic writing task and to collect their students' responses. (Copies of the writing prompts are included in Appendix B; the initial letter to the graduate instructors is Appendix A.)

The topic of the prompt was student contributory funding for the Student Organizations Allocations Committee (SOAC). Each student at MU pays a student activity fee of approximately $120 each semester; the fees fund various groups and organizations on campus—including ethnic, religious, and political groups. SOAC is a committee made up of students whose task is to decide which groups receive funding.

There is a faculty advisor (the Authority Figure)[9] named Suzanne Sharp, who was quoted in a local newspaper as saying that "nearly every student group that is eligible for funding receives it." Since most college campuses regularly deal with groups of students protesting funding for organizations whose policies and goals they don't agree with, I felt that MU's students would be equally interested in where their money was going.

In order to set up the task as persuasive writing, the group to get the funding had to be one with whom the student writer would disagree. Given the diversity of MU's student body, I knew that no single group of my own designation would be likely to meet that criterion, so I allowed the students to decide what it was that the group—designated the "XYZ Society"—stood for or did. Students were directed to imagine the XYZ Society as being whatever they wanted, as long as they could imagine themselves as strongly disagreeing with its ideology. I also hoped to play on school pride by having them conceive of the XYZ Society as holding beliefs and ideals that did not represent the majority of students at MU, nor of the school itself.

The only difference in the three prompts was that approximately one-third of the students were asked to write to a close friend who is a member of SOAC; one-third were asked to write to Suzanne Sharp, the faculty advisor; and the remaining third were directed to write an essay about the topic, with no specific audience listed. In all three prompts, students were directed to "express their views about whether the XYZ Society should receive SOAC funding." My working hypothesis was that the differing audiences would cause the students to write differently, and indeed, that is what I found, as will be shown in Results.

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[9] At the time of this study, student groups on the campus of University of Missouri-Columbia were required to use faculty members as advisors.

Procedure

All eight instructors in my study regularly used diagnostic essays early in the semester, as do many teachers of composition at MU and nationwide, in order to determine the range of student writing ability in an individual class so that assignments may be more appropriately tailored to those students and so that an early sample of writing from each student may be used as an assessment tool. The instructors who used the study's tailored writing prompt used it only in lieu of one of their own choosing; in other words, all instructors would have used a writing assignment early in the semester as a diagnostic tool, whether that assignment was original to them or was one selected from the many available in writing textbooks.

The graduate instructors were asked to provide as little explanation of the writing prompt as possible. I left it up to individual instructors to decide whether their students would respond to the prompt in class or as homework; as a result, many of the essays were written outside of class. It was important for the research that the students be as unaware as possible that one-third of them were being asked to write a letter to a close personal friend; one-third were being asked to write on the same topic to an unknown authority figure; one-third were given no audience instructions, but were told to write an essay on the topic. The reason for keeping the students unaware was that more information could potentially serve to further affect the students' sense of audience. The more explanation the teacher provided, the more the students might be likely to see their teacher as the only real audience. Further, wanting the distribution of prompts to be as random as possible, I did not want students trading with each other to get their preference of the three prompts. It is possible, of course, that the students did speak among

themselves and discover that there were three slightly different prompts, but since the majority of the diagnostic writing samples were assigned during the first two weeks of class, I anticipated that students would not yet have many friends with whom to speak in their English class.

Although the prompts were carefully divided so that each of the eight instructors would have one-third of each type to distribute to each class, the responses to the prompts were not equally one-third for each type for a number of reasons:

- class sizes for English 20 are capped at 20 students, but on the days the diagnostic prompts were administered, not all students in each class were present. One class turned in only 8 responses (possibly because the class was underenrolled).
- some students may have chosen not to turn in their responses to the prompt. It is not uncommon for students to fail to do or to turn in ungraded assignments.
- some students' responses were not returned with the prompt and were sufficiently unclear as to which prompt was being answered so that placement of these texts into the three categories relied upon an educated assessment.
- some instructors removed the prompts before photocopying the diagnostic texts so that they could more easily preserve the privacy of their students.

Three of the eight instructors submitted prompts to two classes; five instructors submitted prompts to only one class each. Over 200 prompts were distributed, which means that approximately 73 prompts for each of the three audience types were handed out.

In evaluating these writing samples, I have made the following assumptions:

- All students had the same instructions (provided by letter to the teachers participating) regarding what they were to do with the writing prompt.
- Roughly one-third of the students wrote on each of the three prompts (identical except for audience direction).
- No student turned in a sample revised after teacher feedback. It is, of course, possible that students revised on their own. Since most of the writing samples

collected were handwritten on the writing prompt itself, such revisions as were made were obvious.

- All students were at roughly equal levels of ability. I base this assumption on their enrollment in regular sections of English 20.

After each teacher of record collected the responses, each student sample (minus the writer's name or other identifying data) was photocopied and transcribed. The teachers of record for each class kept all originals. In all, I received 165 useful student responses ranging in length from one paragraph to two pages; responses averaged about 250 words each. (About half the responses—88 of them—ranged between one-half to one full typed page, double-spaced. Another 44 were one page to one-and-a-half pages. Only seven were longer than a page and a half; the remainder were shorter than a half-page.) The dispersal of subjects was 58 in Treatment One (letter to the authority figure), 53 in Treatment Two (the essay), and 54 in Treatment Three (letter to a friend.) Of these,

- 56 were clearly responses to the Authority Audience prompt;
- 46 were clearly responses to the Close Friend Audience prompt;
- 52 were clearly responses to the Essay (no audience specified) prompt;
- 11 were initially deemed too unclear to be assigned to one of the three groups. These responses either had no prompt attached and it was not possible to quickly discern which prompt was being used, or else the response was to a prompt different from the one attached to the writer's response.

Later, after the unclear 11 were studied in-depth, they were assigned to one of the three groups. This final grouping was assigned in this way:

- 2 were added to Authority for a total of 58;
- 7 were added to Close Friend for a total of 53;
- 2 were added to Essay for a total of 54.

The 165 writing samples were examined intuitively to determine not only how to place the aberrant samples, but also to determine which features seemed to stand out as being especially relevant. This intuitive study involved examination of the syntax, diction choices, and mechanics of the writing samples. Content, as well, was studied, as were methods of organization and development. However, the large sample size proved to be difficult to analyze in an intuitive fashion. Therefore, I turned to other methods of analysis which are explained below.

## Part II: Audience-Sensitivity Traits

Because computer-aided text analysis can have limitations, and because a number of similar studies have in the past relied upon audience-sensitivity and intimacy studies related to Hallidayean metafunctions to show that writers were or were not keeping their audiences in mind as they wrote, an analysis was conducted of the 165 writing samples by using a rubric of context-creating statements, descriptive statements, persuasive appeals, and audience-directed statements. This rubric was adapted from those used by Bracewell, Scardamalia, and Bereiter; Kroll; and Puma. (The categories within the rubric are also in some respects quite similar to the categories developed for DocuScope by Kaufer and his colleagues.)

In Bracewell, Scardamalia, and Bereiter's study, students of varying ages wrote letters to describe how to draw specific geometric figures to others (other students as well as adults). The researchers looked at four types of statements:

- statements about the nature of the task (1 point each)
- statements about the overall extent of the task (1 point each)

- statements about the overall characteristics of a particular geometric figure (1 point each for each figure)
- statements about the general characteristics of part of a figure (1 point for each figure). (7-8)

The maximum score per description was six points. The authors note, “The four types of context-creating sentences are particular to this task and do not have separate theoretical significance; however, all fulfill Halliday’s three metafunctions of language” (7-8).

The results indicated that “ability to use context-creating sentences was present in students as low as grade 4” and that “[u]se of these audience-orienting devices increased markedly between grades 4 and 12” (18). The more letter-like the student’s writing was (as opposed to the research “control” of a so-called “standard school writing assignment” in which no audiences were specified), the more likely the students were to use context-creating statements. However, “not until grade 12 was their use clearly differentiated according to needs of the audience” (18).

Like Bracewell, Scardamalia, and Bereiter, Kroll devised a simple scoring system by using a three-point scale to represent the presence and adequacy of the context-creating statements: if the statement was omitted, then zero (0) points were given; if the statement was attempted but was not completely successful, then one (1) point was given; and if the statement was present and successful, then two (2) points were given. The second part of the study examined whether the children described the puppy (the letters’ topic), either physically or dispositionally (412).

Having assigned 49 students of approximately nine years of age to write to varying others to find a home for a (fictional) puppy, Kroll looked for the following context-creating elements: “introduction of the writer, statement of the problem, an

explicit request, and instructions for response" because such "elements provide the reader with orienting information about the background and aims of the communication" (412). He argued that communications without such context-creating statements or elements are less suitable for an audience. However, to broaden the search for ways in which these children provided audience orientation, Kroll included physical and "dispositional" descriptions of the puppy as another way in which the student writers presumably could create context for readers.

The third part of Kroll's study dealt with the types of appeals the writers used. He defined five types:

- flattery of the addressee
- use of audience-directed statements
- appeals based on claims for the match-up (between dog and addressee)
- appeals for sympathy
- appeals based on enticements (412-413).

Kroll's subjects succeeded well at stating the problem and making an explicit request (413). Additionally, most of them did well with including descriptions of the puppy, which Kroll believes "may reveal a basic awareness of the reader's need to know something about the puppy" (416). He writes, "Considered together, the results for context-creating statements, descriptive information, and appeals indicate that these nine-year-old children were, on the whole, fairly successful in producing letters adapted to their audiences" (417). He describes the "most successful letters" as having "a balance of physical and dispositional descriptions" with appeals to the readers and the most useful context-creating statements, such as "stating the problem and making an explicit request"

(418). In his conclusion he called for "future research on audience" that would examine audience-adaptive skills of two types: "skill at adapting messages to the needs of any reader for explicitness and clarity, and skill at adapting messages to the specific characteristics of individual readers" (426).

Drawing additionally upon Halliday's work with register and tenor to compose a study of audience intimacy, Vincent Puma devised an "Audience Intimacy Index" that used two different rubrics. One, the Descriptive Rubric, was designed to examine the interpersonal component; the other, the Analytic Rubric, examined, among other elements, "audience-directed statements" ("The Effects" 45). He explains, "Taken together, the studies of Bracewell et al. and Kroll provide the basis for measuring degree of audience intimacy descriptively because the number and type of context-creating statements and appeals tend to vary with different audiences and effect" ("The Effects" 64). Similarly, Puma used a simple scoring rubric, with elements rated from 0 to 2. If a writing sample omitted an element, that element's score was 0 ("The Effects" 70).

As illustrated below, I adapted the rubrics, scoring, and coding from the three studies above to fit this project's requirements[10]. This rubric will be called **Audience Sensitivity Traits (AST)**. It is explained as follows:

**Context-Creating Elements:** (with sample types of statements)

- States the problem [*A new group on campus*, *XYZ Society, has requested funding from SOAC*....]

[10] One major similarity between my study and Puma's is that both studies called upon students to be persuasive in their writing. My reasoning was that persuasion is a major element of rhetoric, and at University of Missouri, students are frequently called upon, both in first-year composition and in subsequent writing-intensive courses, to formulate their writing as an argument. Puma cited his reason for choosing a "persuasive aim" as being "an effort to encourage the students to confront their audiences directly" and referenced James L. Kinneavy's *A Theory of Discourse* (11). Kinneavy considered persuasive discourse to be most focused on what he termed the "decoder" (60); he writes that "persuasion is decoder-oriented discourse" (219).

- Makes an explicit request [*Please deny funding to XYZ*....]
- Introduces the writer (self) [*I am a freshman who is greatly concerned about this problem*....]
- Tells how to respond [*Please let me know what you decide*....]

**Descriptive Statements:**

- Physical description of XYZ Society *[All the members of XYZ are white males....]*
- Dispositional description of XYZ Society [*Everyone in XYZ advocates the overthrow of the government*....]

**Persuasive Appeals:**

- Flattery of reader [*Because you are so well-respected, you can affect the decision that SOAC makes....]*
- Appeal to similar values [*You and I were both raised to believe in the value of each living soul*....]
- Appeals for sympathy or empathy [*You can understand how frightening such a group can be to those of us who*....]
- MU school pride [*A great school like MU does not deserve to have its reputation ruined by XYZ*....]
- Threats [*If you don't do something about XYZ, I will take my tuition dollars and go elsewhere*....]
- Logic [*It seems reasonable that students should have a say in where their money goes*....]

**Audience-Directed Statements:**

- Addresses and names reader in text [*Tom*, w*e've been friends for a long time, so....]*
- Uses "you" to refer to reader specifically (not generic, universal reader) [*I'm bringing this problem to you because you are the SOAC advisor*....]
- Refers to specific reader characteristic (age, etc.) [*Because you are the secretary for SOAC....]*
- Refers to specific relationship history [*It's been a long time since we used to skip geometry class together, but*....]

**Coding Values and Scoring:**

0 – no statement or evidence of the trait is present
1 – only a weak statement or scant evidence of the trait is present
2 – a strong statement or evidence of the trait is present

After carefully reading each sample text and scoring each trait in each text from 0-2, I subjected the data to a content analysis of the three treatments (Authority Letters, Essays, Friend Letters) of the 165 texts. SPSS was used to facilitate the examination of

multiple variables. The samples were examined for differences between treatments using both content analysis and statistical analysis. Analysis of the three treatments using ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) revealed that there were variables that were statistically different among the three treatments. Further analysis using the T-Test for differences of means was performed to provide verification of statistical differences, directionality, and significance of the individual treatment means between pairs of treatments. These results are presented in the next chapter (Results).

## Part III: DocuScope

DocuScope® text-tagging software enabled me to perform a content analysis on the three treatments (authority letters, friend letters, essays) of the 165 texts. The means for the content variables were assigned by Docuscope® and, as recommended by the designers of DocuScope, these means were retained for further statistical analysis using the SPSS® statistical software, a commercially available software package for statistical analysis. The variables were examined for differences among treatments using both content analysis and statistical analysis.

Analysis of the three treatments using ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) revealed that there were variables that were statistically different among the three treatments. The ANOVA "is useful because it compares the scores of the groups, takes account of each group's variability, and provides an indication of how confident we can be that the differences between the scores is due to group membership and is not the result of random variation" (Kaufer et al., *The Power of Words*, 208).

Further analysis using the T-Test for differences of means was performed to provide additional support for those statistical differences and to provide directionality and statistical significance of the individual variable means between pairs of treatments. These results are presented in tables in the next chapter (Results).

In the words of DocuScope's designers, "The mean score indicates the average percentage of text devoted to the dimension" and the "standard deviation indicates the variability within each group of texts on that dimension." That means that if there is a low mean score, "a low percentage of strings in the texts are devoted to priming that dimension. A low standard deviation indicates the texts in the group have similar percentages of strings devoted to the dimension" (208).

Higher means indicate a higher quantity or likelihood of the variable being present. Also listed is the probability level, or "p-value, which further describes the confidence warranted by the results of the analysis" (208). The likelihood of "random error" causing the difference is low if the p-value is low. Any value under 0.05 means that the result is statistically significant (208). Probability (or alpha) levels that are displayed with an asterisk indicate the significance level is at $p \leq 0.05$, representing a 1 in 20 chance that the difference is because of random chance.

Validity and Reliability of DocuScope

The question of the validity of the DocuScope environment is one that Kaufer et al. address early on in *The Power of Words*, stating their awareness that "coding schemes" such as theirs "represent public and scientific bases of knowledge" which "seek to adhere to the standards of intersubjective reliability and validity"—i.e., "that different people independently classify the same string into the same priming category and that

their agreement is descriptive of the actual phenomenon being coded" (45). In order to fulfill their goal of making their project as objective as possible, they leaned toward "codings that an average reader could confirm on a quick 'second-take' rather than codings that require detailed context-specific interpretations to understanding or to agree with" (45). Robustness of codings ("those codings holding over the most frequent contexts of use") were also important to the developers (45).

Internal validity was tested, as well, to answer this question: "Do our classifications of strings and their primings of audience make separations of text that human classifiers would make at the whole text level?" (45). They tested their classifications on two groups of texts (the Brown and the Freiderg-Brown Corpus), and "found that our strings successfully distinguish fiction and nonfiction genres as well as genres that are more narrative-based (histories, memoirs, mysteries) from those that are more information-based (academic, religious, government documents)" (45).

External validity, also called ecological validity, investigates whether "human readers, untutored in our catalog or its categories, can reproduce our priming categories when they report the experience of their reading" (45). On this measure they found that more work needed to be done: "some of the priming categories in our catalog become visible only when a reader is trained to look at language with a high meta-awareness about function" (46). An example offered is this one: "the English string *anytime soon* only occurs to prime a denial (e.g., *I won't be here anytime soon*). Yet this recognition is not immediately apparent to the average reader encountering these two words alone" (46).

Thus, despite wishing to regard their catalog “as a scientific coding scheme matching the judgments of actual writers and readers,” the developers of DocuScope have realized that they are “also cataloging a more elusive meta-awareness of language that speakers and writers tap into but seldom bring to surface articulation, much less public discussion.” Essentially, then: “The knowledge our catalog extracts seems outside the explicit awareness of most language users” (46). That is to say, the categories and string classifications used by DocuScope are not transparent and easily discerned, one problem that the average researcher will encounter in using this text-tagging environment. It is also problematical for researchers not involved in the creation of the instrument to discover that the designers have shifted and renamed categories as DocuScope has evolved. (For instance, the original External Cluster was renamed Description, and the original string category “description” later absorbed into the Description Cluster. One major dimension, General Inform, is nowhere to be found in *The Power of Words*.)

Despite these problems, Kaufer and a number of other researchers have successfully used DocuScope to aid in the analysis of various types of texts. Studies described in *The Power of Words* are these:

- “To Reason Why: Differences in Shakespeare’s Histories and Comedies”
- “Fiction and Nonfiction: Differences in Genres of Published Writing”
- “Advertising and Presidential Inaugurals: Adapting the Message to the Times”
- “Adapting the Audience to a Message: Differences in Individual Writers’ Language Choices.”

The dissertation of *The Power of Words’* co-author Jeff Collins, *Variations in Written English: Characterizing the Authors’ Rhetorical Language Choices Across Corpora of*

*Published Texts* (2003), is described as "the most extensive study to date" using DocuScope (207).

Since the publication of *The Power of Words*, Kaufer and colleagues have had numerous research projects using DocuScope published in top-ranked peer-reviewed journals:

- *IEEE Transactions of Professional Communication*
- *Discourse & Society*
- *Journal for Business and Technical Communication*
- *Computers in the Humanities*.

Further, their DocuScope-based research has appeared in these refereed collected volumes:

- *Sustaining Excellence in "Communicating Across the Curriculum": Cross-Institutional Experiences and Best Practices"*
- *Mental Space Approaches to Discourse and Interaction*
- *Writing and Digital Media*
- *Ambient Intelligence for Scientific Discovery*.

In 2004 researcher Cheryl Geisler was persuaded to match DocuScope to her "rhetorical intuition" in a study of tech reviews of personal digital assistants (PDAs). She began with a base of 103 proven tech reviews and 52 articles that she knew were not tech reviews, but which nonetheless mentioned PDAs. Then Geisler selected a third group of 112 articles that included a mix of reviews and non-reviews ("Into the Electronic Archives" 8). Afterwards, she wrote, "Docuscope managed to match my judgment most but not all of the time." She found that the comparison resulted in "a total of 20 apparently misclassified texts from the original set of 112, an apparent error rate of 18%" (9-10). After re-examining the documents that she had classified differently from DocuScope, she noted, "This secondary review resulted in my changing my mind in 9 out of 20 cases" (11). At that point, her "agreements with Docuscope rose from 82% to

90%"; in the "final analysis," there was disagreement on eleven of her sample texts, "less than 10% of the original sample" (12).

Geisler concluded that rhetoricians probably don't need the help of an environment like DocuScope if they are analyzing "small and well-defined sets of texts," but if rhetoricians need to analyze many texts, DocuScope "appears to be a very good technique for identifying texts of rhetorical interest, and may, in fact, do better than a rhetorician faced with great numbers of texts and limited time" (23). She adds, "What is harder for the rhetorician to analyze—but not for the computer—is to see the specific collocations of features that combined create the readerly experience of a genre" (24). Geisler notes that rhetoricians can "[feel] these collocations of language" easily enough, but that "analyzing them . . . can be painstaking" because it "is simply beyond our unaided reach" (24).

Limitations of DocuScope

However useful DocuScope is, it is not without its limitations. As David Kaufer and Jeff Collins write in a description of DocuScope, "It is *not* an attempt at artificial intelligence and the program does *not* 'understand' or analyze anything it 'reads.' DS simply goes through text documents and finds patterns of words that the humans using the program have told it are relevant to representation" (Collins and Kaufer 2). Later, they refer to another limitation: "it tags only contiguous language parts. It thus knows nothing about logical dependencies or about shifting speaking roles within textual dialog, for example" (12).

In another article, "Teaching Language Awareness in Rhetorical Choice," Kaufer, Ishizaki, Collins, and Vlachos discuss other limitations of DocuScope. They admit that

they "have yet to conduct a large cross-institution evaluation study" (391). Further, in order to work large-scale with students, the technology needs to become more user-friendly (392). Another relevant problem, they note, is that "the generalizability and scalability of our early findings are impeded by the fact that language theories of rhetorical behavior specific enough to be implemented in a flexible pattern-matching program are not standardized" (392). They report that most "authoritative language references continue to focus on the authority of the single word (in isolation) as its [sic] primary guide for writers" (392). Thus, many language researchers have yet to accept what DocuScope does—cataloging language strings—as being important (392).

Three other limitations are discussed: (1) the kinds of compilations of strings needed would be too huge and expensive to provide as dictionaries are provided; (2) students need to be highly driven to learn to use the technology; and (3) "the high learning overhead of our language categories" (393), which means that users with limited time will find the task of mastering DocuScope to be difficult. They are working on a new version which may remove the burden of statistical analysis from students and allow them to simply work with the language (394).

Despite these limitations, the designers of DocuScope predict that the future looks good for the use of text-visualization technology, even in the writing classroom, where they have discovered that even with the onerous burden of the technology, students have learned how to read "at two levels, both for meaning and reader experience" (364). Such knowledge affects students as readers and as writers: "Good writers are never solely single-word or single-meaning dispensers but always envision how readers can turn the discrete meanings of their words into continuous worlds of experience" (364).

DocuScope enables writers to develop language awareness. "Writers with language awareness," write Kaufer and colleagues, "are able to discuss the words they choose in terms of the rhetorical experience they plan for their readers and vice versa." Further:

> Writers with language awareness can describe ways that their texts fit and do not fit into textual practices with readers. They can better understand the continuum of words and situated actions that support writing across different situations and tasks and that make it possible to transfer writing skill across tasks without having to relearn writing anew in each new situation. ("Teaching Language Awareness" 366)

Given the many different uses to which DocuScope has been put already, it is not unreasonable to expect that its applicability will continue to increase. It has already proven itself useful in writing classrooms and in various Communicating Across the Curriculum text analyses. Should the day arise when it becomes as available and as easy to use as the word-processing software that we regularly use in writing classrooms today (providing students with a way to visualize their language), perhaps teaching students to be aware of audience will be the easiest part of a writing teacher's job.

Meanwhile, though, for the researcher who is not thoroughly trained in statistics and who has access to the DocuScope environment for only a limited amount of time[11], the uses of the program may remain limited. Certainly, because of the changes that have occurred just within the DocuScope nomenclature, I found myself often needing to shift from *The Power of Words,* to Collins and Kaufer's "Description of DocuScope" (2001), and then to "Teaching Language Awareness in Rhetorical Choice" (Kaufer, Ishizaki, Collins, and Vlachos, 2004), and "Textual Genre Analysis and Identification" (Kaufer, Geisler, Ishizaki, and Vlachos, 2005). I also relied upon many email exchanges with

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[11] I was granted access for one year by Carnegie Mellon.

David Kaufer and upon the notes I took at the RSA (Rhetoric Society of America) 2005 Institute held at Kent State University. Even with this amount of information, I found it difficult to understand some of the string classifications, a limitation which has negatively affected this study and will be further explained in the discussion of results.

DocuScope Clusters

In *The Power of Words*, David Kaufer and colleagues explain the clusters of lexical primings that DocuScope employs: "We divide the universe of priming strings into three perspectives: internal [inner thought], relational, and external [description]" (xviii). Based partly on the work of I.A. Richards, the Internal/Inner Thought Cluster is designed to "[reveal] the mind, interior thought, affect, or subjectivity of the speaker, writer, or a person or character referenced" (xviii). Using Halliday's Interpersonal Metafunction as its theoretical core, the Relational Cluster "creates ties between the speaker or writer and the audience or ties between persons and characters they might reference" (xviii). The third cluster, External/Description, "reveals the state of the world outside mind, elaborated descriptively within a scene or extended over time" (xviii). These three clusters are further subdivided into families, dimensions, and string classes (47). For purposes of this research, the more relevant terms are clusters, dimensions, and string classes.

**The Internal/Inner Thought Cluster**. This group of priming strings focuses upon the ways in which the writer wishes to present him- or herself to the reader. A writer priming an audience with these strings will present a personal portrait, one which reveals perspectives, attitudes, thoughts, memories, aspirations, and emotional states. A reader will get an impression of a writer's mind at work; that impression can be positive

or negative (Kaufer et al., *The Power of Words* 16, 47). As we are reminded, "Language, more than visual media, make[s] the interior of minds directly accessible to readers" (59). As a result, the genres of writing that one thinks of initially as representative of the Internal Cluster are self-disclosive: "[j]ournals, diaries, and memoirs." First-person pronouns are frequently used (59).

**The Relational Cluster.** When writers wish to engage more overtly in a partnership with readers, they may nevertheless still choose to hold readers at a distance, in a monologic approach (Kaufer et al., *The Power of Words* 231). If the desire is for a closer connection, to interact with readers, the approach is more dialogic (17, 231). In either case, writers also must direct readers in the ways in which the texts are to be read, to prevent readers from becoming lost (49). This cluster relies upon "mutual reasoning, in sharing premises and values of the larger culture, and in directing activities with audiences" (99). The Relational Cluster focuses upon priming strings that exhibit three purposes: (1) "[t]o orient audiences so that they know where they are and feel acknowledged as an interaction partner...; (2) "[t]o help audiences localize" the least-familiar information so that they can connect it "with what has come before"; and (3) "[t]o help audiences anticipate the unfamiliar yet to come so that they can navigate forward in the stream [of text] while minimizing the need to backtrack" (139-140).

**The External/Description Cluster.** This cluster addresses the world of "the public senses" (Kaufer et al., *The Power of Words* 49). Thus, description and narration are important (17). These strings present an objective world, not the subjective one of the Internal Cluster. Not surprisingly, fiction and poetry rely upon priming strings from the External Cluster (230). Scenes, images, time, word pictures—these are the bases of the

priming strings from this cluster. All three of the text types (authority letters, friend letters, and essays) are represented in all three of the clusters. The results indicated different emphases seemed relevant within each group.

DocuScope Categories vs. Audience-Sensitivity Trait Categories

As explained above, DocuScope is divided into three clusters. It is further subdivided into six families, eighteen dimensions, and dozens of string classes[12] (Kaufer, et al. *The Power of Words*). Clearly, such division is more complex and sensitive than the context-creating rubric's simple divisions of four categories and sixteen subcategories. However, some overlap occurs because both instruments are based at least partially upon Halliday's three metafunctions. The chart below suggests roughly comparable variables; i.e., a DocuScope variable called "Reasoning" is called "Logic" within the Context-Creating Statement rubric.

**Table 4-1: Categories Comparing Analysis Instruments DocuScope and Audience-Sensitivity Traits**

| DocuScope String Category | Audience-Sensitivity Trait Category |
|---|---|
| Relational Cluster: Update and Metadiscourse | Context-creating element: States the problem. |
| Internal Cluster: Self-Disclosure, Disclosure, Autobiography | Context-creating element: Introduces (writer) self to the reader. Often disclosed personal information about writer. |
| Internal Cluster: Think Positive and Positive Affect; Acknowledging | Persuasive Appeal: Flattery of reader (often included acknowledgement of what reader had done or could do). |
| Internal Cluster: Retrospection | Audience-Directed Statement: Refers to specific relationship history. |
| Relational Cluster: Reasoning | Persuasive Appeal: Logic |
| Relational Cluster: Basic Interactivity | Audience-Directed Statement: Uses specific "you." |
| Relational Cluster: Direct Address | Audience-Directed Statement: Addresses or names reader in text. |
| Relational Cluster: Resemblances | Audience-Directed Statement: Refers to |

[12] As the string classes are used later in this study, they will be explained.

| | |
|---|---|
| | specific reader trait. |
| Relational Cluster: Shared Positive Standards; Establishing Like-Mindedness | Persuasive Appeal: Appeal to similar values; MU School Pride. |
| Relational Cluster: Confrontation; Resistance | Persuasive Appeal: Threats |
| Relational Cluster: Request; Insistence on Action; Directing Activities | Context-creating element: Makes an explicit request; Tells how to respond. |
| Relational Cluster: Inclusiveness | Persuasive Appeal: Appeal for sympathy or empathy. |
| External Cluster: Description | Descriptive Statements: Physical and Dispositional Descriptions. |

Comparison of AST Rubric and DocuScope

Categories of classification in the AST Rubric could not be exactly paired with categories from DS, but they are reasonably close. Here are the pairings I made and why:

1. **DS: Self-Disclosure and Autobiography** (Internal Cluster) paired with **AST: Introduces Writer/Self** (Context-Creating Group). DocuScope's Self-Disclosure and Autobiography refer to a first-person consciousness that reveals the writer's perspective on him/herself and his/her past, present, and future. Similarly, the AST context-creating category of the writer introducing him/herself often discloses personal information about the writer.

2. **DS: Think Positive/Positive Affect** (Internal Cluster) paired with **AST: Flattery of Reader** (Persuasive Appeals Group). DS's Think Positive and Positive Affect and Acknowledging strings refer to positive and "feel good" language in general and to expressing gratitude and thanks to others. AST's persuasive appeal of flattery of the reader often included acknowledgement of what the reader has done that the writer is grateful for. Such gratitude is expressed in positive language.

3. **DS: Retrospection** (Internal Cluster) paired with **AST: Refers to Specific Relationship History** (Audience-Directed Statements Group). DS's Retrospection string refers to language that recalls an event from memory. AST's reference to a specific relationship history between the writer and the reader indicates that specific events have been remembered.

4. **DS: Update and Metadiscourse** (Relations Cluster) paired with **AST: States the Problem** (Context-Creating Group). DS's Update strings refer to providing the reader with incoming new information and to answering questions (already asked or assumed to be asked) that the reader has. Metadiscourse strings step outside the text, in a way, to provide the reader with an announcement of what is to come in the text that follows. AST's context-creating statement of Stating the Problem

also serves to provide the reader with an announcement of what is to follow and, like updates, to serve as background for new information that is being brought to the reader.

5. **DS: Reasoning** (Relations Cluster) paired with **AST: Logic** (Persuasive Appeals Group). DS's Reasoning strings serve a multitude of functions, but primarily serve to assert or reject information in a sequenced fashion that invites the reader to share the reasoning. AST's persuasive appeal of logic expresses the reasoning behind the writer's thinking, reasoning which the writer hopes will persuade the reader.

6. **DS: Basic Interactivity** (Relations Cluster) paired with **AST: Uses Specific "You"** (Audience-Directed Statements Group). DS's Basic Interactivity strings use the most common interactivity marker, second-person "you," in such a way as to direct the reader's attention into the text. Similarly, AST's use of specific "you" also speaks to the reader specifically, drawing the reader's attention back into the text.

7. **DS: Direct Address** (Relations Cluster) paired with **AST: Addresses or Names Reader in Text** (Audience-Directed Statements Group). DS's Direct Address, like Basic Interactivity, can rely upon "you" but goes further to enhance interactivity with the reader by using verbs that suggest direct and immediate connection. AST's address to or naming of the reader, an audience-directed statement, also speaks to a specific reader, calling him or her by name, calling upon that reader for direct attention.

8. **DS: Resemblances** (Relations Cluster) paired with **AST: Refers to Specific Reader Trait** (Audience-Directed Statements Group). DS's Resemblances refer to strings that help the reader see things the same way the writer sees them, calling upon shared background at times, to say to the reader that writer and reader see the world the same way; they are alike. In AST's specific reader trait, the writer mentions a trait that the reader has that the reader would not disagree with; it says that the writer knows the reader well enough to know a great deal about that reader.

9. **DS: Shared Positive Standards and Establishing Likemindedness** (Relations Cluster) paired with **AST: Appeal to Similar Values and MU School Pride** (Persuasive Appeals Group). DS's Shared Positive Standards and Establishing Likemindedness refer first to values that the writer believes that the reader and s/he share and second, to any shared values, whether those values are positive or negative. AST's appeal to similar values, including the value of school pride, also points out negative values that the writer expects the reader to share rejecting.

10. **DS: Confrontation and Resistance** (Relations Cluster) paired with **AST: Threats** (Persuasive Appeal Group). DS's Confrontation and Resistance explicitly include threats and strings of language that indicate negatives like

contrast words that signal resistance to something expressed in the text. AST's persuasive appeal of threats is much less specific, confining itself to threats (however vague and unmenacing).

11. **DS: Request and Insistence on Action and Directing Activities** (Relations Cluster) paired with **AST: Makes an Explicit Request and Tells How to Respond** (Context-Creating Group). DS's Requests and Insistence on Action and Directing Activities range from gentle "please" to "you must do this." Requests tend to be directed toward the reader in anticipation of a yes-or-no answer. Insistence on Action suggests a much stronger request, one that pushes for the reader to do something specific. Directing Activities means that the writer is pushing the reader to take action in the immediate time and place. AST's Making an Explicit Request and Telling How to Respond imply that the writer has asked the reader to do something and has further directed the reader in the manner of the reader's response—not just "Will you do this?" but "Will you do this now, and let me know you did it?"

12. **DS: Inclusiveness and Empathy** (Relations Cluster) paired with **AST: Appeal for Sympathy or Empathy** (Persuasive Appeals Group). DS's Inclusiveness and Empathy strings employ words and phrases that invoke group identity, a sense of "we are in this together"; empathy adds to inclusiveness by suggesting that not only are the writer and reader "in it together" but that the writer knows and shares the feelings the reader is experiencing and expects the reader to know and share the feelings the writer is conveying. AST's persuasive appeal for sympathy and/or empathy reveals a writer asking the reader to join with him/her in a common feeling ("As a human being, I am outraged, and you should be, too") or, at the very least, to recognize and have pity upon the plight of the writer.

13. **DS: Description** (External/Description Cluster) paired with **AST: Physical and Dispositional Descriptions** (Descriptive Statements Group). DS's Description Cluster encompasses many traits that convey the outside world, with all its senses (including time and space), from the writer to the reader. Within this cluster are physical and psychological descriptions of people, places, actions, and time. AST's Descriptive Statements are confined to a simpler physical and dispositional description of XYZ Society.

# CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Results segment of this chapter covers the statistical results of both branches of the research. Part I covers the results of the analysis using the Audience-Sensitivity Traits rubric, followed by a preliminary discussion; Part II covers the results of the lexical priming analysis facilitated by DocuScope, followed by a preliminary discussion. Part III is a an examination of three sample texts in the DocuScope framework. Part IV is a meta-analysis of the implications of the two studies, as well as Limitations of the Study, Implications for Pedagogy, and Suggestions for Future Research.

## Part I

This portion of the results examines the analysis of the texts using the Audience-Sensitivity Trait rubric adapted from those in the research of Bracewell, Scardamalia, and Bereiter, and Kroll and Puma. Below, for the sake of reminder, is a compilation of the other studies' results:

- Students as young as fourth-graders exhibited an ability to use context-creating statements (Bracewell, Scardamalia, and Bereiter 18);
- Students between the grades of 4 and 12 showed a clear increase in use of context-creating statements in their writing; students were more likely to use such statements in letters as opposed to "standard school writing assignment[s]" in which no audience was specified (Bracewell, Scardamalia, and Bereiter 18);
- High-school seniors used context-creating statements that were "clearly differentiated according to needs of the audience" (Bracewell, Scardamalia, and Bereiter 18).
- Nine-year-olds were "fairly successful in producing letters adapted to their audiences" (Kroll 417);
- Nine-year-olds successfully stated the problem and made explicit requests of the readers of their letters (Kroll 413).

- The studies of Bracewell et al. and Kroll "provide the basis for measuring degree of audience intimacy descriptively because the number and type of context-creating statements and appeals tend to vary with different audiences and effect" (Puma "The Effects" 64);

- Student writers are able to "internalize different psychological versions of singular assigned audiences" and "adopt relationships of varying proximities with assigned audiences" (Puma "Relationships" 2, 26).

Given these results, I anticipated finding the following in my study of the writing of first-year college students:

1. College-level student writers would use context-creating statements that were differentiated according to the three different treatments (Authority Letter, Close-Friend Letter, and Essay):

    - They would be able to state the problem of XYZ Society's being funding with student-generated dollars;

    - They would be able to make explicit requests of their readers;

    - They would introduce themselves to unfamiliar audiences but not introduce themselves to familiar ones;

    - They would invite the audience to respond to their request.

2. College-level student writers would use appropriate levels of description for their readers—more for readers unfamiliar with XYZ, less for readers familiar with XYZ.

3. College-level student writers would use appropriate types of persuasive appeals for their audience:

    - They would use appeals that they knew would work with familiar audiences;

    - They would use more general appeals that they felt might work with unfamiliar audiences.

4. College-level student writers would use audience-directed statements according to their perceived intimacy levels with their audience:

- They would address or name familiar readers but not attempt to address or name unfamiliar readers;
- They would use second-person “you” in its specific sense rather than in its more universal, generic sense when writing to familiar audiences or to audiences who seemed individual;
- They would refer to specific reader traits and to a specific relationship history only when writing to a familiar audience.

5. College-level student writers would be successful at writing letters adapted to their readers;

- College-level student writers would be able to choose an appropriate level of audience intimacy with their readers.
- College-level student writers’ texts would show evidence of different handling of the three treatments (Authority Letters, Close-Friend Letters, Essays).

The tables following include evidence that the ANOVA analysis of the four Audience-Sensitivity Trait Clusters (Context-Creating Statements, Descriptive Statements, Persuasive Appeals, and Audience-Directed Statements) showed a statistically significant difference among the three treatments (Close-Friend Letters, Authority Letters, and Essays), especially in one category: Audience-Directed Statements. The constructs, or clusters, shown in Tables 5-1 and 5-4 are each composite variables composed of multiple variables (the lists of component variables are in Tables 5-2 and A-1, respectively), and therefore this composite cluster variable may not show the same statistical significance as might the individual variables of which it is composed. The information value of a single variable may be lost when it is combined with another,

albeit related, variable to create the construct cluster. Therefore, individual variables were also investigated variable by variable.

Another reason that ANOVA Tables 5-1 and 5-4 (as well as Table A-1) will often show different statistical significance than later individual variable testing is because the ANOVA tables show the variable results across all three treatments (Close-Friend Letters, Authority Letter, and Essay), and as such, reflect whether all three means of a variable were equal or whether the "differences in means . . . are due solely to sampling error" (Hair, Anderson, and Tatham 154). Subsequent t-tests looked at only individual variables and only across two treatments at a time.

Of interest to many will be the directionality of the means, i.e., whether one group is greater or lesser than another, as well as which variables were statistically different between two treatments. Although a t-test statistical test was used to examine variable by variable and treatment versus treatment, the probability, or alpha, results determined with the t-statistic will be identical with the F-statistic results of ANOVA across two treatments (Zikmund and Babin 359). T-tests are just a special case of ANOVA in which only two levels (treatments are used (355).

**Table 5-1 ANOVA Constructs (variables combined) by Treatment**

| **Cluster Names** | **ANOVA F-statistic** | **ANOVA Significance Level of F (p value)** |
|---|---|---|
| Context-Creating Statements | 2.004 | .138 |
| Descriptive Statements | 2.886 | .059 |
| Persuasive Appeals | 0.353 | .703 |
| Audience-Directed Statements | 52.323 | .000 |

The means, which indicate the strength of the variable, are arithmetical averages of the assigned scores (0, 1, 2). The means also provide directionality when compared to other means. These means were further investigated using the t-test statistical tool between the treatment combinations (Close-Friend vs. Authority, Authority vs. Essay, Close-Friend vs. Essay) for individual variables. I have broken the clusters into separate tables that provide the (1) means and standard deviations for variables within each cluster, and (2) statistical probabilities of the treatment combinations. The t-test results are illustrated in Table 5-3 and summarized following the table.

**Table 5-2: Means and Standard Deviations for Authority, Friend, and Essays (Audience-Sensitivity Trait Results)**

| Variable Name | Friend Letters | | Authority Letters | | Essays | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Mean** | **Std Dev** | **Mean** | **Std Dev** | **Mean** | **Std Dev** |
| **Context-Creating Elements** | | | | | | |
| States the problem | 1.73 | 0.448 | 1.76 | 0.471 | 1.60 | 0.076 |
| Makes an explicit request | 1.62 | 0.599 | 1.64 | 0.485 | 1.62 | 0.707 |
| Introduces writer (self) | 0.19 | 0.525 | 0.69 | 0.863 | 0.25 | 0.552 |
| Tells how to respond | 1.52 | 0.610 | 1.50 | 0.628 | 1.60 | 0.683 |
| **Descriptive Statements** | | | | | | |
| Physical description of XYZ Society | 0.48 | 0.727 | 0.28 | 0.615 | 0.51 | 0.690 |
| Dispositional description of XYZ | 1.71 | 0.572 | 1.52 | 0.569 | 1.67 | 0.668 |
| **Persuasive Appeals** | | | | | | |
| Flattery of reader | 0.25 | 0.590 | 0.12 | 0.462 | 0.02 | 0.135 |
| Appeal to similar values | 1.44 | 0.698 | 1.64 | 0.583 | 1.75 | 0.584 |
| Appeal for sympathy or empathy | 0.92 | 0.813 | 0.62 | 0.791 | 1.13 | 0.963 |
| MU school pride | 0.71 | 0.848 | 0.83 | 0.881 | 0.53 | 0.663 |
| Threats | 0.21 | 0.498 | 0.24 | 0.506 | 0.09 | 0.348 |
| Logic | 1.46 | 0.503 | 1.43 | 0.624 | 1.65 | 0.552 |
| **Audience-Directed Statements** | | | | | | |
| Addresses or names reader in text | 0.46 | 0.727 | 0.12 | 0.422 | 0.04 | 0.189 |
| Uses specific “you” | 1.65 | 0.683 | 1.67 | 0.711 | 0.24 | 0.637 |
| Refers to specific reader trait | 0.62 | 0.820 | 0.33 | 0.574 | 0.00 | 0.000 |

| Refers to specific relationship history | 0.52 | 0.804 | 0.00 | 0.000 | 0.02 | 0.135 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

**Table 5-3: Statistical Probabilities (Alpha Levels) of All Three Treatments Compared (T-Test Results) in Audience-Sensitivity Traits Rubric**

| Variable Name | Friend vs. Authority Letters | Authority Letters vs. Essays | Friend Letters vs. Essays |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Context-Creating Elements** | | | |
| States the problem | .751 | .109 | .189 |
| Makes an explicit request | .830 | .864 | .982 |
| Introduces writer (self) | .000* | .002* | .551 |
| Tells how to respond | .871 | .420 | .520 |
| **Descriptive Statements** | | | |
| Physical description of XYZ Society | .116 | .061 | .837 |
| Dispositional description of XYZ | .077 | .187 | .747 |
| **Persuasive Appeals** | | | |
| Flattery of reader | .207 | .110 | .008* |
| Appeal to similar values | .116 | .330 | .017* |
| Appeal for sympathy or empathy | .051 | .003* | .238 |
| MU school pride | .483 | .042* | .215 |
| Threats | .756 | .067 | .152 |
| Logic | .778 | .046* | .061 |
| **Audience-Directed Statements** | | | |
| Addresses or names reader in text | .004* | .171 | .000* |
| Uses specific "you" | .889 | .000* | .000* |
| Refers to specific reader trait | .038* | .000* | .000* |
| Refers to specific relationship history | .000* | .322 | .000* |

The asterisk (*) indicates that the probability level is statistically significant at the $p \leq .05$ level.

In essence, in the category of Context-Creating Elements:

Bracewell, Scardamalia, and Bereiter found with the students they studied (grades 4 through 12) that their letters showed much more evidence of context-creating

statements than did their "standard school writing assignments in which no audience was specified" (essays?). My results based on the analysis of a similar rubric did not agree. It is possible that many of the students in my study envisioned their teachers as their audience, but that would also be true of Bracewell et al.'s subjects. Indeed, whether the Essay audience could be assumed to be the teacher is not within the scope of this research, though some results could be interpreted as indicating that the student writers with the Essay assignment did occasionally perceive their teacher as one of their multiple audiences—fictionalized, perhaps, based on teachers they had known before, or addressed, based on their initial impressions of the person at the front of the classroom. This topic may be more fruitfully covered in future research.

**States the problem**: There was no statistically significant difference among the three treatments (Authority Letters, Close Friend Letters, Essays). An example of an adequate statement of the problem is this: "I am writing concerning granting funds towards the newly proposed XYZ organization. This organization should receive no funding from our student activity fees because its ideals do not represent those of the student body." Based on Puma's research, I anticipated discovering that college-level students would use context-creating statements that were differentiated according to the three treatments. However, I found that the student writers routinely stated the problem of XYZ's funding, but that they did not differentiate according to whether the audience was Close Friend, Authority Figure, or Essay (no audience specified).

**Makes an explicit request.** There was no statistically significant difference among the three treatments. An adequate statement reflecting an explicit request is this

example: “I ask you to please consider these horrible attributes before awarding XYZ any funding.”

**Tells how to respond.** There was no statistically significant difference among the three treatments. Statements directing the audience in how to respond (the fourth sub-category) are quite similar but usually are directed toward specific action, not just a change of attitude. Here is an example: “Please contact me and tell me what I can do to help stop the funding for XYZ, and feel free to share this letter with your fellow members of SOAC.” I anticipated finding that the student writers would be able to make explicit requests and that they would invite the readers to respond to their requests, and the results suggest that they were able to do these tasks. However, they did not differentiate among the three treatments. This result surprised me because I anticipated that Essays would show a significantly lower score than either of the letters since there was no specific audience for the writers to direct to respond. It is possible that the directions on the writing prompt led students to accomplish this task, regardless of audience, since all three writing prompts directed students to “Write [a letter/an essay] and express your views about whether or not this group should receive funding from student activity fees.” These directions imply that the student writers should ask readers for action.

**Introduces writer (self).** Letters to the Authority Figure had significantly higher means of self-introduction than did letters to Close Friends. Letters to the Authority Figure had significantly higher means than did Essays. There was no significant difference between letters to Close Friends and Essays. The third listed sub-category is an introduction of the writer, an act which establishes the writer’s ethos, which many students accomplished by referring to themselves as students, as freshmen, and as active

in a number of campus activities. In even a cursory reading, such statements seemed quite common in letters to the authority figure. Occasionally among the letters to the close friend were sentences such as “Dear Susan, Do you remember me telling you about an organization I was introduced to last semester?” A marked difference in the results indicated that student writers did frequently use self-introductions to the Authority Figure. That result seems logical. People do not need to introduce themselves to close friends, but if they are writing to someone whom they do not know (be that person an authority figure or not), providing the audience with some sense of who the letter writer is can be inviting.

In the category of Descriptive Statements:

- **Physical description of XYZ Society.** There was no statistically significant difference among the three treatments.
- **Dispositional description of XYZ Society.** There was no statistically significant difference among the three treatments.

One particularly colorful physical description was this one: “They are always dressed in blue and red, and just look at their hair colors! The whole society has either red or blue hair.” Much more common were dispositional descriptions that reflected the values and beliefs of the XYZ Society: “Acceptance into this society is decided upon by a list of qualifications, such as you must not be in any other club; you must never have been a member of any sorority or fraternity, or even have pledged in the past; you cannot be a member of a minority group; you are not to interact with anyone outside the group, or you will be dismissed. . . .” However interesting the various descriptions were, the results did not provide a statistically significant difference among the three treatments. Almost all the writers described XYZ to some degree, probably because to do so was part of the

writing prompt instructions: "Invent whatever details and characteristics about the XYZ Society you wish."

Like Kroll's results suggest, "Although inclusion of descriptive information may reveal a basic awareness of the reader's need to know something about the puppy [or about XYZ Society], subjects' use of various appeal statements provides a more convincing indication that they were sensitive to the needs of the audiences for the letters" (416). The same appeared true with the student writers in my study.

In the category of Persuasive Appeals:

**Flattery of reader.** Letters to Close Friends showed more evidence of reader flattery than did Essays. There was no statistically significant difference between Close Friend letters and Authority Figure letters or between Authority Letters and Essays. In Kroll's study, the children used very few attempts at flattery: "Statements of flattery constituted only 1% of all the content statements contained in the children's letters." In fact, only eight of his subjects used flattery at all (416). Similarly in my study, there were few attempts at flattery, and most of them were subtle, such as this one: "I know that you are not the sole member of the SOAC, so I should not put so much pressure on what you can do about the following situation. However, I feel that you have a strong voice and opinion, and people tend to listen to you." I had surmised that student writers would use appeals that they knew would work well with familiar audiences, and the results indeed did indicate that the Close Friend letters were highest in flattery. (In Kroll's study the children did not know their readers even in an imagined fashion.) To flatter an unknown Authority Figure could possibly be perceived both by the letter writer and its recipient as a type of pandering to the audience. Once again, the Essays, with their lack of specified

audience, might be interpreted as having no specific person to flatter. Even if the teacher was in the student writer's mind as the essay's audience, the semester had just begun, so the teacher might be thought of as similar to an unknown Authority Figure.

**Appeal to similar values.** Essays showed statistically more evidence of similar-value appeals than did letters to Close Friends. There was no statistical significance between Authority Letters and Essays or between Authority Letters and Close Friend Letters. When the appeal was addressed to a specific reader, a relatively common sort of appeal to similar values noted that the letter writer agreed with previous funding distribution: "So far all of the student organizations you have given funding to have represented our school well. All of these groups to this point follow a basic set of moral and social valued both faculty and students agree upon." Most of the appeals to similar values, though, were of this type: "A lot of the population of students strongly disagree with the group," or "I am not very religious yet at the same time I feel, along with many others, that nothing positive could possibly arise from the devil." Commonly, students wrote that XYZ did not represent either that student him- or herself or the other students. These more general types of appeals were to be found much more frequently in Essays, with no specified audience. It seems reasonable that if one has no clear perception of an individual reader but has been asked to write persuasively, the appeals would need to be broadly based so as to include as many different readers as possible.

**Appeal for sympathy or empathy.** Essays showed more evidence of appeals to sympathy or empathy than did Authority Letters. There was no significant difference between Authority Letters and Close-Friend Letters or between Close-Friend Letters and Essays. Appeals for sympathy and empathy called for the reader to have an emotional

response to the writer's request, usually phrased in relatively strong language: "It would be silly and wasteful to help finance an organization that opposes these money-generating events. It will be an outrage of the SOAC awards the XYZ Society money obtained from many opposing students." Essays scored significantly higher than did letters to the Authority Figure. One possibly reason is that there is more risk in using such appeals to someone specific; a writer might be interpreted as inviting pity or condescension. However, if the reader is more generic, the writer might feel the need to apply a "shotgun" (or scattered and broad) approach in an effort to appeal to as many readers as possible.

**MU School Pride.** Authority Letters showed more evidence of appeals to MU School Pride than did Essays. There was no significant difference between Authority Letters and Close-Friend Letters or between Close-Friend Letters and Essays. Appeals to school pride were numerous. Many were quite dignified: "The XYZ Society should not receive student funds, because its beliefs do not reflect the standard of morals set by the University of Missouri-Columbia." Students concerned with drugs often cast XYZ in the role of pro-marijuana legalization groups and warned, "It would be a poor reflection upon MU and what we are trying to represent as a University." Such appeals showed up in all three treatments, but they dominated in the letters to the Authority Figure. After all, she represents the school itself as its employee. The SOAC advisor is not only someone interested in dispensing funds to groups—she is also the person to be blamed if things go wrong and praised if they go right. In essence, she *is* the school, so in some sense, to appeal to school pride is a safe way to flatter the Authority Figure without appearing to "apple-polish."

**Threats.** There was no statistically significant difference among the three treatments. Threats were infrequent and usually cast as threats by the writer to leave the university to go to a more compatible school: "If you do grant this group with the funding, I will have to seriously consider if the University of Missouri is the right place for me and my money." Some students, however, exercised a more emotional approach: "If the XYZ Society gets funding, I will spend every waking second of my existence on this earth to see that either their funding is taken away, this sham of a place of learning and understanding falls beneath my foot, or the XYZ Society disbands." Because there were so few statements of a threatening nature, even as mild as those above, the results of no significant difference among the three treatments can be interpreted primarily as inconclusive. Had there been a substantial number of threatening statements, I feel that there would have been more in the letters to the Close Friend and Authority Figure. Just as there was no one to flatter in the essays, who is there to threaten in an essay with no precise audience?

**Logic.** Essays showed statistically greater evidence of logical appeals than did Authority Letters, but there was no statistically significant difference between Essays and Close Friend Letters or between Close Friend Letters and Authority Letters. The most common appeal was an appeal to logic. Virtually all the writing samples contained at least a weak logical appeal, although the Essays contained the most. Often the most logical appeals came from writers who, in one sense, disregarded the assignment by pleading for funding for XYZ, despite how much they disliked the group: "The University of Missouri must stay consistent with the standard they have previously set for funding student groups. Whether or not the majority of students likes the group is

irrelevant." Most of these and many others suggested alternative plans for XYZ to obtain funding rather than through using student activity funds: "A survey should be given to see if the majority of the MU students supported the idea of this satanic group receiving money. If so, then those students who supported the group could donate their money to the group and those who didn't support the group could have their money donated to one of the many other groups on campus." Even if the student writers argued not to fund XYZ, they were likely to use somewhat similar appeals: "As a student who pays to attend school, I do not want my money put towards the advancement of an organization whose primary goal is to offend." Logic, like appeals to similar values and appeals to sympathy and empathy, is an "all-purpose" appeal. As we know from Aristotle's *logos* and *pathos*, these two sorts of appeals to an audience appear to be used in virtually every communication event, and it is likely that students would have practiced using them both in academic endeavors and in personal situations.

In the category of Audience-Directed Statements:

(Letter salutations and closings were not counted.) This category was the only cluster in the AST to show significant difference according to ANOVA. Not surprisingly, the differences among the three treatments are more easily discernible in this cluster.

Thus, the results of the Audience-Sensitivity Trait analysis seem to reflect general agreement with my initial overall suppositions, that college-level writers would be successful at writing letters adapted to their readers, that they would choose an appropriate level of audience intimacy, and that, for those reasons, their texts would provide evidence of different handling for the three treatments.

**Addresses or names reader in text.** Close Friend Letters showed statistically greater numbers of times when the reader was addressed or named in the body of the text than did the Essays or Authority Letters. There was no statistically significant difference between Authority Letters and Essays. Many of the students writing to a close personal friend directly addressed their friend: “So please, if anything else, Tom, do not give the XYZ Society a dime.” The informal nature of such addresses would not have been appropriate to a reader who was named but otherwise not well known. Results indicate that the writers used many more such direct addresses with Close Friend audiences than with Authority Figures, whereas such appeals in the Essays were virtually non-existent.

**Uses specific “you” (not generic).** Both Authority Letters and Close Friend Letters used specific “you” statistically more often than did Essays. There was no statistically significant difference between Authority Letters and Close Friend Letters. The specific (non-universal) “you” often indicated an audience-directed statement: “I know that you don’t have a lot of pull in SOAC because you are only a secretary.” Both of the letters to specific persons, Close Friend and Authority Figure, showed significant presence of such individual address, whereas the Essays once again reflected minimal presence. That result reflects my supposition that if the writer knows or can imagine an individual, as opposed to a generic “people out there,” he or she will, as Vincent Puma suggests, assume a greater degree of audience intimacy.

**Refers to specific reader trait.** Both letters to the Authority Figure and to the Close Friend were statistically higher than the Essays. The Close Friend letters were higher than the Authority Figure letters. The example above of the reader being “only a secretary” is also one of referring to a specific reader trait. Both the letter categories

showed statistically significant evidence of writers referring to such specific traits, with little evidence of such references in the essays. Once again, if the writer cannot conjure up a mental image of a specific reader, that writer is unlikely to attribute specific traits. "Readers/people in general" call for fuzzy generalities, not easily named or described traits. If the students writing essays perceived their teachers as their only audiences, it seems likely that there would have been more evidence of using these kinds of statements, perhaps something like "You look like a fair-minded person."

**Refers to specific relationship history.** Letters to Close Friends showed statistically greater numbers of references to a specific history with the audience than did Authority Letters or Essays. There was no statistically significant difference between Authority Letters and Essays. Only a few students made reference to a specific relationship history: "Do you like your classes so far this semester? My classes are going pretty well." A couple of students added postscripts that warmed and softened their letters' urgent requests: "Call me when we can get a drink and discuss some more pleasant matters." Only the letters to Close Friends contained significant numbers of such references. It seems obvious that the writers recognized their lack of a relationship with the Authority Figure, and the Essays (even if the teachers were the "real" audience) still did not allow for a relationship history.

## Part II

From the theoretical bases of Hoey and Kaufer et al., on the subject of lexical priming, I have extrapolated the following theoretical concepts:

- All of us—writers and readers alike—are primed to use language in similar ways as well as in ways that are idiosyncratic and personalized.

- Both writers and readers take implicit advantage of priming effects on language.

- A writer's choice of genre is both affected by that writer's priming and affects the future primings for writers in that genre.

- Individual writers' styles are both affected by their primings and affect future primings for both those writers, their readers, and future writers.

- Analysis of priming alone cannot account for complete interpretations of texts. To interpret fully, one needs to account for social, cultural, political, and historical factors. However, analysis of priming within texts is one method by which to begin to account for the writer's effect upon the reader's experience.

From these concepts I have hypothesized that

- Student writers take implicit advantage of the priming effects upon language and are primed to use language in ways similar to the general population of writers and readers, as well as in personal, idiosyncratic ways.

- Student writers' genres are influenced by the primings of the writers and may, in turn, affect the primings of future genres.

- Student writers' styles are affected by their primings and may affect future primings for those writers and their readers in the future.

- Analysis of priming effects on student writers alone cannot account for complete interpretations of their texts. To interpret fully, I would need to account for the students' social, cultural, political, and historical backgrounds. However, analysis of student writer's priming within texts is one method by which to begin to account for the student writer's effect upon his or her readers' experiences.

The ANOVA analysis of lexical priming using the text-tagging software DocuScope is reproduced in the table below.

**Table 5-4 ANOVA Constructs (variables combined) by Treatment**

| **Cluster Names** | **ANOVA F-statistic** | **ANOVA Significance Level of F (p value)** |
|---|---|---|
| Cluster One: Inner Thought | 1.070 | .345 |

| or Internal | | |
|---|---|---|
| Cluster Two: Relational Cluster | 1.764 | .175 |
| Cluster Three: External or Description | 9.492 | .000 |

A more complete ANOVA analysis that provides data on a number of strings from each cluster is located in Table A-1, Appendix E.

As was explained earlier during the presentation of the AST clusters in Table 5-1, this preliminary analysis of construct clusters using ANOVA was followed by further testing using t-tests for statistical differences between means. I have broken the clusters into separate tables that provide the (1) means and standard deviations for strings within each cluster, and (2) statistical probabilities of the treatment combinations. The first two tables deal with the Internal or Inner Thinking Cluster. Some explanation of what each variable label means will be included within the body of this chapter.

**Table 5-5: Means and Standard Deviations for Authority vs. Friend vs. Essays (Docuscope Results)**

| Variable Name | Friend Letters | | Authority Letters | | Essays | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | Std Dev | Mean | Std Dev | Mean | Std Dev |
| ***Internal Cluster*** | | | | | | |
| First Person | 2.7885 | 1.32368 | 2.6549 | 1.60501 | 1.5978 | 1.53701 |
| 1st Per. Sing. Self | 1.0467 | 0.80442 | 0.9939 | 0.98801 | 0.5678 | 0.61927 |
| Self-Disclosure | 1.5309 | 0.83199 | 1.5220 | 0.93644 | 0.9230 | 0.97752 |
| Disclosure | 0.2807 | 0.21826 | 0.2369 | 0.28676 | 0.1044 | 0.22463 |
| Autobiography | 0.21 | 0.276 | 0.14 | 0.202 | 0.11 | 0.264 |
| Think Positive/Affect | 0.7980 | 0.51907 | 0.7942 | 0.56603 | 0.4430 | 0.48964 |
| Think Negative/Affect | 1.3550 | 0.87506 | 1.4190 | 0.99640 | 1.9320 | 1.14503 |
| Contingency | 0.97 | 0.556 | 0.80 | 0.672 | 1.08 | 0.753 |
| Retrospection | 0.4602 | .42882 | 0.7537 | 0.76076 | 0.6004 | 0.56783 |
| Having + Verbed | 0.10 | 0.195 | 0.19 | 0.268 | 0.12 | 0.190 |

**Table 5-6: Statistical Probabilities (Alpha Levels) of All Three Treatments Compared (T-Test Results)**

| Variable Name | Friend vs. Authority Letters | Authority Letters vs. Essays | Friend Letters vs. Essays |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***Internal Cluster*** | | | |
| First Person | .809 | .001* | .000* |
| 1st Per. Sing. Self | .757 | .008* | .001* |
| Self-Disclosure | .755 | .001* | .001* |
| Disclosure | .957 | .008* | .000* |

| Autobiography | .116 | .472 | .047* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Think Positive/Affect | .971 | .001* | .000* |
| Think Negative/Affect | .719 | .012* | .004* |
| Contingency | .156 | .037* | .361 |
| Retrospection | .014* | .231 | .151 |
| Having + Verbed | .049* | .124 | .096 |

The asterisk (*) indicates that the probability level is statistically significant at the $p \leq .05$ level.

**Cluster 1: Internal or Inner Thought Perspectives**: This group of priming strings focuses upon the ways in which the writer wishes to present him- or herself to the reader. A writer priming an audience with these strings will present a personal portrait, one which reveals perspectives, attitudes, thoughts, memories, aspirations, and emotional states. A reader will get an impression of a writer's mind at work; that impression can be positive or negative (Kaufer et al., *The Power of Words* 16, 47). As we are reminded, "Language, more than visual media, make[s] the interior of minds directly accessible to readers" (59). As a result, the genres of writing that one thinks of initially as representative of the Internal Cluster are self-disclosive: "[j]ournals, diaries, and memoirs." First-person pronouns are frequently used (59).

- **First person (grammatical).** Both the Authority Letters and the Close-Friend Letters were statistically higher than the Essays. There was no significant difference between the Authority Letters and the Close-Friend Letters.

- **First-person singular self.** Both the Authority Letters and the Close-Friend Letters were statistically higher than the Essays. There was no significant difference between the Authority Letters and the Close-Friend Letters.

First-person (grammatical). The Dimension of first-person reflects the self-referencing use of first-person pronouns *I, me, my,* or *mine.* More importantly, such pronouns "individuate a point of view from all the mentalities and objects outside of it" (59-60). However, point of view does not require first-person or other self-referencing pronouns since writers can establish point of view without using these pronouns (first-

person singular self). Additionally, such documents as technical reports can be extremely impersonal and objective even when first-person pronouns are used (60). However, in the broadest sense, as writers and as readers, we associate these uses of first-person pronouns and other self-referential pronouns with that person's thoughts, feelings, attitudes, beliefs. As a result, it is not surprising for the letters to the Authority Figure and Close Friend to show greater use of first-person. The student writers could envision another mind responding to their own, whereas in the essays, with their lack of assigned audience, there was no immediate sense of another person to meet minds one-on-one. Further, the use of first person, traditionally proscribed by high-school English teachers, may have curbed the essay writers' use of "I" and its related cases.

- **Self-Disclosure.** Both the Authority Letters and the Close-Friend Letters were statistically higher than the Essays. There was no significant difference between the Authority Letters and the Close-Friend Letters.

Self-disclosure. Kaufer et al. write, "One of the surest ways English particularizes a first person consciousness is to frame it within a simple past or future. The result is a first person consciousness that self-discloses" (60). They note that verb tense plays a role in such self-disclosure: in the past tense, a person "historicizes" him- or herself; in the future tense, a person may be expressing "a resolve for future action"; in the present tense, mental actions are framed as generic and habitual, "a ritual that implicates the actor without revealing his or her inner mind" (61). Once again, it is not startling to discover that there was greater self-disclosure in the letters than in the essays. If the audience is anonymous or unclear, as with an unspecified "school assignment," there is little sense of disclosing one's own self.

- **Disclosure.** Both the Authority Letters and the Close-Friend Letters were statistically higher than the Essays. There was no significant difference between the Authority Letters and the Close-Friend Letters.

Disclosure. Kaufer et al., describe disclosures as “the spoken or written simulation of private thought presented to an audience as part of an unofficial leaking. When speakers and writers use disclosure strings, they suggest they are making public inner thinking that remains the property of the discloser and was not designed at its core to be public information” (63). For the same reasons as above, the letters were higher in disclosure strings than the essays. If one “discloses,” or “confesses,” it is *to* someone else—not to anonymity. There is an awareness of another mind taking in the disclosure.

- **Autobiography.** The Close-Friend Letters were statistically higher than the Essays. However, there was no significant difference between the Authority Letters and the Essays or between the Close-Friend Letters and the Authority Letters.

Autobiography. Each of us is aware at some level that we are part of the flow of history. That awareness is clearest when our “first person utterance resonates with a sense of historical continuity reflective of historical identity” (61). Such utterances are often accompanied by strings such as *I would often* or *I used to* or can be self-referential pronouns used with *have* or *had* or adverbs like *always*. A sense of autobiography can also be future tense, expressing what we hope or anticipate will happen (62). The means for Close-Friend Letters being higher than the means for the other two categories, Authority Letters and Essays, may suggest a writer’s sense that a close friend would care more about our histories and our futures than would an unknown Authority Figure or the faceless Essay audience. Further, a close friend has likely been part of our histories and will be part of our futures, whereas we can have no such claim on an Authority Figure (or on the teacher-as-audience, if indeed that is the audience for some of the essays).

- **Think Positive/Affect.** Both the Authority Letters and the Close-Friend Letters were statistically higher than the Essays. There was no significant difference between the Authority Letters and the Close-Friend Letters.

Think Positive and Positive Affect. These are listed in *The Power of Words* as two separate string classes, but the mean results are the same for both. Think Positive refers to "feel-good words and phrases" such as "*commendable, loving, succulent, fantastic, delightful*" (83). Kaufer et al. warn that "think positive strings are greatly affected by the larger strings in which they appear" (84). As for Positive Affect, so-called "common sense" may be irrelevant when it comes to the emotional affect of positive words. The results lead me to infer that the letters are higher in think-positive and positive affect because, once again, the writers have a clearer sense of another human mind at the reading end of their writing, a sense that they may lack with the essays. Further, governed by logic as the essays seem to be, the writers may have had a stronger sense of writing for academia, or of "inventing the university" (Bartholomae).

- **Think Negative/Affect.** Essays were statistically higher than either the Authority Letters or the Close-Friend Letters. There was no significant difference between the Authority Letters and the Close-Friend Letters.

Think Negative and Negative Affect. Once again, Kaufer et al. warn us not to assume that a negative word or phrase automatically means a negative affect. Although in general, "think negative" means negative feelings are being expressed—annoyance, distress—it is not always the case. For example, "some strings act as reversals or mitigators of affect. They precede affect strings to turn a positive affect into a negative one and vice-versa" (87). The Essays used more think-negative and negative-affect strings than did the letters. The reason could be that in envisioning a "real" audience such

as a close friend or even an unknown authority figure (who after all has a name, a gender, and a job), writers hesitate to express negative feelings that they do not shy from expressing to the personless Essay audience.

- **Contingency.** Essays were statistically higher than the Authority Letters. There was no significant difference between Essays and Close-Friend Letters or between Close-Friend Letters and Authority Letters.

Contingency. When a writer needs to express conditionality, he or she may turn to strings such as these: "*as if, whether, provided that, if only, only with, might have, would have, it all depends, lest, can't help it if, fluke, it depends, if you are willing, happened upon"* (75). This category is not meant to cover the kind of contingency that means that something "could have happened" or that it "might yet happen" (75). Such strings as these suggest logical argument, a finding not incompatible with the Essays having the highest means for the category.

- **Retrospection.** Authority Letters were statistically higher than Close-Friend Letters. There was no significant difference between Authority Letters and Essays or between Close-Friend Letters and Essays.

Retrospection. When a writer is engaged in looking backward, "recalling an event from memory," that writer will use words connected with memory such as "*recall, recount, remember, think back on, look back on, realize afterwards, hark back, recollect, rehash, reminisce,* and *view in retrospect*. The verbal auxiliaries, *have* and *was*, serve many of these think-back strings as well" (92). In the Authority Letters there are a number of uses of such retrospection used as a basis for establishing a connection between writer and reader, such as this one: "I have a dear friend that was forced to suffer through the XYZ Society's initiation process. He has not been the same since." The

writer seems to be bringing the reader with him or her into a retrospection in an effort to provide proof of the writer's assertion that XYZ should be deprived of funding.

Also common is the use of the word *would* to suggest some habitual action: "A common word for forming thinking-back [retrospection] strings is the habitual-past *would*" (94)[13]. Kaufer et al. note, "With certain verbs of inner thought (*prefer, want*) that look to the future, habitual *would* strengthens the base of historical acquaintance from which a person's future action is predicted" (*The Power of Words* 95). The word *would* in its habitual use can also be part of a precedent string, as in "I would never agree to that."

One of the results that seemed unusual was that the Authority Letters were higher in strings of retrospection than were the letters to Close Friends. I can only surmise that the writers assume that the close friend will not need a reminder of the habitual actions of the past, even though common sense suggests that the only people with whom we reminisce are those whom we know reasonably well, certainly not with strangers. DocuScope accounts for many uses of modals in more than one string (i.e., *would* is part of a retrospection/think-back string as well as a precedent string). However, it is possible that the makers of DocuScope have not accounted for the occasional uses that writers make of *would* in senses that are not traditionally correct grammatically, such as "I would have helped my friend sooner if I would have known that he was in trouble."

- **Having + Verbed.** Authority Letters were statistically higher than Close-Friend Letters. There was no significant difference between Authority Letters and Essays or between Close-Friend Letters and Essays.

[13] The word *would* also performs a function in what House and Harman call the "past-future" tense to indicate indirect discourse and to report speech (126). Additionally, the meaning of *would* can differ depending upon whether the word is used as an auxiliary or as a main verb (132). As an auxiliary verb, *would* can "denote volition, obligation, intention, or wish" and as a function word, it can "denote futurity" (132). More commonly, *would* is used for conditionality (Gordon, personal e-mail).

HVed. Dozens of verb-tense combinations are listed among DocuScope's 161 variables. One of only two to show statistical significance in this study was HVed, described on the DocuScope category printout as "a progressive variant of the cluster pattern 'hasVed.'" This verb string "captures a completed present perfect action." According to House and Harmon, the "present perfect tense lays stress upon the completion of an action at the time when the speaker expresses the thought" (119). If I understand the abbreviated term correctly, HVed means "have verbed," as in *have seen.* Kaufer et al. perhaps offer a reason for Authority Letters being higher for this verb string when they suggest that in this "Inner Thinking" cluster, the writer is not as engaged in building a relationship as he or she will be in the Relations Cluster. These strings suggest that the writer "has only a 'field of dreams' regard for the audience—build 'an engaging subjectivity' and audiences will come" (97). In other words, the writer has engaged in a form of retrospection, writing of an action already completed in the past but being referred to in the present.

The next two tables deal with the second major cluster, the Relational:

**Cluster 2: Relations or Relational Perspectives.** When writers wish to engage more overtly in a partnership with readers, they may nevertheless still choose to hold readers at a distance, in a monologic approach (231). If the desire is for a closer connection, to interact with readers, the approach is more dialogic (17, 231). In either case, writers also must direct readers in the ways in which the texts are to be read, to prevent readers from becoming lost (49). This cluster relies upon "mutual reasoning, in sharing premises and values of the larger culture, and in directing activities with audiences" (99).

The Relational Cluster focuses upon priming strings that exhibit three purposes:

(1) "[t]o orient audiences so that they know where they are and feel acknowledged as an interaction partner . . .;

(2) "[t]o help audiences localize" the least-familiar information so that they can connect it "with what has come before"; and

(3) "[t]o help audiences anticipate the unfamiliar yet to come so that they can navigate forward in the stream [of text] while minimizing the need to backtrack" (139-140).

**Table 5-7 : Means and Standard Deviations for Authority vs. Friend vs. Essays (Docuscope Results)**

| Variable Name | Friend Letters | | Authority Letters | | Essays | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Mean** | **Std Dev** | **Mean** | **Std Dev** | **Mean** | **Std Dev** |
| ***Relational Cluster*** | | | | | | |
| Dialog Cues | 0.03 | 0.103 | 0.09 | 0.188 | 0.06 | 0.220 |
| Reasoning | 3.9515 | 1.43054 | 2.9485 | 1.41053 | 3.9569 | 1.53607 |
| Refute That | 0.42 | 0.524 | 0.24 | 0.378 | 0.34 | 0.412 |
| Deny Disclaim | 1.3980 | 0.76601 | 1.0680 | 0.88463 | 1.3156 | 0.65428 |
| Resistance | .68 | 0.570 | 0.42 | 0.407 | 0.69 | 0.475 |
| Interactivity | 1.7106 | 1.24356 | 1.3441 | 0.81187 | 0.6411 | 0.70471 |
| Basic Interactivity | 0.08 | 0.180 | 0.02 | 0.082 | 0.01 | 0.075 |
| Oral Interactivity | 0.06 | 0.131 | 0.06 | 0.192 | 0.00 | 0.000 |
| Direct Address | 0.9807 | 0.89270 | 0.8292 | 0.75892 | 0.0972 | 0.24993 |
| Request | 0.11 | 0.230 | 0.13 | 0.235 | 0.05 | 0.161 |
| Establishing Actions | 1.2837 | 0.97167 | 1.2834 | 0.80884 | 1.7137 | 1.18044 |
| CommonAuthorities | 1.2120 | 0.94321 | 1.2405 | 0.79652 | 1.6398 | 1.17428 |
| Confirmed Thought | 0.01 | 0.037 | 0.00 | 0.000 | 0.02 | 0.079 |
| Acknowledge | 0.1578 | 0.20850 | 0.2500 | 0.27753 | 0.0276 | 0.08906 |
| Values | 2.3743 | 1.32279 | 2.0120 | 1.04517 | 2.9250 | 1.68769 |
| Positive Standards | 1.5280 | 1.04887 | 1.4086 | 0.85601 | 1.9685 | 1.44568 |
| Negative Standards | 0.8167 | 0.68317 | 0.5907 | 0.65803 | 0.9278 | 0.65944 |
| Linear Organization | 2.7328 | 1.20577 | 2.5283 | 1.28126 | 2.9902 | 1.08862 |
| Pronoun Focus | 1.1363 | 0.92712 | 1.0963 | 0.90383 | 1.4459 | 0.81133 |
| Refer Other Texts | 0.32 | 0.344 | 0.63 | 0.642 | 0.39 | 0.340 |
| Quotation | 0.03 | 0.091 | 0.07 | 0.198 | 0.01 | 0.076 |
| Citations | 0.29 | 0.334 | 0.54 | 0.557 | 0.38 | 0.344 |
| Resemblances | 0.13 | 0.192 | 0.04 | 0.115 | 0.08 | 0.169 |
| Example | 0.02 | 0.073 | 0.05 | 0.137 | 0.07 | 0.227 |
| Assert That | 0.6283 | 0.42432 | 0.6531 | 0.53148 | 0.8919 | 0.74184 |
| Specifications | 19.6596 | 3.28249 | 19.2439 | 3.47508 | 21.3481 | 3.39612 |
| Update | 0.26 | 0.302 | 0.35 | 0.352 | 0.17 | 0.262 |
| General Inform | 27.709 | 3.8454 | 27.585 | 3.9734 | 30.248 | 3.9372 |

**Table 5-8: Statistical Probabilities (Alpha Levels) of All Three Treatments Compared (T-Test Results)**

| Variable Name | Friend vs. Authority Letters | Authority Letters vs. Essays | Friend Letters vs. Essays |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***Relational Cluster*** | | | |
| Dialog Cues | .020* | .308 | .338 |
| Reasoning | .000* | .000* | .985 |
| Refute That | .042* | .226 | .351 |
| Deny Disclaim | .037* | .096 | .549 |
| Resistance | .005* | .001* | .936 |
| Interactivity | .064 | .000* | .000* |
| Basic Interactivity | .043* | .519 | .020* |
| Oral Interactivity | .917 | .015* | .001* |
| Direct Address | .332 | .000* | .000* |
| Request | .550 | .032* | .141 |
| Establishing Actions | .999 | .025* | .041* |
| CommonAuthorities | .862 | .035* | .039* |
| Confirmed Thought | .298 | .022* | .115 |
| Acknowledge | .050* | .000* | .000* |
| Values | .108 | .001* | .062 |
| Positive Standards | .508 | .013* | .073 |
| Negative Standards | .076 | .008* | .392 |
| Linear Organization | .385 | .042* | .247 |
| Pronoun Focus | .817 | .033* | .068 |
| Refer Other Texts | .002* | .015* | .271 |
| Quotation | .137 | .035* | .288 |
| Citations | .005* | .067 | .171 |
| Resemblances | .006* | .204 | .175 |
| Example | .129 | .025* | .124 |
| Assert That | .786 | .054 | .025* |
| Specifications | .516 | .002* | .010* |
| Update | .162 | .002* | .081 |
| General Inform | .867 | .001* | .001* |

The asterisk (*) indicates that the probability level is statistically significant at the $p \leq .05$ level.

- **Dialog Cues.** Authority Letters were statistically higher than Close-Friend Letters. There was no statistical significance between Close-Friend Letters and Essays or between Authority Letters and Essays.

Dialog Cues. Simply put, dialog cues are merely lexical primings that indicate that the writer is signalling verbatim statements. They are descriptive and create a sense of scene for the reader, one that includes a sense of time. Because the statistical analysis pointed to Authority Letters having the highest means in this class, which seems counter-intuitive, I suggest the following: That the writers to the Authority Figure, who often quoted the SOAC advisor as a reminder to her of what she had once said (Example: "I

recall you once saying in the Columbia Tribune that. . ."), DocuScope tagged these word strings as dialog cues.

- **Reasoning.** Close-Friend Letters and Essays were statistically higher than Authority Letters. There was no statistical difference between Close-Friend Letters and Essays.

<u>Reasoning</u> asserts or rejects information. It reflects social thought and action because it captures language that presents reasoning, social ties, or activities for another. Kaufer et al. explain, "Strings associated with reasoning indicate the sequenced thinking of an individual making a bid to make an audience share the sequence and so think alike. Reasoning strings are the small language actions that help constitute larger actions of assertion (avowing statements of individual thought bidding as social knowledge. . ." (100-101). It seems intuitive to accept the essays as having a great deal of evidence for reasoning, but perhaps a different kind of reasoning is at work with Close Friends—perhaps the type of reasoning is Insistence on Reasoning, in which a writer would urge the audience to think logically: "You have the power to protect the University from this group, so please cast your vote wisely."

- **Refute That.** Close-Friend Letters were significantly higher than Authority Letters. There was no statistical difference between Authority Letters and Essays or between Close-Friend Letters and Essays.

<u>Refute That.</u> Refutations "retract or repudiate" previous assertions (110). The form is generally that of a complete thought, or most of a complete thought, with a subject-predicate relationship; examples include strings such as "this does not follow, it doesn't hold water, it's nonsense, this is irrational" (110). Refute-that strings may also include "resistance" words like "ostensibly" to cue the reader that he or she should be aware of "appearance, half-truths, pseudo-fact, or falsehood" rather than truth (111). That

Close-Friend letters were higher than Authority Letters is not surprising because a student would seldom feel comfortable directly refuting an authority figure. In one Close-Friend letter, a student wrote, "It is rumored that someone from the XYZ Society tried to shoot the President. True or false, does the University really want to have an organization like this on campus?" Compare this less-forceful refutation from an Authority Letter: "I remember you once saying in the Columbia Tribune that, 'nearly every student group that is eligible for funding receives it.' Normally I would say that is just fine, because it gives everybody equality. In the case of XYZ Society I would have to say this is not good."

- **Deny/Disclaim.** Close-Friend Letters were significantly higher than Authority Letters. There was no statistical difference between Authority Letters and Essays or between Close-Friend Letters and Essays.

Deny/Disclaim. Like Refute-that strings, denials and disclaimers serve to negate previous propositions. However, unlike refute-that strings, a denial string can work to present a positive assertion (112). Some conventional denials, such as "I don't believe," convey skepticism (114). Disclaimers are a subset of denials in which rhetors aim "to correct misimpressions they themselves have created, or could create, through their own words" (112). Close-Friend Letters were higher than Authority Letters, probably for reasons such as stated above—that one can feel more comfortable taking a more assertive stance verbally with a close friend than with an authority figure who holds power. For instance, in one letter to a Close Friend, the writer said, "I do not claim to know everything about the XYZ Society. . . ." In contrast, letters to the Authority Figure were more likely to contain statements such as this one: "As you know, the XYZ Society supports . . . ."

- **Resistance.** Close-Friend Letters and Essays were significantly higher than Authority Letters. Essays and Close-Friend Letters showed no statistical difference.

Resistance. As implied, resistance strings are negative and can imply denials, disclaimers, and refutations (114). Readers may encounter phrases such as “but, yet, despite, even though, and in spite of” (114). Resistance can also be primed by the “lexical content” devoid of specifically negative markers; Kaufer et al. explain that “learning resistance strings apart from refute-that, denials, and negative affect strings, speakers [and writers] learn how to report resistance and negativity without requiring them to subjectively identify with it” (114). Not surprisingly, Authority Letters had few resistance strings. The student writers apparently felt comfortable expressing resistance to close friends and to the faceless reader of the essays, but to express resistance to an authority figure could incur retribution. A point to note is that more than half of the 17 texts that argued *for* funding XYZ were Essays (9 of them), distantly followed by Close Friend Letters (5 of them). Only three were Authority Letters. More commonly, student writers in their letters to Close Friends penned such questions as these: “Have you really turned your back on the views we shared growing up?” Or: “Why not stop trouble before it begins?”

- **Interactivity.** Authority Letters and Close-Friend Letters were statistically higher than Essays. There was no significant difference between Authority Letters and Close-Friend Letters.

Interactivity. “The audience of interacting,” write Kaufer and colleagues, “is but a formal role identity [that] the text itself constructs and that the material reader must don in order to navigate the text from left to right as the communicator has designed” (141).

Interactivity strings call readers and listeners back to the text. These strings may be relatively neutral, with no sense of the writer wishing to form "social ties" with the reader; they may be confrontational, as in threats and flames; or they may be seeking information from the audience (142). Second-person "you" can be [but is not necessarily] an indicator (142). For both Interactivity and Oral Interactivity, Authority Letters and Close-Friend Letters were higher than Essays. It's easy to understand why. Virtually none of the essays used a specific second-person reference, and virtually all of the letters did. The letters also showed evidence of information-seeking and in some few instances, slight threats. An information-seeker wrote this sentence to a Close-Friend: "I hope you agree with me, but I would like to hear your views on this matter even if you do not." A mild threat is exhibited in this letter to a Close Friend: "SOAC had better choose to reject the requests for the XYZ Society, or the storm [brewing on campus] will only grow in strength." Implied is that danger will occur if action is not taken. More threatening is this sentence: "Should SOAC ignore my protests, I will be forced to take my money elsewhere." A slightly more controversial statement, less of a threat than an insult, occurred in a letter to the Authority Figure: "If you think what I have said is incorrect, then I suggest you do some research."

- **Oral Interactivity.** Both Close-Friend Letters and Authority Letters were statistically higher than Essays. There was no significant difference between Close-Friend Letters and Authority Letters.

There is no full description or explanation of Oral Interactivity in the materials on DocuScope; however, I believe that this string category is possibly similar to what Vincent Puma calls a "speaking stance" (as opposed to a "writing stance"), with conversational markers. (I readily admit that this belief could be incorrect.) However, the

letters contained more words and phrases that resonate with a conversational tone than did the essays. As an example, note the conversational feeling to one student's protest of what seemed to be XYZ's racism in a letter to a close friend, "Obviously, you know I'm not racist, seeing as you're African-American and we're such close friends." Another wrote, "Would the college allow the Ku Klux Klan to start a hate group on campus? I don't think so."

- **Basic Interactivity.** Close-Friend Letters were statistically higher than either Authority Letters or Essays. There was no statistical difference between Authority Letters and Essays.

<u>Basic interactivity</u>**.** There are several strings that cue interactivity between writer and reader, but basic interactivity uses "the most common marker of interactivity, namely the second person pronoun (*you*). . ." (142). Examples include such priming strings as these: "As you can see..., Whatever you want..., You bet!, You are right about that" (142). As with Interactivity and Oral Interactivity, Close-Friend Letters were high. Not only were they high in uses of the second-person but in "speaking to" their readers. Frequently the letters to close friends ended with statements like this one: "I hope that you will consider my ideas when you decide whether or not to provide funding for this group." Sentences in the letters included ones such as this: "I figured that a lot of other students have probably already called or written to you to voice their opinions, as well." Most often, though, the letters to friends began with "As you may or may not know...." Letters to Close Friends often ended with a statement directed to the letter's recipient: "Thank you, Annabelle."

- **Direct Address.** Both Close-Friend Letters and Authority Letters were statistically higher than Essays. There was no significant difference between Close-Friend Letters and Authority Letters.

Direct Address. Like Basic Interactivity, direct address calls upon "you" to speak to the reader or listener, but the difference is that direct address uses "present active verbs" to enable the writer to "seize and hold the audience's attention" (144). There is much overlap among string classes, and direct address is no exception, overlapping with other strings that include "the attention and compliance of another mind" (145). The letters, both types, scored higher than the essays, for obvious reasons: There is no "you" to speak to in the essays. Whenever the second-person pronoun is used in the essays, it is as a generic "anyone"—"One suggestion I had was to have the groups fund themselves, so that way you aren't paying for what you don't believe."

- **Request.** Authority Letters were statistically higher than Essays. There was no significant statistical difference between Close-Friend Letters and Essays or between Authority Letters and Close-Friend Letters.

Request. Writers using Request strings wish to get "yes or no" answers from their audiences, or at least "a willingness to comply" (151). The word "please" or "some other politeness marker" lets the reader know that "compliance is voluntary and personally acknowledged" (151). Not surprisingly, Request strings show up often in genres of writing found in the world of work (151). Authority Letters for the most part sounded much like business letters, and essentially, they were: They were doing the business of academia. It seems logical that there are more formal, polite requests in a letter to an authority figure than to a close friend, and certainly, the essays don't provide a sense of a real human being from whom to request something. One letter to an Authority Figure wrote, "I would hope that you would take this seriously and do the right thing." More

commonly, students wrote something similar to this: “I ask you to seriously consider rejecting their request for activity funding.”

- **Establishing Actions.** Essays were higher than either Close-Friend Letters or Authority Letters. There was no statistically significant difference between Close-Friend Letters and Authority Letters.

Establishing Actions. This category is again one about which I must speculate because of the changed nomenclature. It might be what *The Power of Words* calls Establishing Like-Mindedness, about which Kaufer, et al., have written, “Speakers and writers can share social ties with audiences by pointing out their like-mindedness with audiences in their values and perceptions. They establish like-mindedness with audiences, in turn, by invoking standards and values their audiences uphold and value, and by renouncing standards that they know their audiences similarly renounce” (123). However, since Essays scored higher than did Close-Friend Letters or Authority Letters, I fully admit that I may be wrong or that this result is an anomaly. On the other hand, Essays also score highest in Common Authorities and Confirmed Thought, which seem similar in that the categories are referring to shared standards. When one is writing to a generic someone, nameless, faceless, genderless, and opinionless, it is likely a wise strategy to appeal to common values. In addition to the commonplaces of school spirit and law-abiding values, students wrote other commonplaces: “On campus is a body of people that came to this place with the understanding that to start here is to begin a new journey in life, to be in an environment where people are mature enough to establish the meanings of right and wrong.” The most prevalent commonplace, however, referred to the lack of fairness in forcing students to contribute money that would help support a group they thought to be immoral.

- **Common Authorities.** Essays were higher than either Close-Friend Letters or Authority Letters. There was no statistically significant difference between Close-Friend Letters and Authority Letters.

Common Authorities. “These strings,” note Kaufer and colleagues, “invoke prior persons, practices, customs, or beliefs that command widespread deference and respect” (118). Strings for common authorities appeal to ethos: “persuasion through personal credibility, credentials, and good will [that rely] on aligning one’s personal presence, beliefs and projects with authorizing premises shared by the audience” (119). The word “they” (“the all-purpose common authority”) is used to reflect “a unified and anonymous authority” or “expert class” (118, 119). As mentioned previously, Essays scored higher than the two types of letters in this category and others like it. Writers need to appeal as broadly as possible when they know less about their readers. One student even called upon the university’s higher authorities to stop XYZ: “I implore the Chancellor of the University to stop this dangerous group. . . .”

- **Confirmed Thought.** Essays were higher than Authority Letters. There was no statistically significant difference between either Close-Friend Letters and Authority Letters or Essays and Close-Friend Letters.

Confirmed Thought. Positive and exuding confidence, Confirmed Thought strings “endorse the reasoning of others” in phrases such as “I agree with Smith” (107). Essays scored higher than Authority Letters. Quite often, students wrote statements like this one: “As a student of Mizzou, I feel I speak for many when I say that funding the XYZ club would be a waste of money, our money.”

- **Acknowledge.** Authority Letters were statistically higher than Close-Friend Letters or Essays. Close-Friend Letters were statistically higher than Essays.

Acknowledge. Writers or speakers who wish to "express debt or gratitude to others for their previous acts" will use priming strings of acknowledgement (130). Thank-you letters provide numerous examples of Acknowledgement Strings. Not surprisingly, the Authority Letters contained greater numbers of such strings, as in this example: "I support your organization and how it has been run to this point. So far all the student organizations you have given funding to have represented MU well."

- **Values.** Essays were higher than Authority Letters, but there was no statistically significant difference between Essays and Close-Friend Letters or between Close-Friend Letters and Authority Letters.

Values. In *The Power of Words*, "values" are described in two categories, Establishing Like-Mindedness and Sharing Premises. In both, the concept of writers having viewpoints in common with the audience is key. Writers can call upon "standards and values their audiences uphold and value, and [renounce] standards that they know their audiences similarly renounce" (123). The thoughts and feelings of one person are not at stake; rather, "shared history or precedent, common authorities, prior knowledge, and received points of view" are important (116). Essays scored higher than did Authority Letters. The concept of values appears often in the essays in phrases similar to one written by this student: "The right to assemble and the freedom of speech are noble values that should never be ignored." Another wrote, "Being a woman, I don't agree with the beliefs of this group." Still another wrote, "Because of the nature of their protests, I feel that a majority of the students at MU do not agree with the moral standards of this group."

- **Positive Standards.** Essays were higher than either Authority Letters or Close-Friend Letters. There was no statistically significant difference between Authority Letters and Close-Friend Letters.

Positive Standards. Writers using priming strings from this category rely upon such words as "dependable, dutiful, truthful, honorable, ideal, worthy" (124). Essays, once again relying on commonplaces as general appeals, scored higher than Authority Letters or Close-Friend Letters. One essay-writer wrote, for instance, that the XYZ members "do not reflect the common interests and convictions of the majority of students here at the University of Missouri," a bothersome stance in that it does not reflect respect, which is "one of the ideals expressed as an ideal of the University of Missouri."

- **Negative Standards.** Essays were higher than Authority Letters. There was no statistically significant difference between Authority Letters and Close-Friend Letters or between Essays and Close-Friend Letters.

Negative Standards. It is not uncommon for people to "win adherents by sharing their distaste" (125). To prime the audience to share negative standards, writers may call upon such words and phrases as "garish, questionable evidence, baseless, poor taste, not user-friendly," and similar terms (125). In this category, too, Essays scored higher than Authority Letters. Many essay writers expressed distaste for XYZ—"Members of this group make outlandish and offensive remarks to religious people." One wrote, "The XYZ is a disgrace to our school" and "has no business existing here at Mizzou."

- **Linear Organization.** Essays were higher than Authority Letters. There was no statistically significant difference between Authority Letters and Close-Friend Letters or between Essays and Close-Friend Letters.

Linear Organization. Writers must provide navigational aids to readers in the form of textual cues if they expect readers to follow the text (140). Linear organization calls upon writers to select from "strings that seem most responsible for seeding the linear

stream of language with these navigational aids" (140). Using metadiscourse, asides, and certain techniques for cohesion, writers can provide signposts for readers (170). Once again, Essays scored higher than Authority Letters. Not uncommonly, essay writers began with "It has recently come to my attention that. . ." and "I have recently heard about a group that. . . ." Such markers help "open" a text that does not have a more precise and dedicated opening as the letters have, with their Dear ______ salutations to open the door.

- **Pronoun Focus.** Essays were higher than Authority Letters. There was no statistically significant difference between Authority Letters and Close-Friend Letters or between Essays and Close-Friend Letters.

Pronoun Focus. Cohesion in writing can take many forms, but pronouns are particularly useful in that they reference previously mentioned nouns, lessening the need to repeat the noun but keeping the reader connected to the noun and consequently to the train of information. Kaufer and his co-authors discovered in their research that fiction relies more heavily upon pronouns than does non-fiction, especially legal and scientific writing, since the risk of "ambiguous reference" is less acceptable in those genres than in fiction writing (176-177). However, in this study, Essays scored higher than Authority Letters. In one sense, both are somewhat formal, dispassionate texts. And like the strings for linear organization, pronouns help with cohesion. As mentioned elsewhere, the often-used "they" seems to appear more often in texts like essays, as in this example: "I'm positive that if SOAC would analyze the situation, and see exactly who they were giving money to, they would realize that not every student-organized committee is a good idea."

- **Refer Other Texts.** Authority Letters were higher than Close-Friend Letters and Essays. There was no statistically significant difference between Close-Friend Letters and Essays.

Refer Other Texts. "Through the linear channel of language," write Kaufer and colleagues, "speakers and writers can thread not only their own voice but also the voices of various historical and contemporary external voices" (177). To refer to other texts, writers can use "citations, quotations, and dialog cues" (177), but they may also make less formal reference to the words of another (178)—i.e., "I have recently heard that. . . ." Verb phrases can signal the informal reference to another person's words or to communications from the public domain: *decided that, dreamed that, was aware that, noticed that*, etc. (178). Authority Letters scored higher than Close-Friend Letters and Essays, probably because of the number of students who cited the newspaper article in which Suzanne Sharp was quoted. For example, one student wrote, "You even said yourself, Mrs. Sharp, 'nearly every student group that is eligible for funding receives it' (Columbia Tribune, Dec. 11, 2000, p. 12A)." In comparison, very few writers of Close-Friend Letters or Essays cited the article.

- **Quotation.** Authority Letters were higher than Essays. There was no statistically significant difference between Authority Letters and Close-Friend Letters or between Close-Friend Letters and Essays.

Quotation. *The Power of Words* reflects upon two uses of quotation marks: those which are indeed word-for-word replications of a source's language (178), and those which are only a writer's technique for setting off words to emphasize them (179). Noting that novice writers tend to use the second type of quotation marks rather freely, whereas experienced writers are more selective and subtle in their setting off of "verbal clichés or cultural commonplaces" (180), the authors focus upon the first type, which "represents a further class of source strings that clinch the speaker or writer's attribution of ideas in a verbatim format. Quotation strings often involve verbs of saying, verbs that

precede a comma, an optional *that* + quotation marks. . ." (178). For perhaps the same reason as mentioned in Ref Other Texts, Authority Letters scored higher than Essays: the students who quoted Suzanne Sharp back to herself.

- **Citations.** Authority Letters were higher than Close-Friend Letters, but there was no statistically significant difference between Authority Letters and Essays or between Essays and Close-Friend Letters.

Citations. As students have learned, one way to "introduce" an outside source is through citation strings such as "According to." Other citation techniques include referring to research or to studies (177). Once again, Authority Letters scored higher than another treatment, but this time, it was Close-Friend Letters, with no statistical significance in the difference with Essays. I cannot interpret DocuScope's nuances in separating Ref Other Texts, Quotations, and Citations, nor can I account for the reasons that the other two categories were sometimes significant and sometimes not.

- **Resemblances.** Close-Friend Letters were higher than Authority Letters. There was no statistically significant difference between Authority Letters and Essays or between Essays and Close-Friend Letters.

Resemblances. To share and enhance social ties, writers reveal "how things look to them and [assume] things will look similarly to the audience" (126). In fact, the writer counts on "creating a sense of seeing things similar with the audience" (126). The writer depends on the audience sharing similar "background inferences" to cement the social ties (126). It is possible that Close-Friend Letters were higher than Authority Letters because, if the writer is counting on seeing things similarly with the audience, with shared background inferences, a close friend is more likely to share the vision and the background. As an example: "The values and beliefs we have come to appreciate and live with are being disregarded and forgotten. Everything that we have believed in growing

up, like God, being pro-life, and against the death penalty, are being challenged and put down."

- **Example.** Essays were higher than Authority Letters. There was no statistically significant difference between Authority Letters and Close-Friend Letters or between Essays and Close-Friend Letters.

Example. Writers often signal evidence from examples is forthcoming by using phrases such as "for example, for instance, as in the case when" (106). Examples "make a generalization more concrete" (106). Since Essays scored higher on most aspects of logic, and using examples is one of the many ways to organize and support a logical argument, that may be the reason for the score. For example: "This organization is responsible for several hate-related crimes on campus. Just last week a Jewish girl had her car tipped over and 'Hitler' was written all over it. There was another incident where an African American football player had his tired slashed and his locker had the word 'nigger' written on it."

- **Assert That.** Essays were higher than Close-Friend Letters, but there was no statistically significant difference between Authority Letters and Close-Friend Letters or between Authority Letters and Essays.

Assert That. If writers wish to make assertions to an audience, they rely upon strings they hope will be shared truths for both (101). Assert-that strings such as "I claim that, we contend that, I profess that" help the writer establish a present-tense sense of asserting a proposition. Other strings include "it is about, the answer is, there is the matter of" which also help prime the audience to accept the writer's truth (101). The concept of shared truths once again seems to be the key. Usually students reflected their own assurance with sentences like "I am sure no minority student on campus wants to pay fees

so that they can go to an organization that will hinder their education." Another example is this: "I feel I can say this confidently because. . . ."

- **Specifications.** Essays were higher than either Authority Letters or Close-Friend Letters. There was no statistically significant difference between Authority Letters and Close-Friend Letters.

Specifications. Specifications are descriptors of a kind, but not in a sensory way. They usually move the reader from the abstractness of generality to the particular, without imparting a strong sense of the subjective. Some strings that are common are these: *specifically, particularly, in terms of, with respect to, in the sense of, concerning the, in the case of* (156). The logic that the essays has shown no doubt calls for an organizational tool that helps a writer move a reader from the general to the particular. Here is an example that reveals this trait clearly in that it begins with a general statement of what the writer opposes: "I personally feel that if I am paying money that is going to various groups and organizations, my voice should be heard and have an effect on where that money goes, regardless of how the University chooses to disperse it." Then the writer moves to a specific reason for feeling as s/he does: "One reason that I am opposed to having my money partially being dispersed to the XYZ Society is because of their published strong fundamentalist religious views."

- **Update.** Authority Letters were higher than Essays, but there was no statistically significant difference between either Authority Letters and Close-Friend Letters or between Essays and Close-Friend Letters.

Update. The function of update strings is to report what is new in a timely and meaningful way. Humans like to know what is happening, but they also ask questions, so sometimes updates are a way of answering those questions (159). Verbs such as "announce" can be enhanced by adverbs such as "still" and "already" or by adjectives

such as “current, new, latest” (160-162). Authority Letters may have been higher than Essays because words like “announce” can convey an official sense to an update that seems to reflect the sense of the authority figure as University official. Students also called upon new technology to update the Authority Figure. For instance, in a letter to Suzanne Sharp, one student wrote, “If you visit their web site at www.wearebetter.com, you will learn that they are very discriminatory against other races and religions.”

- **General Inform.** Essays were higher than Authority Letters or Close-Friend Letters. There was no statistically significant difference between Authority Letters and Close-Friend Letters.

General Inform. Due to the changing nomenclature of the DocuScope categories, I am unable to decide which category this one once was. That inability is especially problematic since so many strings are called “General Inform” in the computerized version. I suspect that several minor categories were integrated into one larger dimension, but having no proof, I can speak only to the results shown and let readers assume, as I must, that General Inform is much like what it seems—being generally informative for the reader. Essays scored higher than the two letters. In *Engaging Ideas*, John Bean refers to what he calls “data-dump writing,” which “reveals a student overwhelmed with information and uncertain what to do with it” (23).

It is possible that since the writing prompt provided quite a lot of information, the students are merely dumping it back into the essay in an effort to fill up the page. However, they also created a lot of information of their own. In addition to describing XYZ and indicating what the group was like, students also included details such as how and when they first heard of XYZ: “Upon meeting an XYZ member in January of 2001, I was faced. . . .” Another wrote, “XYZ members hand out flyers and pamphlets. They can

even be seen voicing their racist views of hate at places like Speaker's Circle." As examples of traits of XYZ, student writers colorfully cast the group variously as Satanists, Binge Drinkers, White Supremacists, Anti-Smoking, Pro-Smoking, Anti-Marijuana, Pro-Marijuana, Anti-Religious, Pro-Religious, Anti-Gun, Pro-Gun, Anti-Euthanasia, Pro-Euthanasia, Pornographers, and Harley-Davidson riders. XYZ was eXamine Your Zipper, Holocaust doubters, and nudists. A couple of inventive students determined that XYZ mean X-terminating Year-round Zoos and X-amining the Youth of Zimbabwe.

The next two tables include the results for the third cluster, External or Description:

**Cluster 3: Description or External Perspectives.** This cluster addresses the world of "the public senses" (49). Thus, description and narration are important (17). These strings present an objective world, not the subjective one of the Internal Cluster. Not surprisingly, fiction and poetry rely upon priming strings from the External Cluster (230). Scenes, images, time, word pictures—these are the bases of the priming strings from this cluster. This cluster contains strings that prime audiences to "experience situations and worlds within the text, situations displaced in time and space from the immediacy of the audience's context." These strings "convey a world outside of mind and witnessable through the public senses," such as "scenic and temporal descriptions" (49).

**Table 5-9: Means and Standard Deviations for Authority vs. Friend vs. Essays (Docuscope Results)**

| Variable Name | Friend Letters | | Authority Letters | | Essays | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | Std Dev | Mean | Std Dev | Mean | Std Dev |
| ***External Cluster*** | | | | | | |
| Description | 3.9867 | 1.79862 | 4.8051 | 1.40266 | 3.8556 | 2.01429 |
| Sense Property | 0.5065 | 0.46639 | 0.8836 | 0.54261 | 0.6431 | 0.56124 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sense Object | 1.5824 | 1.07383 | 1.6939 | 0.88194 | 1.2763 | 1.06877 |
| Space Relation | 1.27 | 0.758 | 1.58 | 0.773 | 1.30 | 0.788 |
| Scene Shift | 0.11 | 0.215 | 0.07 | 0.154 | 0.14 | 0.215 |
| Time Shift | 0.12 | 0.203 | 0.18 | 0.271 | 0.06 | 0.128 |
| NarratingPastEvents | 0.37 | 0.467 | 0.60 | 0.545 | 0.50 | 0.498 |
| Verb*ed* Word(tense) | 0.26 | 0.372 | 0.41 | 0.421 | 0.37 | 0.364 |
| Person Property | 2.3378 | 1.31115 | 2.7590 | 1.16692 | 2.9326 | 1.43290 |

**Table 5-10: Statistical Probabilities (Alpha Levels) of All Three Treatments Compared (T-Test Results)**

| Variable Name | Friend vs. Authority Letters | Authority Letters vs. Essays | Friend Letters vs. Essays |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***External Cluster*** | | | |
| Description | .008* | .005* | .722 |
| Sense Property | .000* | .022* | .172 |
| Sense Object | .546 | .025* | .141 |
| Space Relation | .031* | .057 | .827 |
| Scene Shift | .192 | .030* | .457 |
| Time Shift | .224 | .004* | .060 |
| NarratingPastEvents | .021* | .849 | .484 |
| Verb*ed* Word(tense) | .047* | .328 | .938 |
| Person Property | .074 | .480 | .026* |

The asterisk (*) indicates that the probability level is statistically significant at the $p \leq .05$ level.

- **Description.** Authority Letters were statistically higher than either Close-Friend Letters or Essays. There was no significant statistical difference between Essays and Close-Friend Letters.

Description. Description is visual language, “word pictures” composed of nouns and verbs; it provides a way for the audience to “see” the content of a text in such a way that readers are “motivated” to get into the text (184). Word pictures can also reflect the mental imagery of a state of mind (184). This class describes persons, objects, and properties as visible or otherwise sensed objects. Unlike in the AST rubric, in the DS results, the Authority Letters had the highest means overall, possibly because of DocuScope’s greater range of descriptive strings. In *The Power of Words* the inclusion of description helps the writer “set in motion the audience’s acquaintance with the persons in the writing” (185). In one of the studies reported in *The Power of Words,* the one that compared political opinion articles by two columnists, one columnist “offers audiences experiences that are constructed to seem relatively objective descriptions of realities,

relying on word pictures and letting readers infer her opinion through these pictures" (230). I suspect that a similar cause is at work in this study. Rather than the writer overtly telling the reader, "This is what I want you to think," the writer paints a picture that covertly allows the reader to see the world as the writer sees it. As Kaufer et al. note, writers of arguments depend in part on primings that "bring an audience along on the writer's rhetorical journey" (*The Power of Words* 215). While most writers want to bring all readers along on the journey, the one reader from the three treatments (Close Friend, Authority, Essay) who is most likely a power figure, the one with the ability to decide whether XYZ gets funds, is Suzanne Sharp, the faculty advisor for SOAC. Perhaps the student writers applied descriptive priming cues more so in these letters because they wanted to persuade her to withhold funds. They may have seen the persuasion of their Close Friends as being more overt, less subtle.

- **Sense Property.** Authority Letters were statistically higher than either Close-Friend Letters or Essays. There was no significant statistical difference between Essays and Close-Friend Letters.

Sense Property. A subclass of description refers to word pictures of "objects and environments as well" as of living, thinking creatures (185). Sense properties have a natural connection and overlap with affective elements (185). Again, the Authority Letters were highest, for reasons that I assume must be similar to those for description in general. One student, in writing of a [pretend, of course] encounter with a member of XYZ, stated, "I was faced with a very disturbing situation. The individual with whom I spoke was very rude and stubborn. When I told the man that I did not agree with his beliefs, he got extremely angry. I then began to walk away. When I did this, he got in my

face and started screaming. If a passerby hadn't intervened, I don't know what might have happened next."

- **Sense Object.** Authority Letters were statistically higher than Essays. There was no statistically significant difference between Close-Friend Letters and Authority Letters or between Close-Friend Letters and Essays.

Sense Object. Kaufer et al. describe sense objects as "primarily noun-based visual objects, experiences, or events. They are sometimes stable as single words, but often need additional length to pin down stable descriptive objects and entities" (186). For instance, this example creates a sensory experience: "The young men who are in this organization give all college age men a bad name. These guys like to take pictures, if you know what I mean." Another student, concerned about the Hemlock Society, wrote, "Not only are members of society legally free to commit suicide, but no counseling is offered by the state prior to death; it is not mandatory that a doctor be present; the 'death drug' freely arrives in the mail, and the individual is free to take the injection at any time, without prior notification to the family by a doctor. In most cases, the drug is not even effective, but rather sends the individual into seizures or a coma."

- **Space Relation.** Authority Letters were significantly higher than Close-Friend Letters. There was no statistically significant difference between Authority Letters and Essays or between Close-Friend Letters and Essays.

Space Relation. Also referred to as "spatial intervals," this string pulls in a sense of movement: "They allow audiences the experience of selectively scanning, zooming, and panning in the space within scenes" (187). Primarily, prepositions such as "on, under, scross, over, against, along, alongside, up, down, in front of," and "in back of" help writers "denote relationships between objects occupying contiguous space" (187-188). A student concerned about Asian immigrants to the U.S. wrote that XYZ opposed

immigration, especially of people from China and Japan. “On January 14, 2001, a Chinese student on the Mizzou campus was attacked after dark and severely beaten. There are also thousands of cases of reported vandalism to the Chinese restaurants every year. With this evidence that the crimes against Asian immigrants are rising, I do not believe SOAC should fund a society that promotes violence against a group of people.”

- **Scene Shift.** Essays were higher than Authority Letters, but there was no statistically significant difference between Authority Letters and Close-Friend Letters or between Essays and Close-Friend Letters.

Scene Shift. The prepositions of direction, *from* and *to*, can help writers cue readers to expect a shift of scene. Kaufer and colleagues describe how scene shifting works: “When a subject of interest changes enclosures, the likelihood increases that the scene changes when the enclosure changes. It is as if the audience’s eyes, tracking the subject from a rear camera, knows to associate a new enclosure with a[n] interior director’s cut or dissolve” (200). Some adverbs, such as “meanwhile,” can cue a scene shift (200). Additionally, writers “can prime a shift in scene simply by referencing a scene holistically” (202). One student writer, referring to the law-breakers in XYZ, wrote, “For a good time they walk in groups, stalk, follow, and beat up bikers. They profile men in their forties with beards and ride on Harley Davidsons and beat them up in front of people. It is not only embarrassing to the bikers but to the students.” Then the writer shifts scene: “People that join the XYZ Society are not even students. They are seventy to ninety-year-old women” who spend their time beating up bikers and “voting for the national pasttime to be quilting.” Obviously: “This group is a menace to society. They must be stopped or put into homes.”

- **Time Shift.** Authority Letters were higher than Essays, but there was no statistically significant difference between Authority Letters and Close-Friend Letters or between Essays and Close-Friend Letters.

Time Shift. "In the course of telling a story," explain Kaufer and colleagues, "a speaker or writer will often tell the story shifting back and forth through time" (202-203). The writer is likely to use priming strings such as "a year before, a week later, a few minutes ago" (202). The phrase "a time" is also common (202). In denouncing an XYZ group that is "a group dedicated to 'proving' that the Holocaust was never committed," one student writer carries readers from the time of XYZ members distributing brochures and "other propaganda which 'covers it up' and promotes White, Protestant, Germanic power. I am not making these accusations because I heard them on the street. I attended one of these meetings myself as an experiment and left after ten minutes." The next shift carries readers back to the reality of the Holocaust: "As much as the world, and myself as well, would love to forget humans can be as cold and cruel as the participants of the Holocaust were, it happened. The people who were killed were martyred for their race, creed, sexuality, and religious beliefs." Then readers are brought back to current time: "[Holocaust victims] fully deserve to be remembered and honored."

- **Narrating Past Events.** Authority Letters were significantly higher than Close-Friend Letters. There was no statistically significant difference between Authority Letters and Essays or between Close-Friend Letters and Essays.

Narrating Past Events. The way writers express how time passes is through using specific types of verbs in the past tense (194). Not all past-tense verbs can handle the sense of time passing; verbs of "agency and external action" will work to function narratively, but verbs that pertain more to "internal and relational perspectives" will be

less likely to do such work (195). Beginning as many letters did, one student wrote, “I have recently learned that the XYZ Society has applied for funding from SOAC.” Then the writer shifted to a past-event narration: “I have witnessed some of their activities on campus and felt that instead of helping people, they seemed to attack other people’s values.”

- **Verb*ed* Word (tense).** Authority Letters were significantly higher than Close-Friend Letters. There was no statistically significant difference between Authority Letters and Essays or between Close-Friend Letters and Essays.

Verb*ed* Word (tense). Specifically past-tense –*ed* action verbs constitute a subclass of narrating past events. As mentioned, they alone cannot always portray time passing.

- **Person Property.** Essays were higher than Close-Friend Letters, but there was no statistically significant difference between either Authority Letters and Close-Friend Letters or between Essays and Authority Letters.

Person Property. Word pictures also have a specific string that deals with the sensory descriptions of people: “Such properties help audiences distinguish, through the five senses, one human being from the mass of human beings on the planet” and “capture the visual and auditory features audiences notice, but seldom verbalize, when they come to know human beings through a face-to-face acquaintance” (184-185). Like a character sketch, person properties can refer to “personal tendencies and individuating characteristics” (185). One student writer individuates XYZ members clearly: “One can always tell who belongs to the society and who doesn’t by their overdone religious clothing; quoting scripture, ideas, views, and making a mockery of others’ viewpoints. Many of them walk past those with different beliefs with their noses held high, almost to say that they walk on water, and you’re not worthy.”

## Part III
## An Examination of Sample Texts

In the past, student writers were sometimes accused of being too egocentric to write effectively for an audience. Yet this study suggests that if their writing is any indication, then the student writers involved in this study seem aware of their audiences in a number of ways. Lexical priming can provide a way for text to reveal much of what is occurring, possibly at the subconscious level of cultural conditioning, in the minds of writers as they seek to communicate with their multiple audiences.

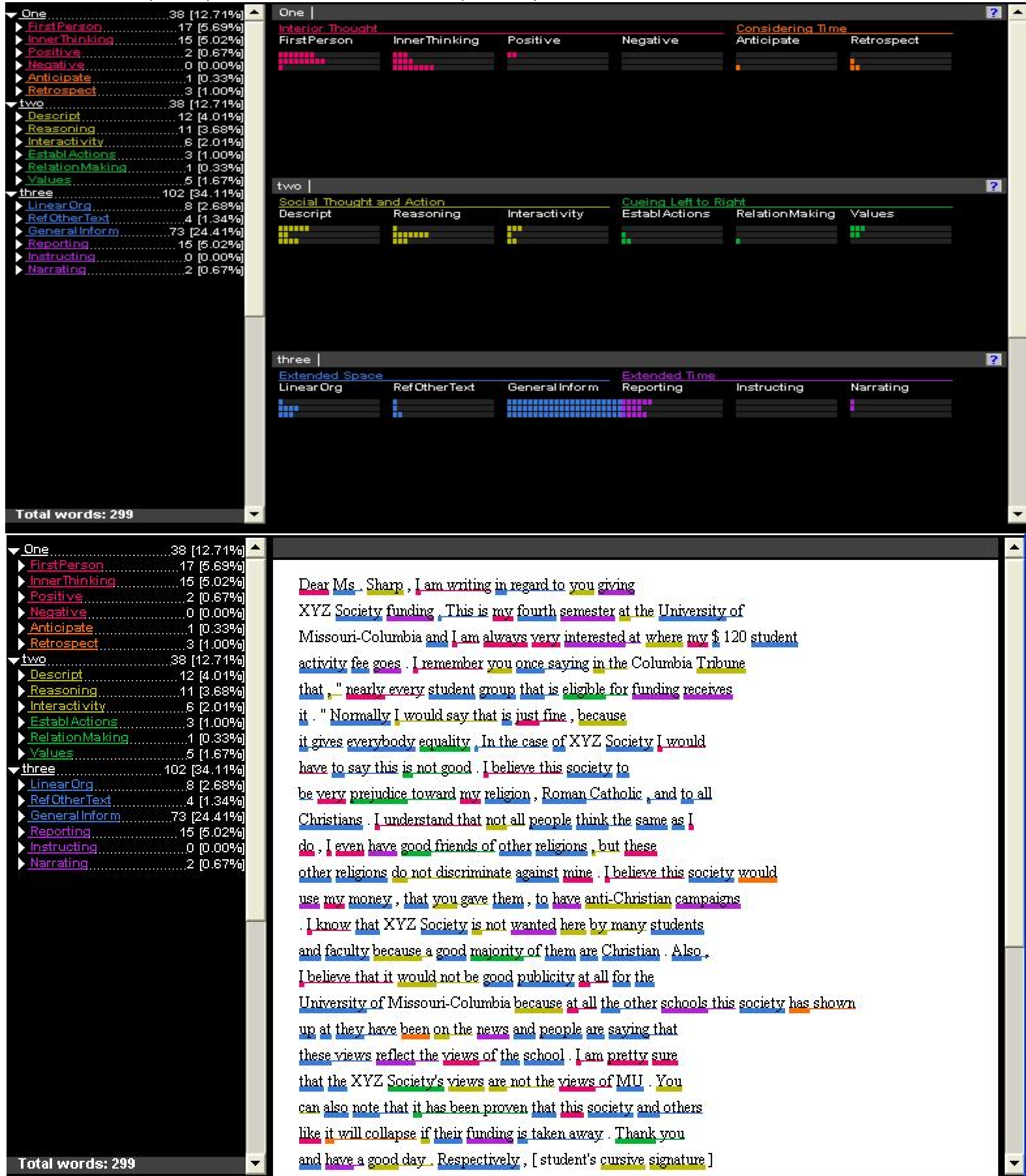
A variety of audiences tend to be present for all writers: there are the ones in our heads that we have fictionalized, the ones checking their e-mail to read what we've written to them, the ones standing at the front of the class, waiting to collect essays. Each audience is simultaneously multipresent, and it is no shock to find that student writers sometimes have difficulty focusing attention on the enabling audiences while ignoring the toxic ones. Nevertheless, student writers can learn that there are cues and conventions from the lexis that prime their readers because they themselves are already similarly primed. In fact, such cues and conventions help them focus their writing toward the audiences that are most relevant for each rhetorical situation, and to "close their eyes" to others.

Reproduced at intervals in the following pages are three student texts. The first is a letter to Suzanne Sharp, the Authority Figure (faculty advisor to SOAC). The second text is an essay, and the third is a student's letter to a friend. These three samples are neither overly representative, nor non-representative, of their genres. What they have in common is that each reveals a writer using lexical priming as a means of cueing an audience and that each in some way suggests a sense of genre appropriate to the writing

task. Each text will be discussed as a representative of the more general results already reported. (Please refer to Illustration 3-1 on page 53 for an annotated sample.) In the sample Dimension View in Illustration 5-1, the color yellow highlights Description, explained by Kaufer et al. as "visual nouns and verbs" as well as "extended space and extended time, that contribute to external description" (*The Power of Words*, 183-184). Description, Barry Kroll notes in "Audience Adaptation in Children's Persuasive Letters," is a persuasive appeal that attends to readers' need to know specifics in order to be persuaded. Kroll's subjects included description frequently: "Morover, subjects tended to use specific, audience-directed appeals more frequently than they did the other, more general types of appeals" (418). However, description is not limited to visual nouns and verbs or colorful adjectives; it includes "states of mind that language communities have managed to reify into sensory objects through use. . ." (Kaufer et al., *The Power of Words,* 184).

The letters to the Authority seem to support Puma's belief that student writers will provide more evidence for an authority figure because of both register and semantic abbreviation. Semantic abbreviation suggests that when the psychological distance between reader and writer is not close, the writer will feel the need to include information that he or she would not have to include if the distance was more intimate. The writer cannot assume much common knowledge with the Authority-letter reader; thus, more description, more citations and quotations, and more acknowledgment of others' input. In expressing acknowledgment for what others have done, most people will use primings that thank the reader and express other polite acknowledgements. (Politeness strings are discussed in two classes in DocuScope: positive feedback and requests. While

**Illustration 5-1 Sample Letter to the Authority Figure: Single-Text Visualizer (STV): Dimensional View (below)**




Dear Ms. Sharp, I am writing in regard to you giving
XYZ Society funding. This is my fourth semester at the University of
Missouri-Columbia and I am always very interested at where my $ 120 student
activity fee goes. I remember you once saying in the Columbia Tribune
that, " nearly every student group that is eligible for funding receives
it. " Normally I would say that is just fine, because
it gives everybody equality. In the case of XYZ Society I would
have to say this is not good. I believe this society to
be very prejudice toward my religion, Roman Catholic, and to all
Christians. I understand that not all people think the same as I
do, I even have good friends of other religions, but these
other religions do not discriminate against mine. I believe this society would
use my money, that you gave them, to have anti-Christian campaigns
. I know that XYZ Society is not wanted here by many students
and faculty because a good majority of them are Christian. Also,
I believe that it would not be good publicity at all for the
University of Missouri-Columbia because at all the other schools this society has shown
up at they have been on the news and people are saying that
these views reflect the views of the school. I am pretty sure
that the XYZ Society's views are not the views of MU. You
can also note that it has been proven that this society and others
like it will collapse if their funding is taken away. Thank you
and have a good day. Respectively, [ student's cursive signature ]

**Illustration of a Sample Authority Letter, Single-Text Visualizer (STV): Text View**

DocuScope does not measure politeness directly as a variable, the concept of politeness seems inherent in the examination of positive and negative feedback.)

The Authority letters rated low in denials, resistance, and negative words, all primings that seem to inhibit politeness. That is to be expected. Peers can disagree and argue in ways that people cannot argue with their superiors; there is much less to lose, in one sense. In another sense, though, there is more to lose—a friendship—which may be why the Friend letters were only slightly lower than the Authority Letters. The concept of register helps us to understand that the level of politeness is conventionally higher in communications with authority figures than with intimates. There is less need for politeness with friends, but if writers wish to continue having friendships, it is unlikely that they will feel as free to express negatives as they would if the reader was an unknown cipher, as in the essays.

Authority letters may have been higher in retrospection than the letters to friends for reasons of semantic abbreviation. Friends don't need to spell out memories to each other. Their habitual actions are well known to each other. Contrarily, the authority figure would need to have evidence of these retrospective moments in order to be persuaded to do as the writer was asking. Similarly, Authority letters were higher than essays in updates, which is reporting what's new. With a specified audience, writers of the letters to authority figures needed to persuade by providing new and timely evidence; the essay writers had little need since they had little sense of a real person as audience. Similar reasoning can be applied to the time shifts. Writers signal time shifts with cues such as "a year before," which would benefit the Authority reading and making a decision.

There are twelve description strings in the sample student text. An obvious adjectival description is the student's use of the term "anti-Christian." The writer employs some nouns, such as the addressee's name, that could be considered visual;

however, the weight of description in this letter is carried by the shifting of verb tenses, which served to illustrate "English's capacity to record events that audiences do not directly witness or no longer witness," as well as "the elapse of time through the expression of past events" and various "transitive functions" (Kaufer et al., *The Power of Words* 193-95). For example, the writer begins the letter in present tense, "I am writing," but shifts to using "would" as a modal auxiliary verb to indicate a sense of volition: "Normally I would say. . ." By the end of the letter, the writer notes that XYZ "will collapse if their funding is taken away." In the alterations of verb tense, the student writer is indicating to the reader through language cues that time is elapsing, shifting, changing.

The color blue is used to indicate references to other texts (Ref Other Text). As we can see, the writer cites a newspaper article in which the letter's addressee was once quoted: "I remember you once saying in the Columbia Tribune. . . ." Additionally, "other texts" can refer to conversation as well as printed text. Some of the words underlined in blue refer to conversational texts: for example, "people think" and "people are saying." The writer "invents" fictitious sources so that writing "You can also note that it has been proven that. . ." is justifiable. The student writer of this text seems to understand that the reader(s) will be more persuaded if someone other than the writer him- or herself backs up the opinions offered by the writer and "seconds" the request.

The request itself is tentative to the point of being nearly invisible. Yet the letter reflects the writer's realization that although money has already been given to XYZ Society, the letter's primary reader, Ms. Sharp, has the authority to reclaim it. In *The Power of Words*, the authors explain, "One recurring characteristic for request strings is the use of *please* or some other politeness marker to signal that compliance is voluntary

and personally acknowledged" (Kaufer at al., 151). Our student writer stops short of using the word "please," but ending with thanks and a wish for a good day are heightened by the writer's use of "Respectively." ("Respectfully" is likely what was meant.)

However, for the dimension of "Negative" highlighted in red, the bar chart indicates no negative language in this letter; the list to the left of the text puts Negativity at zero. Nevertheless, upon reading the letter, one can see that the word "not" is used six times. Additionally, words like "prejudice" and "collapse" and the prefix "anti-" tend to be considered negative. Is DocuScope in error? Or is it possible that this example indicates a problem Kaufer et al. discussed in *The Power of Words* regarding negative affect? Words that are considered "affect" terms—i.e., evoking pleasant or unpleasant emotions—"exhibit wide variability and instabilities at the grain size of a single word" (85). (That may be one reason why rhetoricians shy away from attributing rhetorical meaning upon a single word.)

In the case of the sample being studied, the negative words tend to be equalled by positive words: "interested," "fine," "equality," "good" (used five times). The overall tone of the letter is courteous and generally positive. There is no sense of anger or urgency. The writer ends the letter with "Thank you and have a good day." The bar graph for Positive, though not lengthy, still reflects activity. Further, the writer employs a large number of qualifying or mitigating terms: *just, even, I would have to say, I believe, people are saying*. Such strings may "act as reversals or mitigators of affect. They precede affect strings to turn a positive affect into a negative one and vice-versa" (Kaufer et al., *The Power of Words* 87). Additionally, writers use negatives at times to persuade readers to join them in sharing a joint outlook. As Kaufer et al. note in *The Power of*

*Words*, “it is arguably a smaller feat to rally around common distastes than common tastes,” so the writer of the letter above may be “priming” his or her reader(s) to join in disliking a group that would express prejudice toward Catholics. And just in case the reader is not Catholic, or Christian at all, the writer has supplied another solution: it is okay for writer and reader not to agree. The writer realizes that “not all people think the same as I do.”

As Lanham suggests, we must look not only *through* language but *at* it (*Analyzing Prose* 192). When we read a text that contains an ostensibly negative message, we must examine both aspects—the *at* and the *through*. In “Textual Genre Analysis and Identification,” Kaufer et al. analyzed two letters similar to the one reproduced above—both his letters are ostensibly negative, yet contain differently worded messages (131-32). Despite one letter using negative language on the surface (words like “regret,” “broken”), Kaufer and colleagues remind us that the other letters is equally as negative, though phrased in less overtly negative language.

Of course, it requires cultural knowledge for the close reader to understand that both letters present a negative message, and the creators of DocuScope acknowledge that cultural knowledge stands apart from textual evidence. However, they argue that “small, systematic differences in language choice accumulate into large, important differences” (208). In other words, readers must “oscillate” between what they see on the surface and what they know through experience to be true: “A reader only looking through texts misses important surface differences. A reader only looking at texts misses important underlying similarities that the textual surface can’t capture” (Kaufer et al., “Textual”

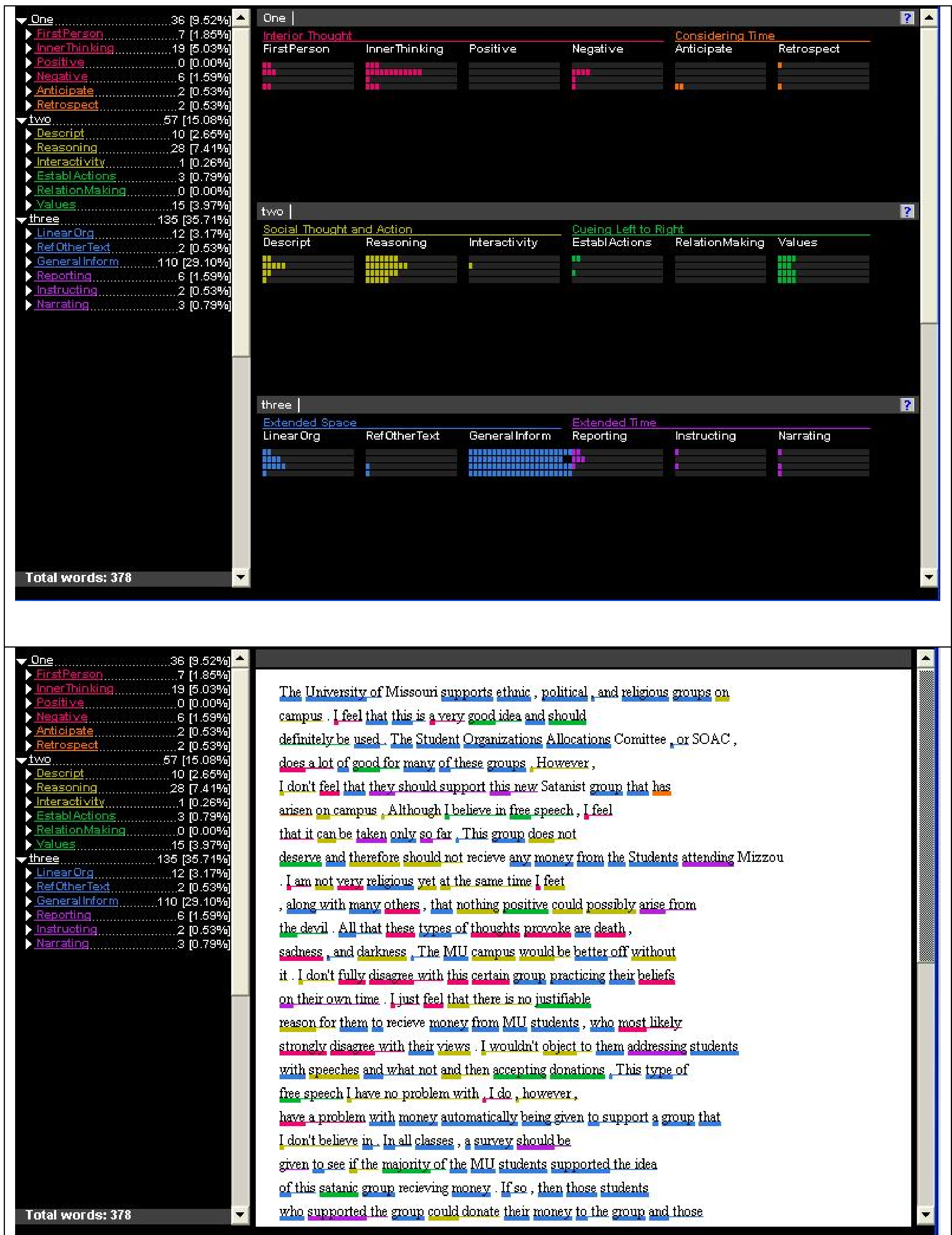
132). The same is true with the student textual sample; it must be read both on the level of the textual surface and at the level of cultural knowledge.

A close reading that incorporates cultural knowledge would suggest that the writer is aware that the primary reader is an authority figure. Should denials, resistance, and negative language dominate a letter meant to be persuasive, the writer runs the risk of alienating and angering the authority figure, not of persuading her. Thus, while using cues that imply disagreement with the authority figure's decision, the writer has taken precautions to sound reasonable and knowledgeable. One of the dimensions in DocuScope is relation-making (done via sharing social ties); this student writer employs social ties in the form of shared social truths—that equality is good, that prejudice and discrimination are bad, and that it is fair to promote the first but not the second two.

Essays rated highest in negativity (Think Negative/Negative Affect) and in public commonplaces (Common Authorities), highest in information density (General Inform), and lowest in use of first-person and self-disclosure. They were also lowest in direct address and interaction with readers (Interactivity and Basic Interactivity). As the sample above indicates, the writer does indeed score low in strings that reflect interpersonal relationships. There is no direct address at all, nor is there a string in relation making[14]. The essay does seem to contain a preponderance of negatives ("negative" scores a 6; "positive" scores a 0). The essay itself is full of negative language: "However," "don't," "Although," "does not deserve," "should not receive," "nothing positive could arise,"

[14] Because of the numerous changes and shiftings of cluster and string-class names, at times I have had to make educated guesses as to which category was being referenced. Relation-making seems to clearly belong to Cluster Two, Relational, but it has been renamed. "Inclusiveness" is one possibility.

**Illustration 5-2 Representative Essay in DocuScope: Single-Text Visualizer (STV): Dimensional View**



"death, sadness, and darkness," "no justifiable reason," "strongly disagree," "have a problem," "denied the privilege," "no rebuttal."

It came as no surprise that Essays, with no assigned audience, were the most impersonal of the samples. Because the student writers were assigned no audience and they had not been members of the class long enough to have a srong sense of who their teachers were (only of who English teachers were, in a generic sense), they had to rely upon the subset of Mutual Knowledge that Gordon Thomas calls Knowledge of Conventions. As Thomas explains, "composition students in the U.S. use English to communicate, and their audience consists of people familiar with the conventions of college essays" (586); i.e., English teachers. The students relied on the kinds of "public commonplaces" that David Bartholomae describes in "Inventing the University": "culturally or institutionally authorized concept or statement that carries with it its own necessary elaboration. We all use commonplaces to orient ourselves in the world; they provide points of reference and a set of `prearticulated' explanations that are readily available to organize and interpret experience" (137-138).

The fact that the essays were higher in negativity was expected. The suggested form of the response was argument, and as explained earlier, arguments tend to rate higher in negative language and negative affect. Further, with no sense of audience except a teacher who was as yet an unknown, students had little fear of offending a "real" person. Thus, there was little direct address, little interaction with readers, and little acknowledgment of others' input.

The lack of audience in the essays could have easily translated into teacher-as-audience, and to some degree it did: essays rated higher than either the authority or friend

letters in information density (General Inform). Semantic abbreviation can account for this result, as well. With little sense of who the readers were, the writers intuitively supplied more details than they would have supplied had they had a stronger sense of the audience. They felt they shared nothing but the broadest, most common knowledge with the reader, whoever he or she might be, so the gaps had to be filled.

Because they had less sense of who their audiences were, it may seem an anomaly that essays rated higher in confirming others' thoughts, but that, too, can be explained by the students' use of commonplaces, which are, after all, the students' ideas of what others' thoughts are likely to be. Kaufer et al. note that for a writer to present "'convention' or 'received' points of view before elaborating [his or her] own distinctive point of view is a common move in academic writing" (*The Power of Words* 119). Unlike the letter writer previously discussed, this writer begins not with a reference to self, but a reference to the shared values of the University: "The University of Missouri supports ethnic, political, and religious groups on campus." The writer employs strings that invoke for the reader a sense of widespread customs and beliefs: "I feel, along with many others. . . ." S/He "speaks" as a voice for the masses who share in those beliefs: "The MU campus would be better off without it."

The essay also glows brightly with blue for general inform (which may or may not be information density) and yellow for reasoning. In contrast to what is revealed in this essay, in the first major cluster, Inner Thinking, a writer is concerned with revealing the individual self; often the language used suggests private thinking and subjective perception. This is the kind of writing that most of us associate with personal disclosure, in which the writer might reveal autobiographical details. The perspective is of the writer

looking out and telling what he or she knows, sees, feels, thinks. In general, this is not the kind of writing that is called for in the academic essay; the genre of academic essay tends to value logic, reasoning, support, evidence, and objectivity. At first glance, our sample seems to reflect a student writer who is violating the convention of academic essay by using a number of expressions such as "I feel" and "I think" and "I believe" from the Inner Thinking or Internal cluster. Yet in the end, the writer supports the weight of the argument with information and reasoning. For example, s/he suggests giving out a survey so students can democratically decide whether XYZ gets the money. In fact, the writer even uses these words: "With these plans implemented I feel that the problem of these unsupported groups would come to a diplomatic, fair conclusion."

Compared to the first student text (Dear Ms. Sharp), which had 11 reasoning strings, this essay exhibits 28 strings, or 7.41 percent of the writer's total of 378 words. General Inform reflected 110 strings in the essay, or 29.10 percent of the text. (The writer of Dear Ms. Sharp, though informative, presented only 73 strings.) Reasoning belongs to the cluster of Relations because reasoning strings "indicate the sequenced thinking of an individual making a bid to make an audience share the sequence and so think alike" (Kaufer et al., *The Power of Words*, 100). The kind of connection the writer is making is one that relies upon shared premises (17). The student text exemplifies the kinds of "shared truths" that the writer surmises that the audience will also accept: "With the students voicing their opinion there could be no rebuttle from the group." Words such as "justifiable" buttress the idea of a shared sense of justice. The occasional passive voice also relieves the writer of the burden of solo action and invites the reader to participate in action to achieve a just solution.

**Illustration 5-3 Representative Friend in DocuScope: Single-Text Visualizer (STV): Dimensional View (above) and Text View (below)**

One .......... 80 [15.56%]
FirstPerson .......... 6 [1.17%]
InnerThinking .......... 50 [9.73%]
Positive .......... 4 [0.78%]
Negative .......... 6 [1.17%]
Anticipate .......... 9 [1.75%]
Retrospect .......... 5 [0.97%]
two .......... 60 [11.67%]
Descript .......... 11 [2.14%]
Reasoning .......... 27 [5.25%]
Interactivity .......... 4 [0.78%]
EstablActions .......... 2 [0.39%]
RelationMaking .......... 1 [0.19%]
Promise .......... 0 [0.00%]
Reassure .......... 0 [0.00%]
Reinforce .......... 0 [0.00%]
Acknowledge .......... 0 [0.00%]
Inclusive .......... 1 [0.19%]
Confront .......... 0 [0.00%]
Values .......... 15 [2.92%]
three .......... 167 [32.49%]
LinearOrg .......... 20 [3.89%]
RefOtherText .......... 3 [0.58%]
GeneralInform .......... 127 [24.71%]
Reporting .......... 14 [2.72%]
Instructing .......... 3 [0.58%]
Narrating .......... 0 [0.00%]

Total words: 514

One

Interior Thought: FirstPerson, InnerThinking, Positive, Negative
Considering Time: Anticipate, Retrospect

two

Social Thought and Action: Descript, Reasoning, Interactivity
Cueing Left to Right: EstablActions, RelationMaking, Values

three

Extended Space: LinearOrg, RefOtherText, GeneralInform
Extended Time: Reporting, Instructing, Narrating


One .......... 80 [15.56%]
FirstPerson .......... 6 [1.17%]
InnerThinking .......... 50 [9.73%]
Positive .......... 4 [0.78%]
Negative .......... 6 [1.17%]
Anticipate .......... 9 [1.75%]
Retrospect .......... 5 [0.97%]
two .......... 60 [11.67%]
Descript .......... 11 [2.14%]
Reasoning .......... 27 [5.25%]
Interactivity .......... 4 [0.78%]
EstablActions .......... 2 [0.39%]
RelationMaking .......... 1 [0.19%]
Promise .......... 0 [0.00%]
Reassure .......... 0 [0.00%]
Reinforce .......... 0 [0.00%]
Acknowledge .......... 0 [0.00%]
Inclusive .......... 1 [0.19%]
Confront .......... 0 [0.00%]
Values .......... 15 [2.92%]
three .......... 167 [32.49%]
LinearOrg .......... 20 [3.89%]
RefOtherText .......... 3 [0.58%]
GeneralInform .......... 127 [24.71%]
Reporting .......... 14 [2.72%]
Instructing .......... 3 [0.58%]
Narrating .......... 0 [0.00%]

Total words: 514


Dear Jeremy , I am writing you with regards to the most recent
request for funding from the student activity fees made by the " XYZ
Society " . I feel that it is not in the best interest
for SOAC , as a committee of the University of Missouri and the
students of the University , to grant this request . Although the society
may feel just in their request , I do not believe that the
majority of the student body would agree . Their beliefs do not coincide
with the majority of the students , which in itself is not the
problem , but when these beliefs infringe upon others ' rights then something
must be done . First of all , this group believes heavily in
strong racial division , both in society and in the classroom . They
also advocate the use of violence to obtain such goals . This ,
to me , seems to directly violate the standards set by the University
in keeping such things from taking place . Also , I don't feel
that the University nor SOAC would want to seemingly condone such malicious and
/ or malevolent behavior on campus . Whether the intention or not ,
the use of student fees to fund such a group would appear to
suggest this very element . Second , this group doesn't stop at violence
on a purely racial level . This society , or organization , has
been known to openly condone the use of terrorism and subjective force in
an attempt to deny others of their religious freedom . They have verbally
assaulted every religious belief . No joking . They've presented no apparent reasons
for their hatred , yet , they do not deny it . I

The letter to Jeremy above is notable for its 50 strings representing Inner Thinking. A number of Inner Thinking traits can be noted, such as first-person singular pronouns ("I" is used eleven times). According to *The Power of Words*, such pronouns "individuate a mind without specifying it or imbuing it with historical particularity" (Kaufer, et al. 60). In other words, one can write using "I" and still not create a sense of a real individual. Reading the letter certainly does not give the reader a sense that the writer has self-disclosed (another Inner Thinking trait), even though the writer uses phrases such as "I feel, "I do not believe," and "I do not expect." However, another trait, confidence, is more obvious: "They have verbally assaulted <u>every</u> religious belief. No joking." Kaufer and his co-authors argue that the strings that "denote a speaker's or writer's confident attitude about an utterance also denote the truth of the utterance as an assertion" (*The Power of Words* 67). The writer occasionally qualifies and mitigates assertions, but the overall sense is that this writer knows positively what is going on, and he or she feels strongly enough to act: "I also feel that the majority of the students at this University would agree with my point-of-view. It would be wrong for SOAC to allow the allocation of these funds to this particular organization." The writer is even confident that s/he won't succeed in altering XYZ's behavior: "I do not expect this group to change their beliefs. . . ."

Intensity is similar to confidence in that it conveys decisiveness: "I strongly disagree with their beliefs." As Kaufer et al. note, "English strings conveying intensity underscore the writer's emotion more than the assurance of truth" (*The Power of Words* 72). The writer certainly expresses emotion: "To allow this group the funds necessary to propel their hatred would be a crime against the rest of the student body." Punctuation

even contributes to intensity: “assaulted every religious belief.” Intensity can also be reflected in the writer’s “priming a sense of strong but nonspecific feeling” (73). The student writer’s letter reflects that trait: “this group believes heavily in strong racial division. . . .”

Yet another trait of Inner Thinking is the writer’s sense of immediacy: Near the end of the letter, the writer expresses appreciation for Jeremy’s cooperation and adds that s/he “fully expect[s] the rest of SOAC to do the same after these points are addressed.” The writer even began with a priming of immediacy by referring to XYZ’s “most recent request” for funding, implying a sense of urgency.

This student writer, like the essay writer, also used numerous strings to prime reasoning and general informativeness. The DocuScope printout used in this study does not reveal the entire text of the letter to Jeremy, nor does it replicate the writer’s original paragraphing; otherwise, it would be easy to pick up on the writer’s strong organizational and transitional elements. One such element that enables the writer to prime the audience to follow the linear text easily is metadiscourse (Kaufer et al., *The Power of Words*, 170). The authors do not adhere to Crismore’s broader definition of metadiscourse, a definition which encompasses “any marker in the stream of language that orients the audience”; rather, they “restrict metadiscourse to aids the speaker or writer provides to help the audience’s linear navigation” (170). One such aid is what they call a “preview string” such as “the purpose of this paper is” (171). In the letter to Jeremy, such a string of metadiscourse is “I am writing to you with regards to. . . .”

Another type of metadiscourse that the writer of the letter uses is “discourse organizers” such as “firstly, secondly, in summary” (172). The writer begins the second

paragraph with “First of all,” uses “Also” to transition in mid-paragraph, starts the third paragraph with “Second,” and begins the last paragraph with “Finally.” The writer is using what Kaufer et al. refer to as “lexical formulae taught in school writing to help students appreciate their responsibilities to guide an audience” (172). Such formulae can be a detriment to student writing if overused, yet many readers appreciate and welcome such visible “highway markers” within the text, especially if written passages are long or complex.

The results of the DocuScope analysis suggest that letters written to close friends stood out for the amount of autobiography and for interactions with readers. It might seem that the Friend letters would be lowest rather than highest in autobiography. After all, writing to a friend is writing to someone who already knows the major details of one’s life. However, this use of autobiography may provide reminders of the ties that already bind the two friends together. Because of the persuasive nature of the diagnostic writing prompt, it is possible that the writer of the letter would need to establish a sense of “you and me together” with the reader. Interactivity, with its emphasis upon the second-person “you” and the sense of showing that the two friends shared similar pasts and beliefs, may have been generally higher in the Friend letters for similar reasons.

In our sample, the letter to Jeremy, very little overt autobiography is present, but the use of address to the reader (“I am writing you,” “as you can see,” and “I would greatly appreciate your cooperation”) in the form of the second person pronoun “you” suggests that the writer is aware of the need to express a certain degree of closeness to the reader. Such was not the case with all the letters to close friends, which were the most interesting and varied, yet difficult, of all the samples. They ranged from warm, friendly

notes, with personal postscripts like "Tell your mom I said hi," to samples that were not clearly letters to anyone at all. In the middle ranges were letters addressed rather anonymously to "Dear Friend" and "Dear Close Friend," as well as "To whom it may concern." The disproportionate numbers of unclear samples for the Close Friend category suggest the difficulty that some students had with writing to an unnamed close friend who might care about the topic. (One potential subject for future research could well concern the fascinating ways students imagine an audience who is a "close friend.")

Ranking Similarities

Upon examining the ways that the two analyses ranked the treatments (which treatment had the highest incidence of the variable, which was in the middle, and which ranked lowest in incidence of the variable), I found that three categories matched exactly in the order in which the treatments were ranked:

Number 2: Think Positive/Positive Affect (DS) and Flattery of Reader (AST) both ranked the Close-Friend Letters as having the highest incidence; Authority Letters held the middle ranking; and Essays had the lowest ranking.

Number 5: Reasoning (DS) and Logic (AST) were matched: Essays first, followed by Close-Friend Letters, followed by Authority Letters.

Number 12: Inclusiveness and Empathy (DS) and Appeal for Sympathy or Empathy (AST) identically ranked Essays first, followed by Close-Friend Letters, with Authority Letters last.

Two categories shared their number-one rankings, but not their second or third:

Number 7: Direct Address (DS) and Addresses or Names Reader in Text (AST) shared the commonality of having Close-Friend Letters ranked first. DS followed with Essays and then Authority Letters. AST followed with Authority Letters then Essays.

Number 8: Resemblances (DS) and Refers to Specific Reader Trait (AST) both ranked Close-Friend Letters first, but DS followed with Essays and then Authority Letters. AST followed with Authority Letters then Essays.

Other partial matches occurred in categories that listed more than one variable:

Number 4: Update and Metadiscourse (DS) and States the Problem (AST) had a partial match. DS in Update only showed Authority Letters—Close-Friend Letters—Essays, but that matched AST's ranking for States the Problem. Metadiscourse's ranking was Close-Friend Letters—Essays—Authority Letters.

Number 11: Request and Insistence on Action and Directing Activities (DS) and Makes Explicit Request and Tells How to Respond (AST): For both DS and AST, the "request" segment ranked Authority Figure first. DS followed with Close-Friend Letters and then with Essays. AST tied Close-Friend Letters and Essays. Insistence on Action and Directing Activities differed from Tells How to Respond. The former ranked Authority Letters and Close-Friend Letters in a tie, followed by Essays, but the latter ranked Essays first, then Close-Friend Letters, followed by Authority Letters.

Three categories presented the two methods as having identical second-place rankings but opposite first- and third-place rankings:

Number 3: Retrospection (DS) and Refers to Specific Relationship History (AST) differed in that DS had this ranking: Authority Letter—Essays—Close-Friend Letter, and AST had this ranking: Close-Friend Letters—Essays—Authority Letters. The Essays held center spot for both.

Number 10: Confrontation and Resistance (DS) and Threats (AST) both had Close Friend Letters as the middle ranking, but the DS ranking had Essays first and Authority Letters last. The AST ranking had Authority Letters first and Essays last.

Number 13: Description (DS) and Physical and Dispositional Description (AST) both had Close-Friend Letters in the middle. DS had Authority Letters first and Essays last. AST had Essays first and Authority Letters last.

One category shared identical second-place rankings on one of two variables within the group:

Number 9: Shared Positive Standards and Establishing Like-Mindedness (DS) and Appeal to Similar Values and MU School Pride (AST): The DS ranking was Essays—Close-Friend Letters—Authority Letters. The AST ranking was mixed; the first trait, similar values, had this order: Essays—Authority Letters—Close-Friend Letters, but MU School Pride had shared the middle ranking with the DS ranking: Authority Letters—Close-Friend Letters—Essays.

One category shared last-place rankings:

Number 6: Basic Interactivity (DS) and Uses Specific "You" (AST) shared Essays as being last-ranked. DS: Close-Friend Letters—Authority Letters—Essays. AST: Authority Letters—Close-Friend Letters—Essays.

Only one category seemed to share no common rankings:

Number 1: Self-Disclosure and Autobiography (DS) and Introduces Self (AST) shared no commonalities. The DS ranking was Close-Friend Letters—Authority Letters—Essays, whereas the AST ranking was Authority Letters—Essays—Close-Friend Letters.

**Table 5-11: Comparing DocuScope (DS) Means Ranking to Audience-Sensitivity Trait (AST) Rubric Means Ranking for Comparable Variables**
**CF = Close Friend AL = Authority Letter ES = Essays**

| Group # | DocuScope Results | | Audience-Sensitivity Traits Results | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **DS Results Variable(s)** | **DS Results Rankings** | **AST Results Rankings** | **AST Results Variable(s)** |
| 1 | Self-Disclosure<br>Autobiography | CF – AL – ES<br>CF – AL – ES | AL – ES – CF | Introduces Self |
| 2 | Think Positive/ Positive Affect | CF – AL – ES | CF – AL – ES | Flattery of Reader |
| 3 | Retrospection | AL – ES – CF | CF – ES – AL | Refers to specific relationship history |
| 4 | Update<br>Metadiscourse | AL – CF – ES<br>CF – ES – AL | AL – CF – ES | States the problem |
| 5 | Reasoning | ES – CF – AL | ES – CF – AL | Logic |
| 6 | Basic Interactivity | CF – AL – ES | AL – CF – ES | Uses specific "you" |
| 7 | Direct Address | CF – ES – AL | CF – AL – ES | Addresses or names reader in text |
| 8 | Resemblances | CF – ES – AL | CF – AL – ES | Refers to specific reader trait |
| 9 | Shared Positive Standards and Establishing Likemindedness | ES – CF – AL | ES – AL – CF<br><br>AL – CF – ES | Appeal to similar values<br>MU School Pride |
| 10 | Confrontation<br>Resistance | ES – CF – AL | AL – CF – ES | Threats |
| 11 | Request and Insistence on Action and Directing Activities | AL – CF – ES<br><br>AL tie CF – ES | AL – CF tie ES<br><br>ES – CF – AL | Makes explicit request and<br>Tells how to respond |
| 12 | Inclusiveness<br>Empathy | ES – CF – AL | ES – CF – AL | Appeal for sympathy/ empathy |
| 13 | Description | AL – CF – ES | ES – CF – AL | Physical and Dispositional Description |

In short, both DocuScope and the rubric devised of Audience-Sensitivity Traits indicated the following:

- Students writing letters to Close Friends engaged in more language that was positive in affect and that flattered the reader than did students writing to Authority Figures. Students writing Essays engaged in the least such language.
- Students writing letters to Close Friends engaged in more Direct Address or Addressing and Naming the Reader in the Text than did Essay writers or writers to the Authority Figure, but the two measurements disagreed over whether Essay writers or Writers to the Authority Figure used the least such language.
- Students writing letters to Close Friends engaged in more Resemblances and References to specific reader traits than did Authority Letter or Essay writers, but the two measurements disagreed over whether Authority Letter or Essay writers used the least such language.
- Students writing letters to Authority Figures engaged in more Updates and Statements of the Problem than did Close-Friend letter writers. Essay Writers engaged in the least such language.
- Students writing letters to Authority Figures engaged in more Requests and Explicit Requests than did Close-Friend letter writers or Essay writers. Essay writers engaged in the least such language in DS's analysis and tied for least with the AST analysis.
- Students writing Essays engaged in more Reasoning and Logic than did students writing either of the types of letters. Both measurements also agreed that letters to Authority Figures engaged in the least such language.
- Students writing Essays engaged in more measures of Inclusiveness and Empathy and Appeals for Sympathy and Empathy than did Close-Friend letter writers. Both measurements agreed that writers of letters to Authority Figures engaged in the least such language.
- Students writing Essays engaged in more Shared Positive Standards and Establishing Like-mindedness than did the letter writers, but the two measurements disagreed over which letter writer type used the least.
- Students writing Essays engaged in the least Basic Interactivity and Use of Specific "You" than did the letter writers.

Essays

**Most:**

Reasoning & Logic
Shared Positive Standards/ Appeal to Similar Values
Inclusiveness & Empathy/ Appeal for Sympathy & Empathy

**Least:**

Think Positive/ Positive Affect; Flattery of Reader
Updates; States Problem
Basic Interactivity; Uses Specific "You"

Authority Letters

**Most:**

Updates; States the Problem
Requests; Explicit Requests

**Least:**

Reasoning; Logic
Inclusiveness & Empathy; Appeal for Sympathy & Empathy

Close Friend Letters

**Most:**

Think Positive & Positive Affect; Flattery Reader
Direct Address; Addresses Names Reader in Text
Resemblances; Refers to Specific Reader Trait

**Least:**

[no least]

**Middle:**

Confrontation, Resistance; Threats
Description

Beginning with the letters to Close Friends, I draw the following conclusions:

- that student writers in the study realized that they could speak directly to their readers without using the distancing language inherent in "respectful" registers one would need with an authority figure;
- that they could use positive, flattering language to affect their readers emotionally;
- that they could bring into their letters their readers' names and traits that the readers would recognize as referring to a shared history with the writers;
- that lexical priming strings that used confrontation, resistance, and threats could be used, but not as their most desirable avenues of persuasion;
- that description could be used, but that it was not really necessary since their readers would likely already know what something or someone was like.

From the Letters to the Authority Figure, I draw the following conclusions:

- that student writers in the study realized that they needed to state their problem clearly by providing "update" language for the readers;
- that student writers in the study saw Authority Figures as being in a position to grant requests, whereas their close friends, despite connections to SOAC, would have less power to grant such requests;
- that student writers in the study believed that reason and logic, while useful persuasion tools, might be less effective than a simpler appeal, such as an appeal to School Pride;

- that student writers in the study believed that appeals toward inclusiveness and appeals for empathy and sympathy might not be effective with an authority figure. While an appeal to school pride may be regarded as an appeal for inclusiveness, it's possible that the student writers felt it represented a middle ground between an overtly emotional appeal, such as one for empathy, and an overtly rational appeal, such as an appeal to logic.

From the Essays, I draw the following conclusions:

- that student writers in the study, not knowing who their "real" audience was, and relying either upon their assumptions about English teachers in general or about the genre of "school writing" in general, felt that the best handling of the essay topic would be to rely upon reasoning and logic, on the one hand, and upon the emotional appeals of inclusiveness, sympathy, and empathy, on the other.

- that student writers in the study, for the reasons above, felt that the readers of their essays, whoever they were, would be likely to share values and standards that were common among the populace in general;

- that student writers in the study felt the least need to use positive or flattering language for an essay reader whose existence was unclear to them;

- similarly, that student writers in the study, not clearly imagining their readers, felt little need to update those readers by stating the problem;

- that student writers in the study, faced with an unnamed, genderless, faceless reader of their essays, felt no need to be interactive with those readers and no need to address those readers with second-person "you" that would speak from one mind to another.

## Part IV: Discussion

In this study I have argued and, I hope, proven the following:

1. The writers in the study effectively in most instances "primed" their readers to read as the writers directed. They provided logic for readers who were not emotionally close to them. They provided emotional appeals for close friends. They called upon school spirit to persuade the Authority Figure.

2. The writers in the study effectively used their primings about genre to write effectively within their assigned genres, with only a few exceptions. Personal letters looked like and read like personal letters, complete with postscripts. More formal letters to the SOAC Advisor looked and read like letters to an unknown but named authority. Essays looked like and read like essays, right down to the problematical "Is the teacher the audience?" element.

3. The writers in the study did not display overt egocentrism. They generally explained what needed to be explained when they realized that their reader would not know basically what they knew (which would be the case with the Close Friend).

In the Introduction to this study, I put forth some questions. To reiterate:

- Are student writers able to use conventional textual cues that offer direction as they write and read?
- Are both writers and readers "primed" to expect words and phrases to appear together because of regularly occurring use?
- Can we link particular patterns of lexical priming with texts addressing particular audiences?

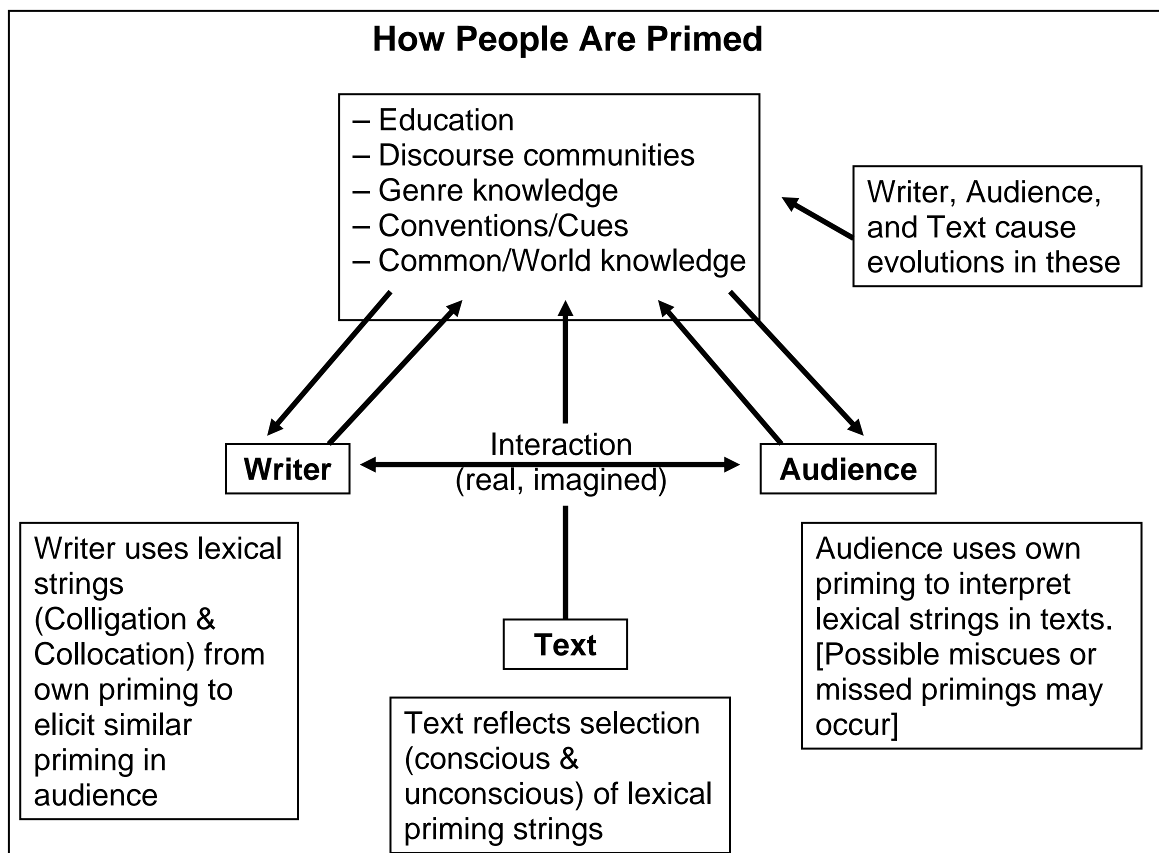
I feel that this study has at least partially illuminated some of the answers. Student writers do appear to be able to use textual cues (whether we call them collocations, primings, or cues) to offer direction to their readers. Readers do pick up on these cues, especially once they learn to read through the eyes of a writer. Participation in discourse communities facilitates the conventions that pertain to many genres of texts; for the most part, the student writers had no difficulty using the conventions of the genres of letters and essays.

As Frank Smith has written in *Writing and the Writer,* "Every aspect of language that we take for granted is a convention that we must have learned. . . . . Yet we acquire this knowledge . . .so easily and imperceptibly that we are rarely aware that the conventions exist, let alone that we have learned them" (63). In short, writers, even novices, may be aware of and use basic cues and conventions (i.e., primings) that have formed in their discourse communities.

The illustration that follows is one that I feel has helped me to see the interrelations among the many concepts covered in this study. If it were possible to have

the illustration as a three-dimensional image, perhaps that would convey what I believe to be the fluidity and intertransference of all these elements. We are, ourselves, like text, affected by the other "texts" adjacent and overlapping, even more than an article in a magazine is affected by adjacent advertising and color photographs. Our "primings" are shaped and colored by every nuance of life, and in turn, we shape our primings into a form that subsequently shapes our audiences, who in turn, as reader-response theorists state, will shape the primings of our prose into a form that suits them. And on and on.

**Illustration 5-4 How People Are Primed**



**Limitations of this Study.** The most serious limitation in this study has been grappling with the complexity of DocuScope. I was given a one-year access to the tool, so even though I had all the statistics that I assumed I would need, I found myself wishing I knew more. Further, because DocuScope is a tool "under construction," the terminology changed several times. Classes sometimes shifted into different clusters. The book *The Power of Words* did not contain or describe as many categories and variables as the program itself. And worst of all, there was as yet no fully articulated User Manual. Thus, I found myself learning by doing—and redoing. All I can promise readers is that I have tried as honestly as possible to focus primarily upon the elements that I feel I fully understand. Even so, I am quite sure that David Kaufer and his co-creators of this interesting tool could find something to argue about with my analysis and assumptions.

**Implications for Composition Pedagogy.** Kaufer and his co-authors believe that DocuScope's effect on their teaching has been a good one. In "Teaching Language Awareness in Rhetorical Choice," they cite two main benefits:

1. Because of the visualization component of DocuScope, students began to help one another to "get the point" of the assignment; thus, their professors had fewer drafts upon which to comment in great detail.

2. The visualization element helped students dare to risk making new and exciting choices since they could see what was happening in terms of the effects of language. (392)

Kaufer et al. cite a couple of cases in which students directly benefited from the use of the visualization and tagging software. In one case, a student was able to see why her response to an assignment was quite different from how other students had handled the same task. She could easily see that the numbers and types of lexical strings she was using were different from the ones used by her classmates, who were having more

success with the assignment (390). That student, and others like her, learn not from the prescriptiveness of being “wrong” but from the descriptiveness of being “different.” As most teachers know, sometimes the one student text that excites us the most is the one that fits far outside the norm. Experienced teachers use such “outlyers” to provide that “teachable moment” that benefits the whole class, who learn that doing what others have done is not always the most appropriate response to an assignment.

The most important benefit to occur from learning about lexical priming is that it enables the writer to contemplate multiple audiences, to analyze genre differences, and perhaps to write with less trepidation. Readers, in turn, who have a basic knowledge of lexical priming, may become more adept at reading both “at” and “through”—reading for the meaning as well as for the pleasures of seeing how the writer manipulated text to create meaning. In turn, teachers of composition must become cognizant of the many audiences always already present to student writers, and must help student writers learn to practice the best strategies—including cues, conventions, and lexical primings—for analyzing and addressing those audiences.

**Suggestions for Future Research.** Research into lexical priming should continue. Even though tools such as DocuScope are not ready for the masses, classroom teachers can enhance student awareness of the functions of collocation and colligation and of some of the elements in Halliday’s functional sentence perspective. Further research should also consider these issues: (1) What role does the evolution of a discourse community (or communities) play in priming writers to write and readers to read? (2) How might genre be evaluated in light of decaying primings? (3) How do register and audience intimacy affect readerly perceptions of primings? (4) Perhaps most importantly,

are the primings that signal "regularly occurring use" regular for all native readers and writers of English, or are they constrained by social class, gender, race, religion, region, and the other elements that make us the socially and culturally created creatures that we are?

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# APPENDIX A

January 18, 2001

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for agreeing to use my diagnostic topic in your English class. As you can see, there are three somewhat separate instructions: One requires the student to write a letter to a close friend; another requires the student to write a letter to an authority figure; the third requires the student to write an essay, with no audience indicated.

Please allow your students to take this topic home and return their written responses at the next class period. It is up to you whether you require the response to be typed or handwritten on the topic sheet. You might suggest that students spend no more than an hour on their responses (30 minutes would be sufficient for my purposes, but you might want a more thorough examination of your students' writing.) I do need the topic sheet returned, attached to the response, if students write on separate paper.

It would be best for you to give as few oral explanations or instructions as possible, since several teachers will be doing this project. All I ask is that approximately one-third of your class(es) gets one topic, one-third gets another, and so on. The essay topic will be used partially as a control, so don't remind the students that you are their audience, nor should you suggest any audience at all for the essay. It would be better not to note that students will be having different audiences.

My project involves determining how well student writers "fictionalize" audience and to what extent their prose is Writer-based vs. Reader-based. At this point, I do not wish to know anything about the student writers other than the classes in which they are enrolled. I will incur the expense of photocopying the essays so that you can keep your originals, and when I do so, I will not photocopy the students' names. However, should the results indicate that knowing more about the students is necessary, I may come to you at semester's end to ask a few questions about them--sex, age, major, and so forth. Therefore, if you would keep the originals, I would be grateful.

This project is likely to be part of my dissertation, and its success is due to your gracious assistance. Thank you very much for helping. I hope that I can return the favor some day.

Sincerely,

Sharon Robideaux

## APPENDIX B

Diagnostic Essay Winter 2001 English___ Name____________________

As a student at the University of Missouri, you pay a student activity fee of approximately $120 each semester. These student activity fees are used to fund various groups and organizations on campus, including ethnic, religious, and political groups. Decisions about which groups receive funding are largely made by a student committee called the Student Organizations Allocations Committee (SOAC). According to Suzanne Sharp, the advisor for SOAC, “nearly every student group that is eligible for funding receives it” (*Columbia Tribune*, Dec. 11, 2000, p.12A).

Recently you have learned that a new group, the “XYZ Society,” has applied for this funding. You know enough about this group to know that you strongly disagree with its extreme views. You do not feel that the group represents the beliefs or ideals of the majority of students at MU, nor of the school itself, and you would like to make your concerns known before the group is funded with your money. (Invent whatever details and characteristics about the XYZ Society you wish. Your political, religious, or other opinions will count neither for nor against you, since only your writing is being evaluated.)

1. A close friend of yours is a member of SOAC. Write a letter to him/her and express your views about whether or not this group should receive funding from student activity fees.

2. Write a letter to the SOAC advisor, Suzanne Sharp, and express your views about whether or not this group should receive funding from student activity fees.

3. Write an essay in which you express your views about whether or not this group should receive funding from student activity fees.

[One-third of the students in an English 20 will receive Letter 1; one-third, letter 2; one-third, the essay. The purpose is to determine how successfully fy student writers fictionalize and address audience.]

## APPENDIX C

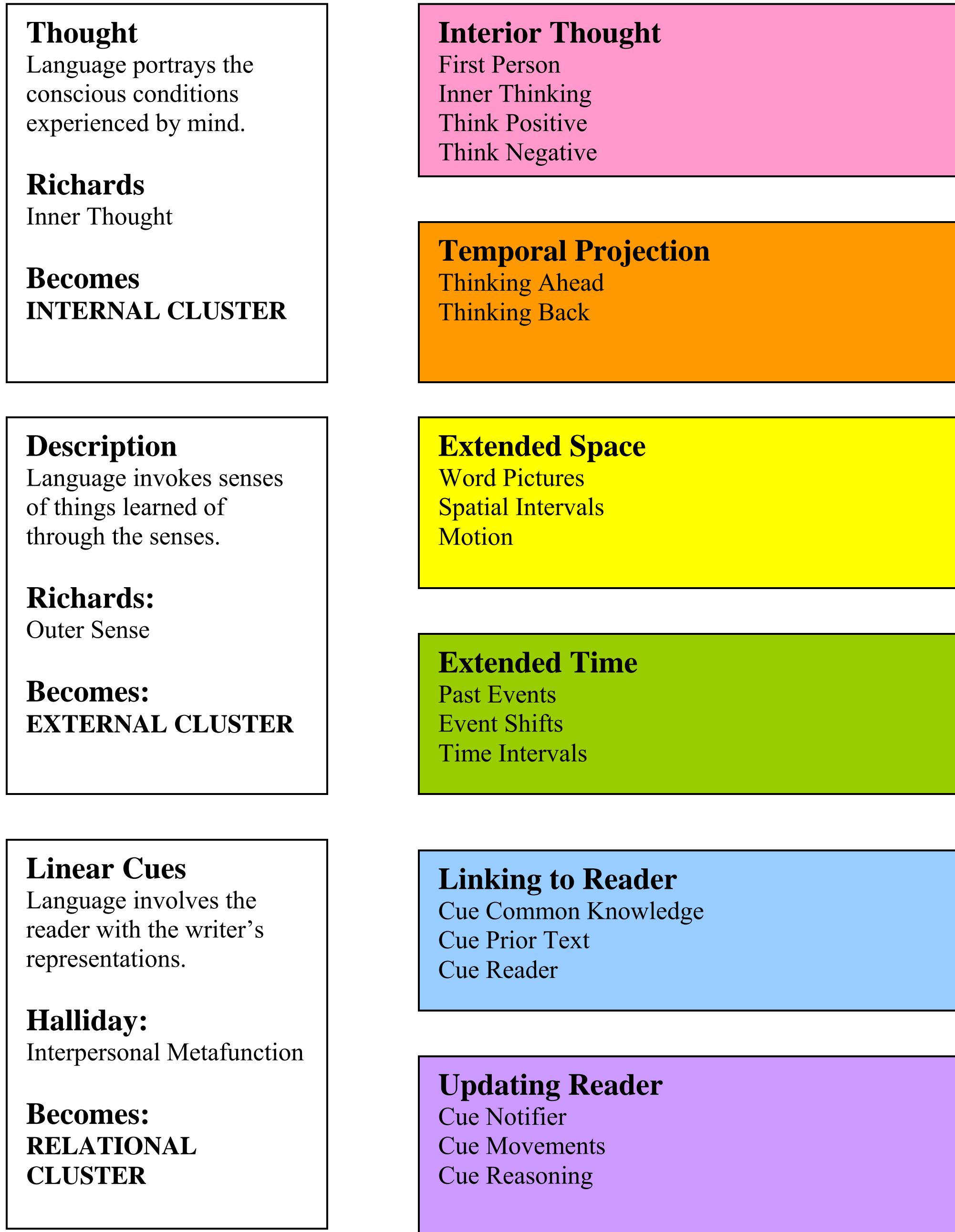
### Hoey's "Priming Hypotheses"

1. Every word is primed to occur with particular other words; these are its collocates.
2. Every word is primed to occur with particular semantic sets; these are its semantic associations.
3. Every word is primed to occur in association with particular pragmatic functions; these are its pragmatic associations.
4. Every word is primed to occur in (or avoid) certain grammatical positions, and to occur in (or avoid) certain grammatical functions; these are its colligations.
5. Co-hyponyms and synonyms differ with respect to their collocations, semantic associations and colligations.
6. When a word is polysemous, the collocations, semantic associations and colligations of one sense of the word differ from those of its other senses.
7. Every word is primed for use in one or more grammatical roles; these are its grammatical categories.
8. Every word is primed to participate in, or avoid, particular types of cohesive relation in a discourse; these are its textual collocations.
9. Every word is primed to occur in particular sematic relations in the discourse; these are its textual semantic associations.
10. Every word is primed to occur in, or avoid, certain positions within the discourse; these are its textual colligations. (*Lexical Priming* 13).

APPENDIX D

DocuScope's hierarchy: (Fig. 2, p. 6, Collins and Kaufer, *DocuScope Description*)

**Adaptation of**
**Representational Theory of Composition**



# APPENDIX E
# FULL DOCUSCOPE TABLES

**Table A-1: Anova Analysis for Docuscope Variables for All Three Treatments: Authority, Friend, Essays.**

| Variable Name | ANOVA | |
|---|---|---|
| | **F Statistic** | **Sig of F (p value)** |
| ***Internal Cluster*** | | |
| First Person | 10.358 | 0.000 |
| $1^{st}$ Per. Sing. Self | 5.545 | 0.005 |
| Self-Disclosure | 7.893 | 0.001 |
| Disclosure | 7.520 | 0.001 |
| Autobiography | 2.523 | 0.083 |
| Think Positive/Affect | 8.196 | 0.000 |
| Think Negative/Affect | 5.338 | 0.006 |
| Contingency | 2.599 | 0.077 |
| Retrospection | 3.307 | 0.039 |
| Having + Verbed | 2.419 | 0.092 |
| ***Relational Cluster*** | | |
| Dialog Cues | 2.095 | 0.126 |
| Reasoning | 9.070 | 0.000 |
| Refute That | 2.243 | 0.109 |
| Deny Disclaim | 2.783 | 0.065 |
| Resistance | 5.777 | 0.004 |
| Interactivity | 17.887 | 0.000 |
| Basic Interactivity | 4.251 | 0.016 |
| Oral Interactivity | 3.935 | 0.021 |
| Direct Address | 25.227 | 0.000 |
| Request | 2.224 | 0.111 |
| Establishing Actions | 3.426 | 0.035 |
| CommonAuthorities | 3.265 | 0.041 |
| Confirmed Thought | 3.564 | 0.031 |
| Acknowledge | 15.984 | 0.000 |
| Values | 6.329 | 0.002 |
| Positive Standards | 3.736 | 0.026 |
| Negative Standards | 3.777 | 0.025 |
| Linear Organization | 2.101 | 0.126 |
| Pronoun Focus | 2.590 | 0.078 |
| Refer Other Texts | 6.982 | 0.001 |
| Quotation | 3.096 | 0.048 |
| Citations | 5.070 | 0.007 |
| Resemblances | 3.691 | 0.027 |
| Example | 1.397 | 0.250 |
| Assert That | 3.441 | 0.034 |
| Specifications | 5.991 | 0.003 |
| Update | 4.950 | 0.008 |
| General Inform | 8.073 | 0.000 |
| ***External Cluster*** | | |
| Description | 4.960 | 0.008 |
| Sense Property | 7.497 | 0.001 |
| Sense Object | 2.557 | 0.081 |
| Space Relation | 2.883 | 0.059 |
| Scene Shift | 2.209 | 0.113 |
| Time Shift | 4.366 | 0.014 |
| NarratingPastEvents | 2.811 | 0.063 |
| Verb*ed* Word(tense) | 2.224 | 0.111 |
| Person Property | 2.980 | 0.054 |

**Table A-2: Means and Standard Deviations for Authority vs. Friend vs. Essays (Docuscope Results)**

| Variable Name | Friend Letters | | Authority Letters | | Essays | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | Std Dev | Mean | Std Dev | Mean | Std Dev |
| ***Internal Cluster*** | | | | | | |
| First Person | 2.7885 | 1.32368 | 2.6549 | 1.60501 | 1.5978 | 1.53701 |
| 1st Per. Sing. Self | 1.0467 | 0.80442 | 0.9939 | 0.98801 | 0.5678 | 0.61927 |
| Self-Disclosure | 1.5309 | 0.83199 | 1.5220 | 0.93644 | 0.9230 | 0.97752 |
| Disclosure | 0.2807 | 0.21826 | 0.2369 | 0.28676 | 0.1044 | 0.22463 |
| Autobiography | 0.21 | 0.276 | 0.14 | 0.202 | 0.11 | 0.264 |
| Think Positive/Affect | 0.7980 | 0.51907 | 0.7942 | 0.56603 | 0.4430 | 0.48964 |
| Think Negative/Affect | 1.3550 | 0.87506 | 1.4190 | 0.99640 | 1.9320 | 1.14503 |
| Contingency | 0.97 | 0.556 | 0.80 | 0.672 | 1.08 | 0.753 |
| Retrospection | 0.4602 | .42882 | 0.7537 | 0.76076 | 0.6004 | 0.56783 |
| Having + Verbed | 0.10 | 0.195 | 0.19 | 0.268 | 0.12 | 0.190 |
| ***Relational Cluster*** | | | | | | |
| Dialog Cues | 0.03 | 0.103 | 0.09 | 0.188 | 0.06 | 0.220 |
| Reasoning | 3.9515 | 1.43054 | 2.9485 | 1.41053 | 3.9569 | 1.53607 |
| Refute That | 0.42 | 0.524 | 0.24 | 0.378 | 0.34 | 0.412 |
| Deny Disclaim | 1.3980 | 0.76601 | 1.0680 | 0.88463 | 1.3156 | 0.65428 |
| Resistance | .68 | 0.570 | 0.42 | 0.407 | 0.69 | 0.475 |
| Interactivity | 1.7106 | 1.24356 | 1.3441 | 0.81187 | 0.6411 | 0.70471 |
| Basic Interactivity | 0.08 | 0.180 | 0.02 | 0.082 | 0.01 | 0.075 |
| Oral Interactivity | 0.06 | 0.131 | 0.06 | 0.192 | 0.00 | 0.000 |
| Direct Address | 0.9807 | 0.89270 | 0.8292 | 0.75892 | 0.0972 | 0.24993 |
| Request | 0.11 | 0.230 | 0.13 | 0.235 | 0.05 | 0.161 |
| Establishing Actions | 1.2837 | 0.97167 | 1.2834 | 0.80884 | 1.7137 | 1.18044 |
| CommonAuthorities | 1.2120 | 0.94321 | 1.2405 | 0.79652 | 1.6398 | 1.17428 |
| Confirmed Thought | 0.01 | 0.037 | 0.00 | 0.000 | 0.02 | 0.079 |
| Acknowledge | 0.1578 | 0.20850 | 0.2500 | 0.27753 | 0.0276 | 0.08906 |
| Values | 2.3743 | 1.32279 | 2.0120 | 1.04517 | 2.9250 | 1.68769 |
| Positive Standards | 1.5280 | 1.04887 | 1.4086 | 0.85601 | 1.9685 | 1.44568 |
| Negative Standards | 0.8167 | 0.68317 | 0.5907 | 0.65803 | 0.9278 | 0.65944 |
| Linear Organization | 2.7328 | 1.20577 | 2.5283 | 1.28126 | 2.9902 | 1.08862 |
| Pronoun Focus | 1.1363 | 0.92712 | 1.0963 | 0.90383 | 1.4459 | 0.81133 |
| Refer Other Texts | 0.32 | 0.344 | 0.63 | 0.642 | 0.39 | 0.340 |
| Quotation | 0.03 | 0.091 | 0.07 | 0.198 | 0.01 | 0.076 |
| Citations | 0.29 | 0.334 | 0.54 | 0.557 | 0.38 | 0.344 |
| Resemblances | 0.13 | 0.192 | 0.04 | 0.115 | 0.08 | 0.169 |
| Example | 0.02 | 0.073 | 0.05 | 0.137 | 0.07 | 0.227 |
| Assert That | 0.6283 | 0.42432 | 0.6531 | 0.53148 | 0.8919 | 0.74184 |
| Specifications | 19.6596 | 3.28249 | 19.2439 | 3.47508 | 21.3481 | 3.39612 |
| Update | 0.26 | 0.302 | 0.35 | 0.352 | 0.17 | 0.262 |
| General Inform | 27.709 | 3.8454 | 27.585 | 3.9734 | 30.248 | 3.9372 |
| ***External Cluster*** | | | | | | |
| Description | 3.9867 | 1.79862 | 4.8051 | 1.40266 | 3.8556 | 2.01429 |
| Sense Property | 0.5065 | 0.46639 | 0.8836 | 0.54261 | 0.6431 | 0.56124 |
| Sense Object | 1.5824 | 1.07383 | 1.6939 | 0.88194 | 1.2763 | 1.06877 |
| Space Relation | 1.27 | 0.758 | 1.58 | 0.773 | 1.30 | 0.788 |
| Scene Shift | 0.11 | 0.215 | 0.07 | 0.154 | 0.14 | 0.215 |
| Time Shift | 0.12 | 0.203 | 0.18 | 0.271 | 0.06 | 0.128 |
| NarratingPastEvents | 0.37 | 0.467 | 0.60 | 0.545 | 0.50 | 0.498 |
| Verb*ed* Word(tense) | 0.26 | 0.372 | 0.41 | 0.421 | 0.37 | 0.364 |
| Person Property | 2.3378 | 1.31115 | 2.7590 | 1.16692 | 2.9326 | 1.43290 |

**Table A-3: Statistical Probabilities (Alpha Levels) of All Three Treatments Compared (T-Test Results)**

| Variable Name | Friend vs. Authority Letters | Authority Letters vs. Essays | Friend Letters vs. Essays |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***Internal Cluster*** | | | |
| First Person | .809 | .001* | .000* |
| 1st Per. Sing. Self | .757 | .008* | .001* |
| Self-Disclosure | .755 | .001* | .001* |
| Disclosure | .957 | .008* | .000* |
| Autobiography | .116 | .472 | .047* |
| Think Positive/Affect | .971 | .001* | .000* |
| Think Negative/Affect | .719 | .012* | .004* |
| Contingency | .156 | .037* | .361 |
| Retrospection | .014* | .231 | .151 |
| Having + Verbed | .049* | .124 | .096 |
| ***Relational Cluster*** | | | |
| Dialog Cues | .020* | .308 | .338 |
| Reasoning | .000* | .000* | .985 |
| Refute That | .042* | .226 | .351 |
| Deny Disclaim | .037* | .096 | .549 |
| Resistance | .005* | .001* | .936 |
| Interactivity | .064 | .000* | .000* |
| Basic Interactivity | .043* | .519 | .020* |
| Oral Interactivity | .917 | .015* | .001* |
| Direct Address | .332 | .000* | .000* |
| Request | .550 | .032* | .141 |
| Establishing Actions | .999 | .025* | .041* |
| CommonAuthorities | .862 | .035* | .039* |
| Confirmed Thought | .298 | .022* | .115 |
| Acknowledge | .050* | .000* | .000* |
| Values | .108 | .001* | .062 |
| Positive Standards | .508 | .013* | .073 |
| Negative Standards | .076 | .008* | .392 |
| Linear Organization | .385 | .042* | .247 |
| Pronoun Focus | .817 | .033* | .068 |
| Refer Other Texts | .002* | .015* | .271 |
| Quotation | .137 | .035* | .288 |
| Citations | .005* | .067 | .171 |
| Resemblances | .006* | .204 | .175 |
| Example | .129 | .025* | .124 |
| Assert That | .786 | .054 | .025* |
| Specifications | .516 | .002* | .010* |
| Update | .162 | .002* | .081 |
| General Inform | .867 | .001* | .001* |
| ***External Cluster*** | | | |
| Description | .008* | .005* | .722 |
| Sense Property | .000* | .022* | .172 |
| Sense Object | .546 | .025* | .141 |
| Space Relation | .031* | .057 | .827 |
| Scene Shift | .192 | .030* | .457 |
| Time Shift | .224 | .004* | .060 |
| NarratingPastEvents | .021* | .849 | .484 |
| Verb*ed* Word(tense) | .047* | .328 | .938 |
| Person Property | .074 | .480 | .026* |

The asterisk (*) indicates that the probability level is statistically significant at the $p \leq .05$ level.

# VITA

Sharon Cockerham Robideaux was born in 1951 in Winnsboro, Louisiana. After graduation from LaSalle High School in Olla, Louisiana, in 1969, she began studies for her bachelor's degree from Northeast Louisiana State College in Monroe, Louisiana. Although marriage and children interrupted her progress, in 1983 she graduated *magna cum laude* from Northeast Louisiana University with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. In 1988, she completed work on her master's degree at Northeast Louisiana University in English, with a major emphasis in Creative Writing. After teaching high school (Senior Honors English) briefly, she was employed to teach college-level English and writing courses in Louisiana and Georgia. In 1994 she began pursuit of a Ph.D. in English, Rhetoric and Composition, at the University of Missouri-Columbia. After teaching in Michigan for several years, she completed her Ph.D. in August 2007.