Interactions between ideology, dialogic space construction, and the text-organizing function: A comparative study on the traditional and postmodern academic writing corpora

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Interactions between ideology, dialogic space construction, and the text-organizing function: A comparative study of traditional and postmodern academic writing corpora

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Abstract

Dialogic elements are considered to play a crucial role in text construction, but little has been revealed concerning how these elements interact with other resources to construct text. This paper explores the text-organizing function of heteroglossic resources quantitatively by focusing on different ideological stances that thesis writers take, namely, the traditional or postmodern stance they take toward history writing. In this study, I demonstrate that traditional and postmodern theses vary significantly in the way they create dialogic spaces. The analysis further reveals that the different dialogic strategies they employ are manifested in the larger textual organization, which demonstrates that dialogic resources interact with text-organizing resources in the construction of text.

Keywords: dialogism; corpus linguistics; English for Academic Purposes; history discourse; interactions between multiple resources.
1. Introduction

It was nearly two decades ago that Hodge (1995) found what he called the “postmodern turn” in humanities and social-sciences thesis writing:

In discipline after discipline, it [the postmodern turn] raises issues of epistemology and the processes of intellectual and textual production, in a way that is cumulatively so radical that the previous practices of disciplinary knowledge can no longer be assumed as given by those aspiring to profess them at any level. (Hodge 1995: 35)

“Postmodernism” is generally characterized by a mistrust of the grand narratives relied on by modernism, which was built on the belief that maintaining objectivity throughout an inquiry is possible. Lyotard (1984) – who coined the term – defined postmodernism as an “incredulity toward meta-narratives” (p. xxiv); that is, an incredulity toward the power to universalize the meta-narrative that presupposes that there is such a thing as universal, true knowledge. As postmodernism became more prominent, the modernist’s construction of knowledge as a true objective description of the world was increasingly
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questioned across disciplines, especially in the humanities, resulting in postmodern elements in academic writing that refuses to construct objective knowledge.

In postmodern academia, where researchers know that the observation of objects ‘as they are’ is no longer possible, a growing number of academic writings are radically personal and subjective:

Typically . . . they are over-ambitious, they lack unity, they lack objectivity, they are “creative”, they are difficult to assign to a single disciplinary pigeon-hole, they are excessively concerned with their own conditions of production, and they are strenuously, complexly written (or, sometimes, refuse to be merely written, but reach out for some other mode of presentation). (Hodge 1995: 35)

Hodge further pointed out that what new humanities theses look like should be studied from the pedagogical perspective, because these theses “run the risk of being judged by inappropriate criteria” or “as failing to be ‘good Old Humanities theses’” (Hodge 1995: 35).

Many studies report that academic writing is not as static and monolithic as it was once believed to be. Thus, Hyland (2004) pointed out that “the discourses of the
academy are enormously diverse” (p. x), and that “this diversity has important implications for writers as they interact with their teachers and peers, and as they write themselves into their disciplines” (p. x), indicating that successful interaction through writing can be achieved by adequate understanding of diverse practices or ideologies within disciplines. Postmodern elements in humanities writing may be one of the consequences of such diversified ideologies within disciplines (e.g. Hodge 1998; Swales 2004; Starfield & Ravelli 2006; Casanave 2010). Most of the literature on English for Academic Purposes (EAP), however, has focused on the description of major elements in genre and disciplines (e.g. Prior 1998; Lewin, Fine & Young 2001; Hyland 2004; Samraj 2005). Despite the increasing awareness that variations exist within disciplines, which is particularly apparent in postmodern humanities and social-sciences thesis writing, as yet not much research has been conducted on the ways in which different ideological orientations within disciplines impact on academic text construction.

In studies that investigate the postmodern elements in contemporary academic writing, researchers have agreed that a growing body of academic writing today rejects the traditional academic writing style aiming to be detached and objective and has become increasingly subjective (Hall 1985; Hodge 1995; Kelly, Hickey & Tinning
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While the understanding of traditional academic writing as detached and objective and that of postmodern writing as relative and subjective has gained ground, little is known as to how exactly traditional and postmodern academic discourses differ due to the paucity of linguistically-oriented quantitative research into the new ways of structuring academic text relying on postmodern academic writing norms.

Studies that relate to postmodern subjectivity have typically investigated specific lexicogrammatical elements. For instance, some of the studies that have been produced so far have explored the functions of the first-person pronoun I (e.g. Ivanič & Camps 2001; Starfield & Ravelli 2006; Sheldon 2009). Starfield and Ravelli (2006), for instance, in their thesis corpus investigated the role of the first-person pronoun I as it characterizes the presentation of self and identified the pronoun’s different discourse functions. One of the functions they discovered is the “reflexive I” (Starfield & Ravelli 2006: 233), i.e. autobiographical/narrative I, which is a reflection of the emergence of postmodern academic writing in new humanities theses. This dual use of I is an interesting observation for the present study because it suggests that the same lexical item serves different functions in terms of its subjectivity. However, a more
comprehensive investigation that looks at how postmodern subjectivity manifests itself in the overall construction of text beyond a particular lexical item is now needed in order to more fully understand the relations between differences in ideologies, subjectivity, and text construction.

Against the traditional notion that academic writing should be detached, studies of EAP have shown that interpersonal elements in fact play a crucial part in academic writing (e.g. Hyland 2005; Hood 2010). It has also been pointed out that academic writing is an institutionalized genre where ideologies, intentions, and strategies are involved both internally and externally in the text (e.g. Halliday & Martin 1993; Martin & Wodak 2003; Hyland 2009). From a more general perspective, in genre studies, the relations between ideologies, interpersonal strategies, and genre have been receiving more and more attention in terms of how they relate to the evolution of genre (e.g. Poynton 1993; Martin 2006; Martin & White 2005). Despite all the advancement in studies concerning the relations between ideology, genre, and text, little has been revealed as to how these features actually interact. In particular, there has been little exploration of how the emergence of the postmodern ideology impacts interpersonal positionings in the text, and further, how this impacts the structuring of the text.
Outside of more general academic discourse studies, the role of interpersonal elements in the construction of text has been investigated (Halliday & Hasan 1976). Thompson and Zhou (2000) showed how logical connectors, such as and, so, or but, which are typically considered to be a function of the textual domain, actually contain an interpersonal function. They concluded that coherence and cohesion may depend on evaluation, which further suggests that cohesion itself is an interpersonal as well as textual phenomenon. In addition, Hunston (2000: 177) stated that “evaluation plays a key role in the construal of a particular ideology by a text or set of texts. It also plays a key role in discourse organization”. As such, with the emergence of postmodern humanity theses, a more comprehensive study that focuses on the text-construction mechanism that is concerned with the interactions of multiple resources is necessary. This may shed further light on the understanding of the relations between ideological changes and the evolution of genre.

What these previous suggestions about the interactive functions of interpersonal resources remind us of is the Bakhtinian perspective on text stratification. Throughout his book, Bakhtin (1981) emphasized what he called “the centripetal forces of language”, which concern the dynamic and dialogic interactions between ideologies, the writer/speaker, the listener/reader, and the text, all of which he considered to contribute
to unifying the discourse. Investigating the dynamism of Bakhtinian dialogism in relation to text construction in humanities-thesis writing at the emergence of postmodernism and relating it to the impact of ideological changes may reveal many crucial processes of text construction concerning the dynamic and dialogic interactions, which has been a gap in research.

In this study, I attempt to fill this gap by exploring engagement strategies in texts that are written from different ideological orientations, and by examining how multiple resources interact with each other and how subjectivity is constructed differently in them. I also aim to investigate what postmodern humanities theses look like from a pedagogical perspective. For these purposes, I collected 40 introductory chapters from PhD theses in history, as both history discourses and introductions in academic writing are considered to be sites that produce active contestation (e.g. Anderson & Day 2005; Swales 1990, 2004), making them a fertile site for the present investigation. In this study I focus on variations within a discipline, which, as pointed out earlier, has tended to be ignored in EAP research.

The methodology includes four stages: 1) identifying the postmodern elements represented by the postmodern personal narratives, which divides the corpus into two types: thesis introductory chapters that include postmodern elements (the postmodern
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corpus) and those that do not (the traditional corpus); 2) manually assigning labels to each instance of “heterogloss” (dialogic discourse); 3) providing a quantitative measurement of heterogloss in each text and corpus; 4) commenting on a number of individual texts, in order to illustrate ways in which multiple resources interact. I used the system of engagement\(^1\) (Martin & White 2005) as the framework to conduct a dialogic-dynamism analysis in these two corpora in order to establish whether the existence of postmodern elements makes a difference in dialogic strategies and the organization of the text.

2. The emergence of postmodern history writing

The postmodern influence on history writing is an important issue in historiography, where it has been a widely discussed topic (e.g. White 1973; Chatman 1978; LaCapra 1983; Attridge 1987; Bennington 1988). As a result of postmodern relativism in academic writing that refuses to construct objective knowledge, different ways of constructing knowledge exist even within the same discipline, for instance history. Anderson and Day (2005: 330) observed that the contemporary discipline of history can be summarized as involving “[a] diversity of history knowledge”, and they suggested

\(^{1}\) In this paper, following Martin and White (2005), I write the names of systems and features without capitals.
that this is not only because the discipline ranges over different periods of time and locations but also because of the diversity of approaches and ideologies behind them.

Postmodernism, in particular, has impacted recent history discourse a great deal. Before postmodernism, history writing took an optimistic stance toward the ability of historical research to depict historical events in the way they “really happened”. For example, Ranke (1952), a historian who is regarded as having established the modern methods in the field of history, proposed that the past should not be judged by modern norms and standards, because before the Rankean proposal, the practice of judging past events by present circumstances was a common way to write history. Authors of Rankean history, however, still believed in “grand narratives”: they considered that it was indeed possible to correctly discover the past by taking the viewpoint of the people who lived during a certain time. Rankean influences were dominant in the history discipline before postmodernism, as was the belief expressed by Collingwood (1946) that the historian needs to reenact events with the mind of individuals of the past. Today’s historians argue that this is not possible. In this connection, Muslow (1997), a prominent scholar on postmodern historical theory, wrote the following:
It is now commonplace for historians, philosophers of history and others interested in narrative to claim we live in a postmodern age wherein the old modernist certainties of historical truth and methodological objectivity, as applied by disinterested historians, are challenged principles. Few historians today would argue that we write the truth about the past. . . . It is not enough merely to criticise historical method, but rather to ask can professional historians be relied upon to reconstruct and explain the past objectively by inferring the “facts” from the evidence, and who, after all the hard work of research, will then write up their conclusions unproblematically for everyone to read?

. . . the crude empiricist or reconstructionist emphasis on the historian as the impartial observer who conveys the “facts” is a paradigm (defined as a set of beliefs about how to gain knowledge) that obscures history’s real character as a literary undertaking. (Muslow 1997: 1–2, original italics)

Today’s historians, then, no longer rely on the belief that historical descriptions can be objective and positivistic. As Tosh (2006: 23) noted, “We understand more clearly than Ranke did that historians cannot detach themselves from their own time”. It is not surprising, then, that research in the field of history today is diverse and appears to have
“no single, dominating epistemology or methodology” (Booth 2003: 248). As such, writing history today has come to be considered “a discursive practice” that enables “present-minded people(s) to go to the past, there to delve around and reorganise it appropriately to their needs” (Jenkins 1991: 68). This indicates that the emergence of postmodern awareness in writing history is also an awareness of the historian’s ideological positioning and takes into consideration how that affects every facet of exploring history, including the data collection, interpreting of sources, and assigning of cause and effect, to present them consecutively in writing. History writing today, therefore, is a varied representation of diverse ideological positioning. The question arises, therefore, as to how such an emergence of postmodern awareness in history writing manifests itself in text construction.

A small number of insightful studies have investigated history discourse linguistically (Prost 1988; Silver 2003; Bondi 2005; Toolan 2006; Coffin 2010; Mazzi 2012). The discourse of history has been explored ontogenetically by Coffin (2010) through investigating a series of students’ stages of development in relation to the management of a text’s structures and stance-taking strategies. Bondi (2005) investigated abstracts in history and economics research articles, and found that history abstracts contain two sub-genres, “history as story-telling or narrative” and “history as
argument”. Interestingly, some of her corpus of abstracts includes narrative elements that recount historical events, in a way that an anonymous third-person narrator reports the scene. Bondi (2005) further observed that – in abstracts with more explicit “history as argument,” in contrast to “history as story-telling/narrative” – the claim of significance and credibility is rather epistemologically oriented, relating the argument to theoretical issues, discourse community, etc. These previous findings may relate to ideological impacts on text structuring, but more work is needed on the emerging ideological impact on text structuring in the discourse of history, which this paper sets out to explore.

3. Method

The corpus used in this study comprises 40 introductory chapters selected randomly from history PhD theses produced in Australian universities during the time period of 2000 to 2010. The original total size of the dataset is 230,707 words, and the entire corpus that was coded for engagement analysis consisted of 223,159 words, which is due to the parts excluded from the original corpus, as will be noted later.

I limited the scope of research to one discipline so that the corpus would not encounter interference produced by the inconsistency of disciplinary variation. Among
the many types of different academic writing, I chose to analyse PhD theses in this study for two reasons. One reason is that theses are particularly interactive, in that theses need to be successfully discussed with and evaluated by their examiners and the broader research community (Bunton 1998; Paltridge 2002; Thompson 2005), making them an interesting site to study persuasive strategies that create successful texts. Another reason I chose to look at students’ writing is because of its educational aspects. I focused on introductory chapters because they require strategic persuasion to successfully create a research space (Swales 1990, 2004).

I investigated the corpus in terms of the difference in the distributions of engagement resources that occurs when the traditional or the postmodern stance is taken toward history writing. I grouped the thesis introductory chapters that contained postmodern personal elements (see the example excerpt below) together as the “postmodern corpus” and the remainder as the “traditional corpus”. While this initial categorization was made on intuitive grounds, it is useful in establishing categories that can then be investigated quantitatively. I then coded the engagement resources and tested the two corpora statistically. In a final step, I examined the reasons for the results through a detailed textual analysis.

The following excerpt, taken from Text 1, is an example of a postmodern
personal anecdote, which appears early in the introductory chapter of a thesis in the field of participant history:

Text 1, p. 6

Like many of my political generation, my own development of a “primal socialist innocence”, really began at university. I went to the Australian National University at the beginning of 1966 having been brought up in a country town (Orange) as the child of parents who typified the post-World War Two middle class. My father had come from a working class background and left school to work in the “woollen mills” at Orange before fleeing the certainties of factory labour (in a reserved occupation) to enlist in the Second AIF. A prisoner of war after the fall of Singapore, he returned home after the war and built a successful small business as a contract painter. My mother also came from a rural working class background and met my father after the war on a bus on a hockey trip to Dubbo (they were both hockey players). . . . I was interested in politics at my local high school and my memory is that it predisposed me to a more Left wing sensibility than that suggested by the more conservative political environment around me. This was a town that was part of Country Party electorates, state and federal, during the dominant anti-communism of the 1950’s and early 1960’s,
though my father mostly voted Labor and my mother always did.

The excerpt represents typical postmodern and poststructuralist problematizations of representation and meaning (cf. Hall 1985; Hodge 1995). Since the research is classified as a participant history, the author considers introducing the history of his own life to be an important step to introduce the history of his life in the introduction, so that he can explain how he – a participant historian – has been brought up to have a particular political view and, consequently, to be involved in the political movement he is going to research. More than being simply autobiographical, the excerpt is carefully crafted, starting with, “Like many of my political generation, my own development of a ‘primal socialist innocence’, really began at university . . .”, thereby bridging the shift between what so far has been presented in the chapter and the autobiographical recount.

For this study’s investigation of dialogism, I adopt the system of engagement (Martin & White 2005), which is a subsystem of the system of appraisal (Martin & White 2005), characterized by its Bakhtinian orientation in that its primary “heteroglossic” categories are defined by a text’s dialogic “contraction” and “expansion”. “Contract” resources close the dialogic space without allowing alternative viewpoints; on the other hand, “expand” resources open up the dialogic space for
alternative viewpoints. In real discourse, the writer/speaker may deploy various strategies to dialogically “contract” and “expand” the discourse, hence, subcategories under “contract” and “expand”, accordingly, are concerned with different ways in which the discourse closes and opens up the dialogic space.

One of the subcategories of “contract”, “disclaim”, has two subcategories: “deny”, which includes formulations such as not, nothing, and so forth, and “counter”, which includes but, although, and the like. Denying another person’s viewpoint closes the dialogic space, hence, it is dialogically “contractive”. A countered alternative viewpoint is weakened, which narrows the dialogic space, hence the discourse is dialogically “contracted”. The other subcategory under “contract” is “proclaim”, which has three subtypes: “concur”, “pronounce”, and “endorse”. The subtype “concur” includes formulations such as of course, certainly, and other such phrases, which overtly announce that the writer/speaker is in line with the addressee. It is dialogically “contractive” because both addressee and addressee share a viewpoint, which closes the dialogic space. Its subcategories are “affirm”, where the writer/speaker is happy to concur (e.g. Naturally . . . ), and “concede”, where the writer/speaker is reluctant to concur (e.g. It is true . . . , but . . . ). Another subtype of “proclaim” is “pronounce”, with which the speaker/writer grants a proposition to be true or factual, and which
includes authorial emphases or explicit authorial interventions or interpolations, as in
the formulation *The facts of the matter are that . . ., In fact, . . ., I argue that . . .*, and
intensifiers such as *did, do, does*, etc. “Pronounce” resources close the dialogic space by
not allowing alternative possibilities to the viewpoint advanced by the speaker/writer.
The final subtype of the proclaim resource, “endorse”, involves externally referenced
propositions or phenomena that are granted to be true by the speaker/writer. Such
formulations include, *They demonstrate that . . ., The diary shows that . . .*, and so forth.
It is dialogically “contractive” because endorsing a viewpoint narrows the dialogic
space for alternative viewpoints.

Resources such as *it is important that . . ., it is clear that . . ., it is significant that . . .*, etc. are considered highly negotiative and contractive by other frameworks of
evaluation (e.g. Hunston’s [1994] intensity/scales of “relevance” dimension; Bednarek’s
[2006, 2008] “importance” and “comprehensivility” parameters). In appraisal theory
(Martin & White 2005), however, these resources have been treated as “appreciation”,
which is a category under the attitude system. However, these resources seem to
straddle the boundary between attitude and engagement. Appraisal sub-systems often
seem to overlap (Martin & White 2005; Bednarek 2008) due to the prosodic nature of
interpersonal resources (Halliday 1981), which may be one of the causes that
researchers of the engagement system tend to draw slightly different lines between
dialogic functions. In this study, these “contractive” formulations are included in the
engagement analysis because these are dominantly deployed in academic discourse for
the dialogic purpose. I do, however, adopt Martin and White’s (2005) rationale to code
intensifiers with clausal scope only, because intensifiers with clausal scope clearly
present propositions to be contracted. Hence, this study includes in the analysis
formulations with adjectives with clausal scope only, meaning that adjectives without
clausal scope (e.g. sectarianism was a significant factor in public and political life in
Richmond . . . [Text 20: 6–7]) are excluded.

Let us now turn to “expand” resources, which expand the dialogic space. In the
subtype “entertain”, the authorial voice is just one of many possible positions and opens
up a dialogic space for these alternative positions. Formulations include It is possible, It
seems, In my view, I think, Probably, may, must, and the like. In the other subtype of
“expand”, “attribute”, propositions are ascribed to some external voice. It has two
subcategories, “acknowledge” and “distance”. In utterances where there is no overt
indication as to where the authorial voice stands with respect to the proposition, as in
Their study reports that . . . , the proposition is classified as “acknowledge”. Since the
position of the authorial voice is not apparent, “acknowledge” resources simply open up
the dialogic space to bring a viewpoint into the discourse. The proposition is classified as “distance” if the authorial voice distances itself from it, consequently allowing the authorial voice and the alternative one to co-exist, as in the case of the phrase *Their study claims that* . . .

The entire view of the engagement system (Martin & White 2005) is displayed in Figure 1. “Monoglossic” in the system denotes “default” discourse that is not “heteroglossic”.

[Insert Figure 1]

According to Martin and White,

Engagement is concerned with the ways in which resources such as projection^2, modality, polarity, concession and various comment adverbials position the speaker/writer with respect to the value position being advanced and with respect to potential responses to that value position – by quoting or reporting.

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^2 Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 440–441) explain “projection” as follows: “If I say *I can see the boats turning*, this is an event. A process ‘the boats are turning’ is being treated as a single complex phenomenon – a macrophenomenon as we put it ... If I say *I can see that the boats are turning*, this is a projection. The process ‘the boats are turning’ is being treated as the projection or idea of a phenomenon – a metaphenomenon, something not just bigger but of a different order of reality.” The notion of projection, hence, is “the logical-semantic relationship whereby a clause comes to function not as a direct representation of (non-linguistic) experience but as a representation of a (linguistic) representation” (p. 441). Examples include: *John said: “I’m running away”; John said he was running away; John thought to himself: I’m running away*; *John thought he would run away* (p. 380).
acknowledging a possibility, denying, countering, affirming and so on. (Martin & White 2005: 36)

Thus, unlike other approaches toward interpersonal elements and evaluations in text, which rely on specific concepts such as “modality” (Perkins 1983; Palmer 1986), “evidentiality” (Chafe 1986), and so forth, “engagement” is concerned with these concepts in a comprehensive way. The system of engagement is not primarily concerned with the truth-functional status, the lexicogrammatical realizations of resources, or the sources of propositions; rather it is concerned with the text’s dynamic expansion and contraction in relation to speakers’/writers’ positioning of their own voice and others’ voices. Therefore, the system of engagement is a useful framework for the comprehensive description of dialogic dynamism for the present purposes.

I excluded from the analysis direct quotes from external sources in the texts because coding their engagement resources would complicate the analysis due to the difficulty in treating the dialogic position of the original writer’s deployment of these resources. I coded the engagement resources of each corpus manually using the UAM (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid) Corpus Tool (O’Donnell 2008). I conducted the chi-square test and t-test to test the distributional engagement differences between these
two corpora. More specifically, I investigated whether the postmodern and traditional
corpora are uniform in their density of “heteroglossic” resources (i.e. engagement
resources that are not monoglossic), and then I investigated how dense they were in
each of the “sub-heteroglossic” resources. I conducted the statistical tests using the
software R (R Core Team 2013). To explain the results, in a final step I comment on
some of the texts in detail, aiming to describe dialogic dynamism that constructs
different representations of knowledge in relation to the different ideological
positionings.

4. Results

I identified 10 thesis introductory chapters as including postmodern elements (i.e.
personal anecdotes), which I therefore used to form the postmodern corpus, and
classified the remaining 30 chapters as the traditional corpus. This is an initial intuitive
classification to divide the corpus, which is subsequently to be substantiated. The results
showed that the traditional corpus was significantly high in “acknowledge” and
“endorse” resources, whereas the postmodern corpus was high in “deny” and “entertain”
resources.

The entire traditional corpus that was coded for engagement analysis consisted
of 179,676 words, and the “heteroglossic” resources occurred 7,014 times. Therefore, the mean was 390.37 “heteroglossic” resources per 10,000 words. On the other hand, the entire postmodern corpus that was coded for engagement analysis consisted of 43,483 words, and the “heteroglossic” resources occurred 1,693 times. Therefore, the mean for the postmodern corpus was 389.35 “heteroglossic” resources per 10,000 words. The p-value of the result was 0.9417, which is much greater than 0.05 (p > 0.05 = 5% chance), therefore, the difference between the two corpora was not statistically significant: there was an approximately 94% possibility that the difference occurred by chance. The traditional and postmodern corpora are thus uniform in regard to the level of occurrence of “heteroglossic” resources.

The investigation then moved on to the distributions of the individual “heteroglossic” resources between the traditional and postmodern corpora. The statistical test I used for this purpose is the chi-square test. Although both the t-test and chi-square test can be used to test if two categories are uniform, there is a methodological difference between the two tests. Whereas the t-test assesses an interval on categorical/nominal variances, which was used to assess the interval of “heterogloss”

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3 This study presupposes that “heteroglossic” resources are points in the discourse where “heteroglossic” movements occur. As such, every “heteroglossic” resource identified in this study is counted as one resource – that is, whether the resource is signalled by multiple words, phrases or one word is not considered.
earlier in this study, the chi-square test uses nominal variables only. I prefer the chi-square test for the present purpose because it can assess frequency between several variables – that is, its processing of the observed data makes it an easier test for determining the proportions of the traditional and postmodern corpora of many different types of “heterogloss” resources. As both corpora have already been found to be uniformly “heteroglossic”, I assessed the distributional differences of the individual resources under “heterogloss”. That is, what I assessed are the distributions of a particular resource and the other resources (such as “deny” and “nonden”) between the two corpora. The results of the chi-square test are displayed in Table 1.

[Insert Table 1]

Table 1 shows significant differences between the traditional and postmodern corpora: “endorse” and “acknowledge” occurred much more frequently (significant at the 0.01 level) in the traditional corpus, while “deny” and “entertain” occurred much more frequently (significant at the 0.01 level) and “concede” more frequently (significant at the 0.05 level) in the postmodern corpus. As discussed above, “contract” and “expand” form the main engagement resources in the “heteroglossic” system, from which “sub-heteroglossic” resources emerge. Hence, I categorized all the “heteroglossic” resources as either “contract” or “expand” (noncontract). The postmodern corpus
contained a slightly denser amount of “contract” resources. The difference, however, according to the t-test was only significant at a 0.1 level, as the $p$-value was 0.09635.

The slightly denser “contract” numbers in the postmodern corpus can be explained by the figures for the sub-resource “deny”, which had very high statistical significance in the postmodern corpus. Regardless of the somewhat low amount of “expand” resources in the postmodern corpus, what is noticeable is the very high statistical significance of the “entertain” resources, which is a sub-resource of “expand”. In the traditional corpus, on the other hand, “expand” resources were associated with “acknowledge”, and “contract” resources with “endorse”. The results hence indicate that the postmodern history thesis introductory chapters tend to “deny” and “entertain” propositions, whereas the traditional ones “endorse” and “acknowledge” them. Possible explanations of this quantitative result need to be sought.

5. Textual commentary

The following subsections attempt to account for the result of the quantitative analysis in the previous sections; that is, the association of “deny” and “entertain” with the postmodern corpus, and “endorse” and “acknowledge” with the traditional corpus. This will be done by exploring the functions and strategies of the resources in question,
which will be further discussed in relation to their text’s organizing functions. “Concede” occurred only 35 times for the entire corpus (amounting to none to two per text), which is too low to discuss.

For each of the resources to be examined, the text that has the highest mean occurrence of a resource is selected. The reason for this is that a text that is the densest in a particular resource should most clearly show its discourse function and provide the clearest explanation of why this particular resource is deployed so frequently in a given text. Another reason is that because the present analysis requires the examination of the “heteroglossic” flow of an entire thesis chapter, it is not realistic to examine all or many of the texts.

The texts and related resources to be examined are Text 2 for instances of “deny”, Text 1 for instances of “entertain”, Text 20 for “endorse”, and Text 29 for “acknowledge” (see Appendix B). Text 1 and Text 2 both turned out to fit into the postmodern corpus, and Text 20 and Text 29 the traditional one, as identified in the intuitive classification conducted earlier.

5.1 The high significance of “deny” in the postmodern corpus

“Deny” resources occur most frequently in Text 2 (one of the postmodern texts). This
text is the introductory chapter of a thesis that is concerned with the impact of migration in Papua New Guinea, titled *The Impact of Migration on the People of Papua, Indonesia*. The beginning of this thesis exhibits a type of personal narrative where the author recounts a parade, the Wamena Carnival in Papua, as an observer. The author describes the carnival that officially celebrates Papua’s diversity. The recount accompanies photos of the carnival taken by the author, which makes the text look like a travel report.

The author ends this recount with a couple of questions: “Is this an exhibition of the cultural exchange occurring in this distant outpost, the multicultural nation in action? A celebration of the diversity in the unity?” (Text 2: 14). Then the discourse gradually shifts to a rather typical kind of historical recount:

**Text 2, p. 15**

Once the parade is over, I decide to eat. The nearby cheap restaurant is run by a migrant from Sulawesi. A quick stop at the internet cafe (Sundanese owner), before going back to my hotel (owner also from Sulawesi). The next day I take a becak (cycle rickshaw) to the terminal (Dani driver) and bus along the valley (West Sumatran driver). Out of these workers, the only job not taken by a migrant is poorly paid, low status and hard labour. The divide between migrants
and indigenous people in the province is hard to miss on the ground.

Since the handover of power from the Dutch to Indonesia (via the United Nations) in 1962/3, Papua has been a destination region for migration from the rest of the nation of Indonesia. Migration has been both by people moved here through the transmigration program, and by those moving to Papua with no government assistance, so called spontaneous migrants. The western half of this island has a comparatively low population density in a nation with some of the most densely populated regions of the world.

The contrast between the hard labor often done by an indigenous person and the standard jobs that are taken by migrants strategically leads the discourse to highlight “the divide between migrants and indigenous people . . .”, which then shifts to the historical account that is concerned with the Papuan migration policy. The discourse then more clearly reveals the political nature of the carnival scene by using “deny” resources:

**Text 2, p. 25** (underline added)

Transmigration sites have not lived up to the expectations of the participants of these programs, with some sites having high rates of transmigrants abandoning
their new homes. . . with Hal Hill claiming in 1991 that only 10–15% of transmigrants had left their settlements. In those sites which were not successful in retaining migrants, many transmigrants migrated on to nearby towns and cities rather than returning to their areas of origin.

As seen in the excerpt above, the author is deploying “deny” resources in order to reveal that the migration program was not successful. The author’s intention of denying the official representation is even clearer in the final passage of the introduction chapter:

Text 2, p. 26 (underlines added)

The essential aim of the research is to assess the political, social and economic changes that have come about through the large-scale migration to the province during the period of Indonesian sovereignty. The influx of migrants has blocked the advancement of indigenous people in the political, social and economic fields, creating jealousy and distrust of the newcomers. It appears that this mixing of people has not created the unity in diversity – the national identification beyond the ethnic pieces – that the earlier photographs from the carnival suggest. There has been the formation of a pan-ethnic consciousness
among the indigenous populace, along with a feeling of difference from the “Other” – the non-indigenous migrants who give definition to a Papuan identity.

The series of “deny” deployments in Text 2 functions to deny the positive image of Papuan multiculture and to represent it as a mere “mixing of people”. The particularly frequent “deny” resources deployed in this text, therefore, can be attributed to the series of denials of the official positive image of the migration policy. The text also includes typical uses of “deny” resources, for example to point out the lack of research: “There has been no detailed assessment of the effects of this migration on the people of Papua historically throughout the period of Indonesian sovereignty” (Text 2: 17, underline added). Hence, it appears that Text 2 has become denser in the “deny” movement than other texts because of the need for the extra deployments of “deny” used to negate the official representation.

Another thing to be pointed out is the shift in the discourse of the function of the author’s explicit question about the positive representation created by the carnival organizers: “It appears that [entertain] this mixing of people has not [deny] created the unity in diversity – the national identification beyond the ethnic pieces – that the earlier photographs from the carnival suggest [entertain]” (Text 2: 26, underlines added).
is an important passage for the text because it reflects the discourse relations between
the recounting of the carnival scene at the beginning of the chapter, the denying of the
official image, and the accessing of the history of the migration scheme that forms the
rest of the thesis.

It is also important to note that this shifting point is partly created by the
strategic choices of engagement resources. The opening phrase *It appears that...*,
which is classified as an “entertain” resource, brings an alternative view – “this
mixing of people has not created the unity in diversity” – to the official representation.
The alternative view is “entertained” at this stage of the discourse because it is yet to be
demonstrated: it presents the view that the author will attempt to demonstrate for the
rest of the thesis. The alternative view denies the official representation by using *not*, a
“deny” resource. Also, the descriptions of the photographs that have been presented at
the start of the introduction chapter get “entertained” by the use of the word *suggest*. As
such, “the national identification beyond the ethnic pieces” is not shown but only
suggested (classified as “entertain”) by the photographs of the carnival. Thus, the
passage assigns values to the different positions introduced to the discourse and thereby
predicts and manifests the heteroglossic dynamism of the rest of the discourse.

Such a discourse function of “deny” as well as other engagement resources
needs to be further examined in relation to ideology, more specifically the extent to which different ideologies and theories impact levels of the discourse structure. It is not simply about the use of “deny” resources but also about how the whole structure of the text changes accordingly. For the author to make the same point in the introduction chapter, it would be possible for him not to present the carnival scene or to use “deny” resources in the discourse. In fact, the carnival scene is not essential for the purpose of pointing out the problems with the migration policy. If not for its presentation, the author could have simply constructed the chapter without using “deny” resources. For example, he could have said, “The impact of migration on Papua is such that it has created various issues in the society . . . .,” which would change the entire structure of the chapter (See Figure 2).

[Insert Figure 2]

Further, it is important to point out that the use of “deny” resources in Text 2 exactly reflects the process of deconstruction. A term coined by Derrida (1976), deconstruction is concerned with postmodern explorations of meaning and encourages questioning of the connection between representation and reality. Any text, be it written or spoken with language, visual images, and so forth, is assumed to be a construct, and as such there is a need to deconstruct it in order to enable the reader or viewer to see the
politics behind it.

In the case of Text 2, the author questions the official meaning produced by the carnival, gradually deconstructing the connection between the positive image of the migration policy and the carnival scene by denying the positive image presented and giving evidence that suggests otherwise. Munslow (1997: 3), in his book titled *Deconstructing History*, emphasized “the role of the historian, his/her use of social theory, and the construction of explanatory frameworks in historical understanding”, and later in the book stated that

> [h]istorians of the deconstructionist or linguistic turn, like others aware of the indeterminate character of postmodern society and the self-referential nature of representation, are conscious that the written historical narrative is the formal re-presentation of historical content. (Munslow 1997: 25, original italics)

In the case of Text 2 – which is not a written historical narrative but a description of a carnival scene – the author is aware that the carnival is an official re-presentation of the past Papuan migration policy, which he proceeds to question. And this is what Southgate (2003), a historian of postmodern theory in history, called
“decenteredness”: “Postmodernism in any context – personal, cultural, historical, geographical or whatever – questions the prioritization of any single centre” (Southgate 2003: 11).

Although it is difficult to generalize the use of “deny” resources in postmodern theses based solely on the analysis of one text, Text 2 at least allows us to identify the local deployment of postmodern textual strategies that happens with the use of “deny” resources. Specifically, it shows the author’s construction of the carnival image and the text’s resulting deconstruction, which is a step-by-step process of decentering and persuading the reader. Such a use of “deny” resources, therefore, may be a postmodern strategy of history writing – that is, to deny in order to deconstruct – which suggests that different strategies for the deployment of the same engagement resources may exist between traditional and postmodern theses.

According to Munslow (1997), however, a deconstructionist historical method should not go to the next stage of reconstructing:

But most historians clustering around the reconstructionist/constructionist axis still insist on seeking the essential proof that something discoverable and recoverable happened in the past, reasoning that the source, studied
appropriately – in its context and/or the application of appropriate models of explanation – will reveal the reality behind it. The deconstructionist historian, on the other hand, maintains that evidence only signposts possible realities and possible interpretations because all contexts are inevitably textualised or narrativised or texts within texts. (Musnlow 1997: 26, original emphasis)

From the following description of the purpose of the research at the start of the final paragraph of the introduction chapter, it seems that Text 2 may be clustering around “reconstructionist” history: “The essential aim of the research is to assess the political, social and economic changes that have come about through the large-scale migration to the province during the period of Indonesian sovereignty” (Text 2: 26). After the deconstruction of the official representation of the past, the next stage of assessing the political, social, and economic changes may be close to reconstruction.

Importantly, the difference in ideology between traditional and postmodern history writing in this case may change not only the author’s choice of which dominant engagement resources to deploy (polarity in this case) but also the macrostructure of the text. This further indicates that engagement resources, together with ideologies, interact with the textual functions of constructing a larger text, that is, when the author’s
ideological choices change, they influence the realization of the overall text, determining the final text to a large extent. This point will be further discussed in relation to specific traditional and postmodern history ideologies and larger text organizations after other thesis introductory chapters have been investigated in this paper.

5.2 The high significance of “entertain” in the postmodern corpus

Text 1, a participant-history thesis, is the densest in “entertain” resources, which are very significant in the postmodern corpus. In this ‘strongly’ postmodern thesis, then, the thesis author may even question his own assessment of historical events, which is reflected in his very frequent deployment of “entertain” resources in Text 1. In the first paragraph of the thesis, the author summarizes what the thesis is about: a history shaped by his own memory of political involvement in inner Sydney Leichhardt and the Australian Labor Party. The autobiographical narrative begins in the second paragraph and continues throughout most of the introductory chapter, which contains no traditional types of research-topic justification. With the frequent “entertain” resources used in this thesis’s introductory chapter, the discourse is characterized by the awareness of, in Munslow’s (1997: 25, original italics) words, “the indeterminate character of
postmodern society and the self-referential nature of representation” and suggests that “the written historical narrative is the formal re-presentation of historical content”. For example, the author “entertains” when he claims that his personal experience can be generalizable across his generation:

**Text 1, p. 5** (underline added)

I am all too well aware of the danger of imposing my own hopes and disappointments on an interpretation of past events. But perhaps my experience is also that of a generation.

In this excerpt, the author deliberately avoids denying alternative propositions to his claim that his experience belongs to the generation by inserting perhaps into the sentence. Moreover, he presents the claim after deliberately allowing a possible antithesis to it: “The danger of imposing my own hopes and disappointments on an interpretation of past events”. His claim is, then, made in the discourse environment of a wide heteroglossic space where possible alternative propositions also exist.

The author continues to narrate his own political involvements as the text proceeds:

**Text 1, pp. 7–8** (underlines added)
I can recall the meetings of the (north) Annandale branch as being small with a large proportion of older members. But it seemed as if I had entered the “real” world (in contrast to Canberra), especially alongside my high school teaching at western Sydney high schools and the beginning of my involvement with the teachers union, the NSW Teachers Federation.

In this excerpt, the author continues to “entertain” the description from his memory by saying, I can recall . . . , implying that there must be other things that occurred that he cannot recall. This is also reflected in his frequent use of I in the text. The author’s propositions are presented as no more than the reflections of the fragment of events that he can recall, as the title given to the introductory chapter, “Memory’s Mosaic: An Introduction”, suggests.

As the author describes the details of the contents of his memory, he frequently enacts the “entertain” resource, for example with his use of It seemed. He thus presents the descriptions as no more than his own impressions, claiming no observations of fact. Then, he starts to discuss the difficulty of presenting such postmodern perceptions in history writing, and then the discourse gradually goes on to how the problem could possibly be solved with the approach he is taking:
Text 1, p. 9 (underlines added)

This memory has been reconstructed in the specific context of trying to explain my political evolution as background to my own involvement in the Labor Party and the way that background and involvement may have shaped this project. While it seems like a fair description I still have doubts as to whether it properly reflects how I felt at the time. Subsequent to my deferral in 1968 my political consciousness evolved from a “Left Laborism” to a more “libertarian Marxism” associated with the politicised end of the urban “counter culture”. Standing in London’s Grosvenor Square near the American embassy in 1975, the morning after the fall of Saigon, I can recall not only a sense of relief that the war was over but a sense of joy at the triumph of the Vietnamese and the vindication of the anti-war movement. Since these moments, other factors have also intruded on the clear line of vision back to my past: anger at the West’s (in particular the US) vindictive isolation of Vietnam, disappointment at the “Stalinisation” of post-war Vietnam and the general political confusion of the post-Cold War Left. But how politically radical was I back in 1968 when I confronted the problem of call-up? I think I have got the memory right but not without a good deal of reflection.
He goes on to say:

**Text 1, p. 15** (underline added)

As a participant historian who engaged in this, at times bitter, conflict I *can* do no more than attempt to construct a mosaic of the involvement of the new middle class in the Leichhardt ALP branches during the 1970’s and 1980’s. In doing so I hope to maintain an awareness of the integral relationship between oral and documentary sources, and between the contested territories of memory and history maintaining transparency as to the intrusion of my own, subjective, experience.

In the previous excerpts, we can see that the “entertain” resources occur frequently during the descriptions of the research approaches taken. This is compatible with what Munslow (1997: 26) identified as “the deconstructionist history approach” that does not reconstruct but rather “maintains that evidence only signposts possible realities and possible interpretations because all contexts are inevitably textualised or narrativised or texts within texts”.

It thus seems that the frequent “entertain” resources in the postmodern corpus
are related to critical approaches to objective historical knowledge concerning the perception of the real world. In Text 1, the author admits that his history writing is an activity of subjective and relative historical description. This results in his very frequent use of “entertain” resources, which help to realize the “decenteredness” (Southgate 2003) of the discourse, something that the relativist approach to history is often characterized by. This explains the result of the quantitative analysis that shows a statistically very significant mean of “entertain” resources in the postmodern corpus. It also reflects the understanding that in postmodern-history writing conditions, any propositions concerning a historical event are equally subjective.

5.3 The high significance of “endorse” in the traditional corpus

For the subcategory of “endorse”, Text 20 has been selected because it is the traditional text that has the highest density of “endorse” resources. This text is a thesis on sectarianism in New South Wales, Australia, in the period from 1945 to 1981. In the early pages of the introductory chapter, the thesis presents various existing views concerning the word sectarianism:

**Text 20, pp. 2–3** (underline added)

In his study of sectarianism in early twentieth century Australia, Jeff Kildea
notes that sectarianism is a term in Australian history “pregnant with meaning which dictionary definitions fail to capture” and Michael Hogan points out that “the cultural complexity of sectarian divisions makes the concept a messy one for explaining what happens in society”.

In the excerpt above, the author introduces Michael Hogan’s proposition with an “endorsing” resource, points out that, so that it becomes clear that the author views the proposition made by Michael Hogan in a positive light. Throughout the introductory chapter, the author frequently refers to previous studies on sectarianism in a positive sense, using them as the foundations for his research:

**Text 20, p. 4** (underlines added)

There is a significant international body of historiography on Catholic-Protestant sectarianism. This scholarship demonstrates the methodological complexity of sectarianism, revealing its interconnectedness with other historical factors and forces. It shows that sectarianism has been a regular fixture within the armoury of social and political conflict throughout the centuries, serving as a conduit for the expression of not only religious rivalry but of other social cleavages and grievances, including class and ethnic rivalry. For instance, in his study of
twentieth century England, Ross McKibbin shows that it was expedient for political parties to exploit racial grievances clothed in religious terms. Similarly, Frank Neal’s *Sectarian Violence: The Liverpool Experience* shows that during the famine years of the nineteenth century, anti-Irish feeling – based on fears of Irish rebellion, crime and economic burden – was expressed in Merseyside “in the guise of increased sectarian bitterness”.

In this excerpt, the author presents the complexity of methodology in sectarianism research as producing factual knowledge, by using endorsing expressions such as *demonstrates* and *revealing*. The author then gives examples of sectarianism studies that take account of other historical factors, again endorsing such studies with *shows that*. The author in turn used the studies he endorsed to support his research method, which takes account of other interconnected social factors. He presents these factors on the first page of the chapter: “It locates sectarianism within the contexts of theological discourse and polemic, religious culture more generally, politics, broader social issues and cultural memory” (Text 20: 1). Such endorsing strategies continue, as illustrated in the following passage:

**Text 20, pp. 6–7** (underlines added)
In addition to Hogan’s work, there are other more specific studies which contribute to the contextualisation and analysis of sectarianism in Australian history. Jeff Kildea’s history of the Catholic Federation in Tearing the Fabric: Sectarianism in Australia 1910-1925 is an important contribution to the study of sectarianism, demonstrating the significance of sectarianism in Australian political cultures and institutions. There are also some significant studies of Australian sectarianism at the local level. James Logan’s “Sectarianism in Ganmain: A Local Study, 1912-21”, shows how pragmatism invariably mitigated latent sectarianism in the small rural community of Ganmain. Janet McCalman’s Struggletown: Public and Private Life in Richmond, 1900-1965, also shows that while sectarianism was a significant factor in public and political life in Richmond, Victoria, personal contact could overcome sectarian prejudice in the private sphere.

As observed, it is not surprising that in traditional thesis introductions, authors frequently “endorse” other studies because they can straightforwardly justify new research as being in line with tradition without “denying” or “entertaining” it. The positive relations with previous research also allow them to show the heteroglossic
structure of the discourse to be a positivistic and straightforward one, which explains the high density of the “endorse” resources.

5.4 The high significance of “acknowledge” in the traditional corpus

“Acknowledge” resources were very significant in the traditional corpus. The thesis introductory chapter with the most dense use of the “acknowledge” resource is Text 29. It is a thesis about Australian foreign policy with Asia between 1951 and 1960 and focuses on the role of the External Affairs Minister, R. G. Casey. After the author offers a brief summary of the thesis on the first page, he goes on to present many of the background sources by deploying the “acknowledge” resource:

Text 20, p. 2 (underlines added)

While different aspects of External Affairs in the 1950s have been discussed in isolation, such as Suez, there is not a definitive analysis of Casey’s policies toward Asia, and particularly South-East Asia. Nevertheless, many writers have alluded to the fact that Casey contributed much to Australia’s relationship with Asia and, in particular, South-East Asia. Walter Crocker believed that Casey’s “special achievement was to make Australia aware of Asia and Asia aware of Australia, and in both cases with sympathy and respect”. W. J. Hudson argued
that “Casey from the beginning showed a sensitive awareness of the politics of South and South-East Asia”, while David Lowe believed that Casey “showed himself intellectually flexible and receptive to new ideas in his thinking about Asia”. Lowe also stated that “with considerable foresight [Casey] acknowledged the need for Australia to act as an involved party in South-East Asian affairs”. Coral Bell suggested that Casey was “more attuned, especially in dealing with non-Europeans, to the realities of the mid-twentieth century”. Furthermore, T. B. Millar felt that Casey was “more sensitive to the feelings of Asian leaders”. Upon Casey’s retirement, in an evaluation of Casey’s time as Minister for External Affairs, a writer for the Sydney Morning Herald noted that Casey had “personally laid the foundations of the closer relationships with the new nations of South-East Asia which must now be among the first of our preoccupations”.

The author uses a number of “acknowledge” resources in order to support his claim that Casey is an important and interesting historical figure who is worth a separate historical analysis. By establishing the value of Casey as a historical figure, the author successfully establishes a research space for his thesis. It is interesting to note that although the author deploys “acknowledge” resources to introduce many sources
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concerning Casey, he maintains a neutral stance toward the descriptions about the politician. The author’s choice of “acknowledge” over “endorse” can also indicate that these propositions are not so much a sufficient analysis for endorsement as they are casual, nonacademic descriptions of Casey and that there are insufficient texts concerning Casey. Hence, in the previous excerpt, by choosing to “acknowledge” the propositions instead of “endorsing” them, the author is successful in indicating two points about Casey: 1) he is worth being researched, and 2) he has not yet been researched properly. The chapter from then on similarly “acknowledges” other propositions and studies that surround various aspects of the study.

As the preceding excerpt indicates, the frequent use of “acknowledge” resources seems to be the result of the thesis being positioned unproblematically and straightforwardly with propositions made by others, which appears to be a typical feature of traditional thesis introductions. That is, unlike their postmodern counterparts, the traditional theses do not hold a relativistic understanding of their own or others’ propositions treating them in a straightforward way without the need to “entertain” them. Hence, the introductory chapters of traditional theses become dense with “acknowledge” resources, which serves to create a typical kind of research space for the rest of thesis chapter, as observed in the preceding excerpt.
6. Engagement and ideology

As observed in the analysis up to this point, it seems that differences in the deployment of engagement resources exist even within the postmodern and traditional theses. Text 1 and Text 2, as discussed, are both influenced by postmodern perspectives, but different deployments in engagement resources were identified depending on the different kinds of, or extent of, postmodern ideologies the thesis authors hold; namely, reconstruction after deconstruction or maintaining the awareness of the self-referential nature of representation. In Text 1, the author went so far as to accept that his own discourse is relative and hence deployed many “entertain” resources. In Text 2, on the other hand, the author deconstructed the official representation, and when the discourse moved on to his own position, it did not “entertain” as much as the first text but rather attempted to reconstruct.

In a similar way, the investigation of the traditional theses shows some variations in the use of engagement resources depending on the position the author took in relation to other studies he/she brought into the discourse. Whereas Text 20 justified the research topic by “endorsing” many other studies that established the importance of the research topic, Text 29 “acknowledged” many other sources to show how frequently...
the research topic had been discussed previously. The latter text then created a research need by concluding that the previous propositions concerning the research topic were not sufficiently academic.

It is interesting to note how different types of engagement resources become dominant in thesis introductions depending on slight differences in the authors’ positioning of other studies they bring into the chapter. Thesis authors seem to first set a strategy of justifying the research in accordance with their ideological standpoints, which determines the choice of dominant engagement resources they deploy for introducing other studies. It is not only when introducing other studies but also when introducing their own study that their deployment of engagement resources changes. If a history thesis author takes a particularly postmodern approach and positions his/her own research in a relativist context, the result is a high frequency of “entertain” resources in the text. Thus, not only does the positioning of other studies change the author’s choice of engagement resources but so does the positioning of the thesis author’s own research. Further, the deployment of “deny” resources analysed earlier suggests that the same engagement resources may have different functions depending on the ideological positioning of the text. The interaction between engagement and ideology has therefore been observed to be extensive in the present corpus.
7. The discursive associations: Engagement, organization, and stance taking

The results of this engagement analysis comparing the traditional and postmodern corpora suggested that the thesis author’s ideological stance taking (in this case, the author’s perspective toward writing history) impacted the text not only in terms of its distribution of engagement resources but also in terms of its larger organization. That is, when the choice in engagement resources changed, the organization of the text changed accordingly. As observed quantitatively, when a discourse in the postmodern thesis introductory chapters “contracts”, it is characterized by a high deployment of the “deny” resource. If the traditional introductory chapters “contract”, on the other hand, the discourse is characterized by a high deployment of the “endorse” resource. The difference between the two types of discourses in the way the “contractive” resources are selected is statistically significant, but it is important to note that the varying styles of selection make a difference to the text’s organization but little difference to the content.

As discussed earlier, Text 2 (See Figure 2), for example – which is a postmodern thesis that is marked with a particularly high frequency of “deny” resources – could have been composed with very few “deny” resources if it had been organized
differently. That is, instead of presenting the carnival scene at the start and gradually “denying” the constructed multicultural theme of the carnival, the text could have been organized straightforwardly by presenting and “endorsing” the instances that reflect the issues concerning migration in Papua New Guinea.

In a similar way, the selection of the “expansive” resources and the text organization would both be expected to change accordingly. The comparison of the “expansive” resources between the traditional and postmodern corpora shows that the traditional one is marked with “acknowledge” and the postmodern one with “entertain” resources. As such, Text 1 – which is a postmodern participant-history thesis with a particularly high frequency of “entertain” resources – could have been composed very differently if the author’s stance toward history writing were not a postmodern one. As observed in the previous section, the high frequency of “entertain” resources in Text 1 is associated with its self-narrative discourse. This type of discourse is a result of the author’s awareness that the history he was writing was no more than a reflection of his own memory, and hence he believed that his writing needed to be loosely composed and to avoid generalizations.

If the author of Text 1 had had a different, traditional stance toward history writing, Text 1 would have had no self-narratives. Consequently, it would have had
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fewer “entertain” resources because this type of resource serves to loosen the author’s own propositions. A traditional thesis would instead compose Text 1 with more typical “expansive” strategies by frequently referring to others’ propositions and “endorsing” them, which would change the entire organization of the text. Hence, the thesis author’s ideological stance taking, engagement resources and larger text organization also interact extensively.

8. Conclusions

This paper has explored the relations between ideologies, engagement resources, and text structuring. It has demonstrated that ideological differences manifest themselves in the text. This paper has shown that the traditional and postmodern corpora differ in their ways to “contract” and “expand” the dialogic space. The discourse in the traditional corpus is characterized by the author “endorsing” and “acknowledging” the previous studies whose tradition the author is continuing, whereas the discourse in the postmodern corpus is characterized by the author making arguments “entertained”, expanding the dialogic space for alternative viewpoints. The process of deconstructing and reconstructing history with “deny” resources shown in this paper has clearly demonstrated, at least in part, an example of the dynamic interaction of resources both
internal and external to the text. That is, a particular ideology in writing history – external to the text – has impacted the internal text, both in its structure and engagement resources.

This study has also indicated that a single engagement resource may be deployed for different text-organizing purposes. A separate study is necessary to fully investigate this important implication suggesting that the functions of particular engagement resources change depending on the internal, external, and interpersonal conditions the text is placed in. A limitation of this study is that the number of texts discussed in detail was low due to limitations of space. More extensive analysis as well as investigations across disciplines could further strengthen the explanations of the results.

This may be one of the first studies to quantitatively reveal the constructive dynamism that takes place between ideology, subjectivity, dialogic functions, and larger text-organizing structures in the text, which highlights the text-organizing forces of dialogism predicted by Bakhtin (1981). Methodologically, this study has also advanced the potential of a quantitative analytical method that contrasts the corpora of different ideological orientations and links ideology to engagement strategies and text structures.

This study has revealed, to some extent, what the “postmodern turn” in
humanities theses looks like. This study’s finding that diverse ideological orientations within a discipline manifest extensive representational as well as linguistic and textual differences in thesis introductory chapter writing has pedagogical implications. Indeed, the teaching of academic writing may require a more complex pedagogy than one based on the understanding of disciplinary variations, because writing in the disciplines is not a monolithic endeavor. An appropriate stance taking that is strategized in relation to the study’s ideological positioning is vital not only semantically and interpersonally but also textually: it has the crucial function of organizing a thesis chapter. This paper may also be one of the first linguistically-oriented studies to reveal some of the exact features of postmodern relativistic academic writing in contrast to traditional objective writing. However, the scope of this study has been limited to the case of history thesis introductory chapters. It is necessary for future studies to further investigate the dynamic interactions of text construction in other disciplines and genres so that the present findings can be applied to theories of genre studies, textual linguistics, and EAP.
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**Figure 1.** The Engagement System (Figure adapted from Martin & White 2005: 134)
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**Figure 2.** The actual and possible structures of Text 2

**Actual structure**

- The official multicultural image of the carnival
  - Denying of the official image
    - This mixing of people has not created the unity in diversity...
  - Transmigration sites have not lived up to the expectations of...
- Research aim: To identify issues with the migration policy to Papua

**Possible alternative structure**

- Giving background of the migration history in Papua
  - Recent issues resulting from the migration policy
- Research aim: To identify issues with the migration policy to Papua
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**Table 1.** Comparison of the engagement resources between the traditional and postmodern corpora

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>traditional</th>
<th>postmodern</th>
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<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
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*Note.* * = statistically significant at the 0.05 level (5% probability); ** = statistically significant at the 0.01 level (1% probability); ns = not significant; PM = postmodern corpus; Tr = traditional corpus; NA: not applicable.
Appendix A: Sources and text numbers

Text 1:

Text 2:

Text 3:

Text 4:

Text 5:

Text 6:

Text 7:

Text 8:

Text 9:

Text 10:

Text 11:

Text 12:

Text 13:

Text 14:

Text 15:

Text 16:

Text 17:

Text 18:
Davis, Jane. 2009. Longing or belonging?: Responses to a “new” land in southern Western Australia 1829-1907. PhD thesis, University of Western Australia.

Text 19:

Text 20:

Text 21:

**Text 22:**

**Text 23:**

**Text 24:**

**Text 25:**

**Text 26:**

**Text 27:**

**Text 28:**

**Text 29:**

**Text 30:**

**Text 31:**

**Text 32:**

**Text 33:**

**Text 34:**

**Text 35:**

**Text 36:**

**Text 37:**

**Text 38:**

**Text 39:**

**Text 40:**
### POST-PRINT

Interactions between ideology, dialogic space construction, and the text-organizing function: A comparative study on the traditional and postmodern academic writing corpora

#### Appendix B. Engagement distribution between the postmodern and traditional thesis corpora

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**Note.** PM = postmodern corpus; Tr = traditional corpus; n = number of resource; m = mean per 10,000 words.