CHAPTER 2

POSITIONING THE STUDY PEDAGOGICALLY AND EXPLORING RELATED LINGUISTIC RESEARCH

2.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I position the present study in relation to contributions from the two different fields that inform it: education and linguistics. As the focus of the study is, however, linguistic rather than educational, I give only a brief overview of some of the most relevant pedagogic perspectives underlying the notion of student-centredness. In this regard, I concentrate on transformative learning theory, constructivism and whole-person learning. I then consider how the notion of student-centredness is interpreted in distance education settings. In the process of doing so I present some perspectives underlying the social presence theory. However, the main focus of this chapter is on linguistic perspectives relating to student-centredness

First I reflect on some views advanced in systemic functional linguistic (SFL) theory and, more particularly, on perspectives relating to the interpersonal discourse semantic metafunction of SFL. I then explore the views of linguists about how discourse participants signal their presence linguistically in discourses. In this regard, I pay attention to linguistic features associated with 'involvement', truth function, evidentiality, politeness, power, evaluation and appraisal. As the analysis of appraisal has been formalised in Appraisal theory I also discuss this theory and its relevance to the present study.

2.1 PEDAGOGICAL PERSPECTIVES UNDERLYING STUDENT-CENTREDNESS

Brief reference was made in Chapter 1 to the fact that the present study's interest in a student-centred approach to teaching can be associated directly with the shift in the South African government's educational philosophy. It was pointed out (cf. 1.2) that the pedagogical perspectives underlying the notion of student-centredness are informed by the views underlying transformative learning theory, constructivism and explorations into the significant role played by experience, cooperative investigation and emotions in the knowledge construction process. In this regard, it was mentioned that interaction and contact between discourse participants, learning through experience and a consideration for a person's attitude and feelings are foundational to both educational perspectives on student-centredness, and to linguistic

perspectives on 'involvement' and appraisal. Below I explore transformative learning theory and related perspectives such as constructivism and whole-person learning. In this regard, my focus is on the association of these theories with the notion of student-centredness.

2.1.1 Learning theories that advance a student-centred approach

A consideration of some of the theories that promote a student-centred approach to learning reveals that their point of departure is best captured by Confucius' famous saying: 'Tell me, and I will forget. Show me, and I may remember. Involve me, and I will understand' (Canadian Literacy Society). One of the main arguments advanced in these theories is that learning takes place when teachers guide students to expand their existing experience by applying it in new contexts. In the subsections that follow I briefly expand on how this argument and concepts associated with it are advanced in transformative learning theory, constructivism and whole-person learning.

2.1.1.1 Transformative learning

Transformative learning theory has mainly been conceptualised by Mezirow (1981, 1991, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000), who associates transformation with effective, outcomes based learning. Mezirow grounds his work on the assumption that transformative learning is rooted in learning from experience. In Transformative Theory learning is understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience as a guide to future action. According to Mezirow (2000: 5–8):

> Transformative learning refers to the process by which we transform
> our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of
> mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open,
> emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate
> beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action.

Three main themes characterise the theory: personal experience, critical reflection, and rational interaction between one or more individuals. According to Mezirow (1991), a student's life experiences provide a starting point for transformative learning. He proposes that through a combination of emotive experiences, reflection and interactive discourse, the student is able to make shifts in his or her world-view, which result in learning (Mezirow, 1996).

Transformative learning is defined as learning that induces more far-reaching change in the learner than other kinds of learning. Mezirow points out that:

> Transformation theory seeks to elucidate universal conditions and rules that are implicit in linguistic competence or human development. Specifically, it seeks to explain the way adult learning is structured and to determine by what processes the frames of reference through which we view and interpret our experience (meaning perspectives) are changed or transformed. (Mezirow, 1991:xii–xiii)

For Mezirow, one of the benefits of transformative learning is the development of greater autonomy as a person in the presence of others. It is his opinion that learning is understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience as a guide to future action.

Critics have asserted that Mezirow's conceptualisation of transformative learning is overtly rational and analytic (Clark and Wilson, 1991; Taylor, 1998). Mezirow has, however, responded by observing that 'Transformational theory is not simply a theory of rationality, although a theory of rationality is central to it' (Mezirow, 1995:48), and he once again stresses the primary role played by emotion, reflection and rational discourse as the catalysts for learning.

Numerous authors support Mezirow's views. They have considered various aspects of transformative learning (e.g. Baumgartner, 2001; Kovan and Dirkx, 2003; Taylor, 2001), and they have collectively identified factors which produce transformative learning in adult students. Two fundamental questions seem to arise from their observations: what factors contribute to transformative learning; and what challenges arise for the instructor who teaches in transformative learning environments?

In this regard it has been highlighted that a requirement for transformation to occur is that there should be a guardian or teacher to facilitate the learning process; there should be contact between teacher and learner (e.g. the learner should be addressed in a personal way); the relationship between teacher and learner should be one of trust (or solidarity); and personal emotions and experiences should be reflected upon; and group work should be encouraged (Grabov, 1997). Taylor (2000), for instance, suggests that personal address *awakens* the student to his or her personal responsibility to make the learning *happen*, rather than seeing it

as the responsibility to actively participate in the task at hand as something that will be actualised by being part of a *faceless* body of students. In this regard, he proposes that group work is an important facet of the learning process, but individualised agency in terms of reflection and responsibility should be promoted as it ensures participation from everyone in the group.

In underlining the significant role played by the personal experiences of students in the learning process, Taylor (2000:156) points out that as a teacher he observed that 'value-laden course content appeared to foster transformative learning' in that it 'provoked critical reflection ... more so than other content'. He (Taylor, 2000:218) underscores this point by highlighting the fact that '[r]ecent research not only provides support that emotions can affect the processes of reason, but more importantly, emotions have been found to be indispensible for rationality to occur'. Baumgartner (2001: 21) supports this point of view when he remarks that 'it is important to remember that the transformative learning process involves emotions'.

The teaching experiences of scholars such as Baumgartner (2001), Daloz (1999) and Freire (1968) also support the views expressed above about the interrelationship between learning and personal address, personal relationships, group work, emotion and reflection. In this regard, Daloz (1999) points out that his conversations with students about the 'struggles' of their lives, caused them to change their perspective on what education can do for them to change their fate. The conclusion he draws is that reflective discussions are transformative in nature.

The work of Freire (1968) with poor and illiterate students in Brazil helped him to realise that the 'banking method' of education, which emphasises passive listening and acceptance of facts, had kept his students disenfranchised (Freire, 1968:53). Freire accordingly had students discuss and reflect on relevant issues in life such as the inadequate pay they received as rural workers. Through this process, workers recognised that larger societal structures, rather than their own ability, had played a role in their disadvantaged situation. As a result of their newly developed insights, Freire's students realised that their situations were not consistent with what they had held to be true. Their perspective on life had, in other words, been transformed through discursive interaction.

In highlighting the significance of interpersonal interaction in knowledge acquisition, Baumgartner (2001) cites the case of 'Steve, a twenty-something, up-and-coming actor', who

was very career focused, but was then diagnosed as being HIV-positive. After the initial shock of the diagnosis had subsided, Steve set out to learn more about the disease through conversations with doctors, discussions with other HIV-positive people and by reading various publications. These mediations caused him to realise that his situation was not necessarily life-threatening. However, he gained a new appreciation for what was important to him in life, with the result that he shifted more attention to his family rather than his career. His world-view was thus transformed.

It is significant to note that in transformative learning settings teachers or lecturers are referred to as 'learning consultants' (Coughlan, 1980), 'cultural mediators' (Grace, 1994); 'care-givers' (Henderson, 1979); and 'epistemological sounding-boards' (Sammons, 1990). Such references suggest the relationship of teachers with their learners should not be that of a powerful figure who possess knowledge that needs to be transferred to the less powerful. Instead, the teacher is projected as an individual who is prepared to share some of his or her power. This is done by acknowledging that learners have their own knowledge and experience and that this should be utilised to construct new knowledge.

There are strong points of agreement between the perspectives of transformative learning, and those of critical theory (e.g. Habermas, 1972). Both theories encourage a critical consideration of assumptions people hold about themselves and the world. However, as critical theory is more indirectly related to a student-centred approach to teaching than transformative theory, it will not be considered in detail in the present study. What needs to be highlighted about critical theory is Habermas' (1972) views on education, and how critical theory exposes states of *hegemony* (Gramsci, 1971)*.*

Habermas (1972) differentiates between three primary ways through which humans acquire knowledge: work, interaction and power exerted over them. According to him, work broadly refers to the way one controls and manipulates one's environment.   Interaction (or *communication*) generates social knowledge about, or the reciprocal expectations of behaviour between individuals. The knowledge generated through power, on the other hand, relates to what Gramsci (1971) refers to as hegemony, that is, ideological control of the powerful over the not so powerful and a resultant acceptance of an existing status quo as being natural (e.g. racism, male domination).

In similar fashion to critical theory, transformative theory is aimed at resisting the success of dominant classes in presenting their view of reality in such a way that it is accepted by others as common sense, even though it serves the interests of the dominant party alone (Giroux, 1997). In this sense, transformative theory aims at empowering (or emancipating) learners to become powerful knowers. Like critical theory, transformative theory thus wants ultimately to resist social inequality. In similar fashion to the views held in critical theory, transformative theory is also based on the notion that knowledge is socially constructed and 'takes form in the eyes of the knower', rather than being acquired from an existing reality that resides *out there* (Kilgore, 2001:53).

The notions of participation (involvement), interaction, contact , emotive involvement (attitude) and the negotiation of attitude, which are foundational to transformative theory, have informed the analytic approach I adopt in the present study. In my view these references serve as a pedagogic link with the linguistic views advanced by Biber (1988) on 'involvement' and by scholars such as Martin (1995, 1997, 2000, 2002, 2004) and White (1998, 2002, 2003) on the significance of emotion or attitude in interpersonal solidarity negotiation. In the next section I show that scholars who promote a constructivist approach to learning also emphasise the significance of involvement, interaction, attitude and the negotiation of attitude in facilitating learning.

2.1.1.2 Constructivism

Much of the theory of constructivism seems to be linked to child development research in language, science and maths learning (Bruner, 1960, 1966, 1973, 1986; Vygotsky, 1962, 1978). In this regard, Bruner's (1973) views stem from his experiences as a maths teacher. He observed that the concept of prime numbers appears to be more readily grasped when the child, through interaction with the teacher, discovers that certain handfuls of beans cannot be laid out in completed rows and columns. Such quantities have either to be laid out in a single file or in an incomplete row-column design in which there is always one extra or one too few to fill the pattern. He thus concludes that instruction must be concerned with experiences which are negotiated by informed advisors (teachers or peers) in contexts that make the student willing and able to learn.

In similar fashion to Bruner, Vygotsky (1962, 1978) formulated his social constructivist theory on the basis of his observations as a teacher. He observed, for instance, that when children were tested on tasks they had to complete without guidance, they rarely did as well as when tested on tasks where they were guided by an adult. Thus, Vygotsky (1962) concluded that the process of engagement with the adult enabled children to refine their thinking or their performance to make it more effective. Hence, for him, the development of language and articulation of ideas are central to learning and development.

Central to Vygotsky's theory is his belief that biological and cultural development do not occur in isolation. According to Vygotsky (1962), all fundamental cognitive activities take shape in a matrix of social history and form the products of socio-historical development . In other words, cognitive skills and patterns of thinking are not primarily determined by innate factors, but are the products of the activities practised in the social institutions of the culture in which the individual grows up. Consequently, the history of the society in which a child is reared and the child's personal history are crucial determinants of the way in which that individual will think. In this process of cognitive development, language is a crucial tool for determining how the child will learn how to think because advanced modes of thought are transmitted to the child by means of words.

It is Vygotsky's view that development is a process that should be analysed, instead of a product to be obtained (Saettler, 1990). According to Vygotsky, human development is a lifelong process that begins at birth and continues until death and cognitive development derives from learning that occurs socially.

In exploring language development in children, Vygotsky (1978) makes a distinction between a child's *actual* and *proximal* zones or levels of development. These distinctions relate respectively to the difference between children's capacity to solve problems on their own, and their capacity to solve them with assistance. In this regard, the actual developmental level refers to all the functions and activities that a child can perform on his own, independently without the help of anyone else. On the other hand, the zone of proximal development includes all the functions and activities that a child or a learner can perform only with the assistance of someone else. The person who provides non-intrusive intervention could be an adult (parent, teacher, caretaker, language instructor) or another peer who has already mastered that particular function. In this regard Vygotsky (1978) reports a significant positive shift from the

actual zone of development to the proximal zone of development. He thus draws the conclusion that interaction between a learner and a teacher advances learning.

According to Vygotsky (1978), humans use tools that develop from a culture, such as speech and writing, to mediate their social environments. Initially children develop these tools to serve solely as social functions, ways to communicate needs. Vygotsky believes that the internalisation of these tools leads to higher thinking skills. Thus, Vygotsky holds that thought and language cannot exist without each other (Driscoll, 1994).

Because Vygotsky asserts that cognitive change occurs within the zone of proximal development, he proposes that instruction should be designed to reach a developmental level that is just above the student's current developmental level. Through interaction with teachers or other mentors students are then led to reach their goal of proximate development. According to Vygosky, interactive teaching allows for the creation of a dialogue between students and teachers. This two-way communication becomes an instructional strategy by encouraging students to go beyond answering questions and engage in the discourse (Crawford, 1996; Driscoll, 1994; Hausfather, 1996).

Vygotsky's social development theory challenges traditional teaching methods where the teacher disseminates knowledge to be memorised by the students, who in turn recite the information back to the teacher. The positive results obtained from interactive learning are of particular interest to the present study, which makes an association between student-centredness and interaction. Important also to the present study is Vygotsky's (1978) conviction that cognitive, social, as well as emotional interchange between teachers and students is necessary for effective learning to occur.

The major concepts underlying a constructivist approach to learning are that: learning is an active process in which learners construct new ideas or concepts based upon their current or past knowledge; the learner selects and transforms information, constructs hypotheses, and makes decisions, relying on a cognitive structure to do so; instructors should try to encourage students to discover principles by themselves; the instructor and student should engage in an active dialogue; the task of the instructor is to translate information to be learned into a format appropriate to the learner's current state of understanding; curricula should be organised in a

spiral manner so that students continually build upon what they have already learned (Bruner, 1973).

Hein (1991) emphasises the practical and social construct of constructivism by referring to his own experiences while watching adults look at a map of England at the dock where the Mayflower replica is berthed in Plymouth, Massachusetts. He reports that adults repeatedly came to the map, looked at it and then began to discuss where their families had come from. He observes that for those who traced their roots back to England, this proved to be an interactive exhibit, which allowed each visitor to take something personal and meaningful from it and relate to the overall museum experience. Hein (1991) reflects that for him, the Diaspora Museum in Tel Aviv came alive when he had the opportunity to call up family genealogies on the computer in the reference centre. The opportunity to view and manipulate a library of family trees covering several generations and a wide geographical distribution gave personal meaning to the idea of a diaspora.

Hein's observations that people's interaction with the map of England and his own interaction with the library of family trees made the museum experience meaningful, support Von Glasersfeld's (1995) view that knowledge is physically constructed by learners who are actively involved in the knowledge construction process. It also supports the view of Honebein (1996) that personal experience and realistic contexts are essential components in the meaning making process.

Honebein (1996:11) summarises the principles of constructivism by saying that experience, realistic contexts, appreciation for multiple perspectives, involvement between lecturer, learner and society, and learner self-awareness are non-negotiable in a constructivist approach to learning. Of particular significance to the present study is Honebein's observation that from a constructivist point of view, intellectual development 'is significantly influenced through social interactions. Thus, learning should reflect collaboration between teachers and students, and between students and students' (Honebein (1996:12). In commenting on a constructivist approach to learning Edelson, Pea and Gomez (1996:161) remark that despite some shortcomings, constructivist learning environments have made great strides in moving from the knowledge transmission model of learning toward an active learner model of social interaction.

Of relevance to the present study is that, in similar fashion to transformative theory, constructivist approaches to learning also emphasise the importance of 'involvement',

29

interaction and attitude in advancing learning. The perspectives on whole-person learning, which are discussed below, expand on the important role played by attitude (the expression of positive or negative feelings) in learning.

2.1.1.3 Whole-person learning

Scholars such as Boyd and Myers (1988), Dirkx (2001), Heron (1992), Kasl and Yorks (2002), Rogers (1961, 1970), Taylor (2001) and Yorks and Kasl (2002) support the view presented in transformative theory that there is a direct relationship between learning and emotion. In putting the notion of whole-person learning in context, Kasl and York (2002:2) remark that in developing transformative learning theory Mezirow rests his work on the assumption that learning transformatively is learning from experience. It is their opinion that the wholistic epistemology developed by Heron (1992, 1996), which theorises the role of affect, 'provides a compelling framework for articulating how experience relates to learning and transformative learning'.

The views of Heron (1992) have been touched upon in the introduction of the present study (cf. 1.2). In his theory of personhood, Heron explains the nature and essence of being human by saying it concerns a consideration of where our emotions, thoughts and actions come from, and how we interact with other humans and with the world. In this regard, Heron's views relate to Rogers' (1961, 1970) perspectives on whole-person learning. Based on research in the field of psychology, Rogers focuses on the significance of interpersonal relationships in promoting personal change. Of particular significance to the present study is Rogers' views that change occurs when there is interaction between people who trust each other, who consider each other's feelings, and who respect each other's perspectives on a particular matter.

Heron (1992) expands on Rogers' views when he observes that there is an extraordinarily powerful illusion in place, namely that cognition is isolated from emotions, while there is support from neurobiological research for his view that the human psyche or mind has four primary modes of functioning: an affective, imaginal, conceptual and practical mode. 'The affective mode embraces feeling and emotion'; '[t]he imaginal mode comprises intuition and imagery of all kinds'; '[t]he conceptual mode includes reflection and discrimination'; and 'the practical mode involves intention and action' (Heron, 1992:14, 15). These four modes of functioning are linked in a hierarchy with the affective mode forming the foundation from which the other modes arise.

According to Heron (1992:14), the different 'modes of psyche' can be associated with different

ways of knowing (cf. Fig. 2.1). *Experiential* knowing is associated with the affective and imaginal modes of psyche. This kind of knowledge is acquired 'through participation in, and resonance with, one or more beings in the unified field of being; the knowledge, in short, that comes with feeling' (Heron, 1992:162). Of particular significance to the concerns of the present study is that the regulation of experiential knowledge forms the 'touchstone for the validity of all higher sets of transactions' (Heron, 1992:162).

Presentational knowing is associated with the imaginal and conceptual modes of psyche. It is developed when 'a person creates a pattern of perceptual elements' (Heron, 1992:165) and is developed through imaginal visualisation. *Presentational* knowing is evident in our intuitive grasp of the significance of imaginal patterns and sketches, graphic representations, and other appeals to human visualisation processes. *Propositional* knowing is associated with the conceptual and practical modes of psyche and refers to 'knowledge about' something (Heron, 1992:169). It is expressed in propositions and statements that make generalisations about facts and theories. *Practical* knowing is associated with the practical and affective modes of psyche. It is 'knowing how' to (Heron, 1992:172) and is evident in the exercise of a skill.

Heron is of the opinion that while each way of knowing must thus be judged on its own terms, the validity of each way of knowing is dependent on the ways of knowing that ground it. He (1992:20, 174) illustrates this hierarchy by means of the following figure (which has been adapted for the purposes of the present study):

Figure 2.1 The human modes of psyche
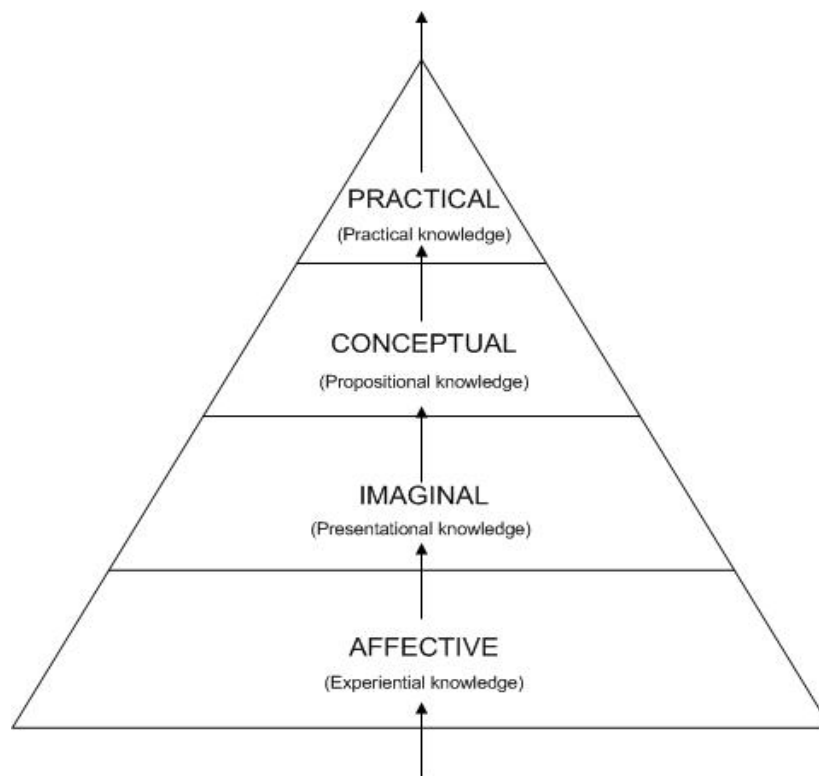
The point of departure in Heron's theory of personhood is that experience is an emotional encounter with the world and can be associated with our consistent appraisal of a given situation. In this regard, appraisal is 'a function of what we intuitively feel the situation to be – supporting, or opportune, or threatening or frustrating' (Heron, 1992:119). The association between emotion and appraisal is taken up again later in the present study (cf. 2.2.4) when I discuss Appraisal theory.

In commenting on Heron's theory of learning, Yorks and Kasl (2002:187) observe the following:

> We find that Heron's small phrase acknowledging emotional and interpersonal work as a precondition for emphatic understanding is as large an understatement as Mezirow's small phrase that empathy is a precondition for discourse.

Yorks and Kasl (2002) substantiate their point of view by relating a personal experience of Kasl about white consciousness. In her role as faculty advisor of mature adult students, she

participated in a teamwork inquiry about race and racial identity. As part of the inquiry, a team consisting of only white people and one consisting of only black people had to create team knowledge about racial consciousness. The individualistic nature of the white team's members, however, prevented them from reaching consensus on the notion of racial consciousness and their team exercise ended in being socially destructive, which filled Kasl with shame. In contrast, united by music and movement, the black team depicted their black self-knowledge by means of a tableau consisting of music and movement and expression of anger and joy while keeping eye contact with each other.

In reflecting on her experience, Kasl remarks:

> My felt encounter with White consciousness affected me profoundly. Even as I write this narrative 5 years later, my breath again grows and my stomach clenches as I relive the experience. I feel the loneliness and the yearning ... I believe that most of us that day felt a direct encounter with what it means to be White. (Yorks and Kasl, 2002:179)

The conclusion Kasl (Yorks and Kasl, 2002) draws is that the white team discussed and analysed the notion of racial consciousness, but did not interpret it in terms of previous experiences they had had. The black team, on the other hand, considered individual experiences and found it easy to express what they had learned in a practical way. Kasl reflects that the emotion she experienced as a result of the inquiry caused her to learn a lot about white and black consciousness.

The views advanced in cooperative inquiry and whole-person learning are reminiscent of Kolb's (1976, 1981, 1984) views on experiential learning. Kolb presents the way people learn as a cycle consisting of four psychological modes: feeling, perceiving, thinking and behaving. He proposes that authentic learning is the product of concrete experience, reflective observation, conceptualisation and active experimentation. In this regard, experiential learning refers to learning undertaken by students who are given a chance to acquire and apply knowledge, skills and feelings in an immediate and relevant setting. Thus experiential learning involves a 'direct encounter with the phenomena being studied rather than merely thinking about the encounter, or only considering the possibility of doing something about it' (Borzak 1981:9). The advantage of this kind of knowledge construction is not only that learners are engaged in realistic experiences, but also that learning is facilitated through discussion of the experiences. As a

result, students' emotions and the judgements they make are addressed.

The significant role played by emotions in learning is also underlined by Dirkx (2001), who bases his views on his observations as a teacher. Dirkx (2001:63) suggests that 'emotions are important in adult education because they can either impede or motivate learning'. Dirkx supports his point of view by quoting the following remark by an adult learner about returning to school: 'I was terrified to death of coming even to this college ... the thought just scared the crap out of me' (Dirkx, 2001:64). Dirkx also quotes another student's remarks about the first day in class; this student said: 'It's like being scared to death because you know no one ... that was like terrifying for me' (Dirkx, 2001:64). Dirkx suggests that such observations demonstrate that emotions and feelings play a critical role in our sense of self and in processes of adult learning.

2.1.1.4 Concluding remarks

I am thoroughly aware that the gist of learning theories, such as the ones briefly touched upon above, cannot be captured by means of a simple list of terms. However, it is quite significant that notions relating to interaction, participation, contact, emotion, and power feature very strongly in all of these theories. As transformative learning theory, constructivism and whole-person learning can be seen as the foundational paradigms informing a student-centred approach to learning, it must be concluded that student-centred texts will be 'involved', interactive, promote participation of the student in the knowledge construction process, consider the emotions of learners and be sensitive to power relations. Problematic in this regard is the fact that the theories mentioned emerged from the work of scholars who worked in contact teaching situations. The question thus arises as to how student-centredness is achieved in distance education and this will be briefly investigated in the section below.

2.1.2 Student-centredness and distance education

It appears that in an attempt to promote 'involvement', interaction and the negotiation of attitude, lecturers at distance education institutions increasingly use electronic media (computer mediated learning, e-mail, video conferences) to facilitate learning (Lea, 1998). Such media allow lecturers to establish contact with students who are separated physically from them (Moore and Kearsley, 1996; Walther, 1992). Through video conferencing, for instance, an image of the lecturer is projected to the student and vice versa. Video conferencing also allows for transmitted real time verbal interaction between the different parties. In computer mediated learning, images of the

34

lecturer and the student can also be projected and computer-based verbal communication between the parties is also possible. However, in the South African context computer mediated learning largely implies that lecturers and students communicate online. Due to the increased use of electronic media, such media have come to be associated with student-centred learning.

Scholars promoting the use of electronic media in distance education seem to see 'interaction' with the student as their main goal (Duffy and Jonassen, 1992). However, there does not seem to be consensus on what the notion of 'interaction' entails. Bates (1991:14) points out that the term 'interactivity' or 'interaction' is 'one of those buzz-words which are bandied around without a great deal of care being given to what it actually means'. Wagner (1994:8) views interaction as the 'event' when people respond to each other. Reis and Wheeler (1991:269) see it as the 'situation' when two or more people are engaged in order to respond to each other's statements. In video-conferencing, the notion of 'interaction' is realised by teachers' responses to students' questions and by the questions asked by the teachers (Hackman and Walker, 1990) and in computer conferencing, interaction is realised through students' participation in online discussions (Gunawardena and Zittle, 1997).

Cole, Coates, and Lentell (1986) and Wilson (1996) argue that in the context of a large-scale distance education institution, such as an open university, the term 'interaction' seems to be interchangeable with contact or the development of relationships. In other words, they acknowledge that in striving for more interaction with students, distance education teachers strive to establish contact and build relationships with their students.

Moore (1993:19) observes that in distance education the term interaction 'carries so many meanings as to be almost useless unless specific submeanings can be defined and generally agreed upon.' He then responds by distinguishing between three types of interaction: *learner-content interaction*, *learner-instructor interaction* and *learner-learner interaction*. He observes that interaction that takes place between the learner and the content is probably the most basic of the three types of interaction. According to him, learning takes place when the learner interacts with the content. This content can be in the form a text, radio, television, audiotape, videotape, or computer software.

In commenting on learner-instructor interaction, Moore (1993:2) observes that this kind of interaction is 'regarded as essential by many educators, and as highly desirable by many learners'. Moore explains that in learner-instructor interaction the instructor serves as an expert

35

who plans the instruction to stimulate student's interest and motivate them. Learner-learner interaction is seen by Moore as socially significant because peers can assist each other in the learning process. He concludes his discussion of the three types of interaction by suggesting that 'it is vitally important that distance educators in all media do more to plan for all three kinds of interaction' (Moore, 1993:2).

It is significant that while educationalists may describe what they mean by interaction in different terms, all the descriptions suggest that the interaction is aimed at establishing a sense of contact between teachers and learners. Hackman and Walker (1990) propose that the overall goal of interacting with students in a distance learning situation is to simulate the social presence of teachers and to acknowledge the social presence of learners in the learning situation. According to them, strategies that will help establish and maintain the perception of the social presence of teachers and learners in distance education include the following: all courses should include some type of welcome message from the instructor; a social connection should be built between lecturer and student; and the emotional involvement of students in the learning process and the difficulties it holds should be acknowledged.

By juxtaposing the image of 'presence' with that of 'distance', Munro (1998) pays attention to the way in which the social presence of students is acknowledged in distance education. According to Munro's extensive analysis of distance education literature, the opinion that educators hold of learning being enhanced by the inclusion of activities in distance education texts is based on a misconception. It is her opinion that it is not so much the 'activity' that enhances learning, but rather the sense of the educator's 'social presence', which is reflected in the interactive nature of the activities.

All of the quoted scholars agree that the striving towards contact derives from research results which suggest that student achievement and student satisfaction with the learning process are enhanced when students feel that there is contact between them and their teachers and fellow learners. Bibeau (2001), in similar fashion to social constructivists such as Vygotsky (1978), attributes increased student satisfaction and performance in situations where there is contact between student and teacher to the fact that teaching and learning are generally seen as social endeavours: people are more comfortable learning in the presence of others.

While many distance education scholars address the significance of electronic media in establishing a student-centred environment, very few have indicated how interaction can be

facilitated in print-based texts. In this regard, Holmberg (1999) seems to be an exception. At the core of his theory of distance education practice is the concept of 'guided didactic conversation' (Holmberg, 1999:43):

> [t]he conversational character is brought about both by real communication (student's assignments, comments on these, telephone, e-mail, fax and postal support), and by a conversational style in printed and recorded subject-matter presentation which attempts to involve the students emotionally, and engage them in a development and exchange of views'. (Holmberg, 1999:59)

In essence, his theory posits distance education as 'friendly conversation' fostered by well-developed self-instructional materials resulting in 'feelings of personal relation ... intellectual pleasure [and] study motivation' (Holmberg, 1999:43).   According to him, it is the responsibility of course developers to create this simulated conversation through well-written materials. Thus, Holmberg sees interaction as the total involvement of students who are emotional, cognitively and physically active individuals in the learning process.

The views presented above about student-centredness show that interaction is a very important feature in distance education and that it is associated with a conversational style, interpersonal contact, the building of relationships, and with an acknowledgement of the social presence of discourse participants.

2.1.3 Social presence theory and distance education

Social presence theory (Short, Williams, and Christie, 1976) evolved from research on the efficiency of different communication media and the satisfaction of clients with such media. In this regard, an association is drawn between effectiveness, client satisfaction and 'the degree of salience' with which the recipient or end user experiences the social presence of the communicator.   Short, *et al.* (1976) see social presence as a subjective quality of a communication medium which relates to intimacy. They propose that the social presence of discourse participants in the discourse situation is signalled by verbal factors such as personal address, personal topics of conversation and emotive language. Social presence theory thus proposes that the effectiveness with which the social presence of discourse participants is signalled through communication media depends on the extent to which a particular medium accommodates the use of these features. Short, *et al.* (1976) conclude that the higher intimacy

and immediacy a medium allows, the higher the perceived social presence.

In exploring the notion of student-centredness, I argue in the present study that the social presence of lecturers and students can be inscribed in distance education teaching texts by the introduction of features associated with social presence. In this regard I draw an association between 'involvement', interaction, the expression of attitude, the negotiation of attitude and the signification of the social presence of discourse participants in a discourse situation. In other words, I propose that the social presence of discourse participants is inscribed in texts through features associated with 'involvement', interaction and the acknowledgement of students' attitudes. In adopting this stance, I aim in the present study to contribute new insights to the debate on how a student-centred approach to learning is actualised in the discourse of printed texts.

Exploring these notions with a focus on printed texts is no easy task. In literature on distance education, students and lecturers have been described as being 'faceless' and 'invisible' to each other (Selinger, 2000:87-88; Mason, 1998:9). As a result, it is quite challenging to shape relationships in a situation where cues to authority, status, cultural differences and power relations need to be provided in the physical absence of discourse participants. The challenge for the present study is thus to determine how social relations are built between the 'faceless' interactants in printed texts. I do so by exploring how notions such as 'involvement', interaction and the expression and accommodation of attitude are actualised linguistically. Put differently, it could be said that I explore how the social presence of discourse participants is signalled linguistically.

2.2 LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVES RELATING TO STUDENT-CENTREDNESS

In this section I consider how a number of linguists explore language features associated with the social presence of discourse participants. As systemic functional linguistic (SFL) theory is foundational to the views of many of these linguists, I first give a brief overview of SFL theory before discussing different views on how the social presence of discourse participants is signalled linguistically.

The point of departure in SFL is that language is a mode of social action. As such, its theoretical formulations are organised to explain linguistic phenomena by reference to their use (Halliday, 1978, 1885, 1994; Halliday and Hasan, 1985; Martin, 1997; White, 1998). Both language and the social context in which language operates are seen as systems of meaning (semiotic systems).

The relationship between the two is construed in SFL as one of realisation: language is seen as affected by the social context or 'context of situation' in which it is used; at the same time, language is seen as a mechanism whereby the context of situation is constructed. In order to verify this 'redounding' or interactive relationship between language and the social context in which it is used, SFL presents a diversified model of meaning operating at the level of both language and social context (Martin, 1997). Language is postulated to incorporate three modes or 'metafunctions' of meaning: the ideational, the interpersonal and the textual. In the same way social context is also postulated to constitute three functional modes of meaning: field, mode and tenor.

White (1998) notes that the social genealogy of SFL can be traced to Firth's (1957) notion of a social context which determines linguistic phenomena. This is a concept which derives from anthropological writings of Malinowski (1923), who coins the term 'context of situation' in the process of developing methodologies for effectively translating and interpreting the spoken texts of the peoples of the Trobriand Islands. In his efforts to develop these methodologies, Malinowski found that it was impossible to convey the meaning and functionality of those texts to a European audience without an extended description of the social environment or 'context of situation' in which they operate. Firth thus proposes that language is polysystemic in nature, arguing that it consists of a range of different systems which vary according to the social contexts in which they are used.

In SFL the *ideational* metafunction of language concerns the reality of participants, processes and the social roles they fulfil. The *interpersonal* metafunction concerns the association of interlocutors with each other and, resultantly, the formation of interpersonal relationships. The *textual* metafunction concerns the flow and organisation of ideational and interpersonal meanings as they unfold in a text. (In this regard, 'text' is understood to refer to both spoken and written, and to both monologic and dialogic communicative exchanges). Thus, language simultaneously conveys ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings (Martin, 1997).

In the SFL postulation of social context, *field* refers to the sphere in which the language is used (e.g. science, politics, education, sport); *mode* refers to the channel through which communication is carried out (e.g. speech versus writing); *tenor* refers to the relations among participants in a discourse situation. The metafunctional interaction between language and social context is seen

as resulting in a particular configuration of language features with a particular configuration of the context variables of field, tenor and mode. Consequently, specific configurations of meaning (also called 'registers') are expressed by texts relating to particular recurrent setups. Each configuration puts at risk a certain potential array of meanings, of which only a subset will typically be implemented by a given text. Thus a register can be thought of as a semantic potential, or a set of meaning options which texts operating in that register will access (Hasan, 1985:101).

In some cases, a particular register will feature meanings with which it is uniquely associated. Such meanings can be said to be indexical of that register – they act to signal that a particular utterance is located in a given register (Halliday and Hasan, 1985:39). Thus a register may be signalled, not necessarily by a meaning which is strictly unique to that register, but by the frequent or rhetorically salient use which texts of that register make of a given meaning or set of meanings, relative to the texts of other registers. From this perspective, socially significant shifts in contextual configurations are understood to reconsider the probabilities of certain semantic (and hence lexico-grammatical) options being taken up. The result is that a register can be understood as a reweighting or reconsidering of meaning.

SFL thus proposes that speakers and writers systematically and predictably change the way they speak or write as they move through different social contexts and pursue different communicative objectives. According to the theory (e.g. Halliday, 1978, 1985, 1994; Halliday and Hasan, 1985), each such context-dependent variety of language will be constituted of a particular configuration of meanings and, more particularly, meanings from the three metafunctions (ideational, interpersonal and textual). For SFL, the starting point is the analysis of texts and this analysis then can show correlations between linguistic patterns and context and explain these variations, through register and genre, in relation to the social context, cultural context and ideology (Eggins and Slade, 1997, Martin, 2000, Christie and Unsworth 2000; Swales, 1990, 1998).

This perspective is of prime importance with regard to the present study. In characterising the distinctive functionality of the language of student-centred texts, I argue that the language of such texts is distinguished from those that are content-centred through a particular configuration of language features associated with 'involvement', interaction and the expression and negotiation of attitude. In this regard, student-centred texts are influenced by the fact that principles of transformative learning theory, constructivism and whole-person learning are advanced in them.

In the sections that follow I consider how these notions have been explored linguistically. First I discuss the exploration of social presence as 'involvement' and then I also look at how the social presence of discourse participants is signalled through language features associated with truth function, evidentiality and politeness notions. I also explore the association between a signification of the social presence of discourse participants in discourse and notions associated with evaluation and appraisal.

2.2.1 Social presence as 'involvement'

The views presented by Biber (1988) are foundational in this section, where I discuss the relationship between 'involvement' and the signification of the social presence of discourse participants in the discourse situation. While building upon research conducted by scholars such as Chafe (1982, 1985), Halliday (1985, 1994), Poynton (1985), Tannen (1982, 1985) and Stubbs (1986), who were referred to in Chapter 1 (cf. 1.3). Biber proposes that the traditional distinction between spoken and written language as the principal discourse types is inaccurate. Biber observes that while language has traditionally been divided into written and spoken genres, with written language described as complex, formal and abstract, and spoken language as more contextually dependent and less structural, his research caused him to come to other conclusions.

Biber's (1988) views are the result of his endeavours to systematically analyse and describe clusters of linguistic features that group together in a wide range of written and spoken English texts. In his research, Biber (1988) analysed texts taken from the Lancaster-Oslo-Bergen (LOB) corpus of written English, and the London-Lund Corpus of spoken English. These texts had previously been categorised into various genres for the corpus (though it is not clear on which basis such genre differentiations were made). Categories in the LOB corpus include such genres as press reportage, editorials, press reviews, religion, skills and hobbies, popular lore and biographies. The London-Lund corpus categories include face-to-face communication, telephone conversation, planned speeches and broadcasts. Biber differentiates between the term 'genre' on the one hand, and 'text type' on the other, the latter being used to refer to groupings of texts that are similar with respect to their linguistic form, irrespective of their genre categories.

The first step in Biber's methodology was to review the work of scholars who had previously

identified potentially important features that distinguish different genres. Thus he identified 67 linguistic features which he used as a benchmark in his analyses. He then performed automated frequency counts of all 67 linguistic features in each of the texts in his data corpus and interpreted his data in terms of the statistical technique of 'factor analysis' to identify what he called 'dimensions', a key concept in his work. According to Biber (1988:55), 'dimensions are bundles of linguistic features that co-occur in texts because they work together to mark some common underlying function'.

He demonstrates that it is possible to identify which linguistic features consistently group together to perform a particular communicative function, that is, which features co-occur and which features are mutually exclusive in particular kinds of texts. Thus Biber concludes that linguistic features do not just randomly occur in texts and that strong co-occurrence patterns of features mark underlying functional dimensions. In this regard, Biber sees dimensions as continuous scales of variation between texts. Based on his strong statistically processed corpus of evidence, Biber was able to identify six main functional dimensions in terms of which English texts can be characterised. Dimension 1, which he labels *Informational versus involved production* is the strongest of these dimensions (Biber, 1988:115). At least 34 of the linguistic features considered group together dynamically in this factor and so Biber (1988:104) says: 'This is an extremely powerful factor representing a very basic dimension of variation among spoken and written texts'.

The features that group together within this dimension are associated with discourses such as personal conversations, telephone conversations, and personal letters. Such discourses are interactional, affective, involved and are associated with real-time production. Such discourses could be contrasted with discourses that are carefully crafted and highly edited and have a high informational density. The linguistic features that occur with high counts in Dimension 1 include private verbs, contractions, personal pronouns and possibility modals, that is, such features are positively associated with this dimension. On the other hand, low counts for features such as nouns, long words and prepositions occur, that is, these features are associated negatively with this dimension. Thus, the positive and negative features are in complementary distribution and define the two ends of the continuum that makes up this dimension. Dimension 1 is the one that is particularly relevant to my concern with 'involvement' in this study, but to place it in its proper context the other dimensions deserve brief mention.

Dimension 2 distinguishes between two functional types of discourses: *narrative versus non-narrative*. Dimension 3 distinguishes between texts with *explicit versus situation-dependent reference*. This distinction differentiates between discourse that identifies referents 'fully and explicitly through relativisation, and discourse that relies on nonspecific deictics and reference to an external situation for identification purposes' (Biber, 1988:115). Dimension 4 separates discourses with *overt expression of persuasion* from other discourses. The features of this dimension are associated with the speaker's expression of own point of view or with argumentative styles intended to persuade the addressee. Dimension 5 distinguishes between *abstract versus non-abstract* discourses, and dimension 6 between 'informational discourse produced under highly constrained conditions such as *on-line informational elaboration*, in which the information is presented in a relatively loose, fragmented, integrated form, and discourse that is not informational (Biber, 1988:115).

It has been pointed out that Biber's views on what he calls 'involved' or 'interactive' texts are of particular relevance to the current study as they provide a mechanism for the comparison of texts with regard to 'involvement' and thus for the partial comparison of texts in terms of student-centredness. The features Biber (1988:115) finds to co-occur with positive and negative groupings in 'involved' texts are presented, in order of their strength of association with the dimension, in the table below:

Table 2.1: Features associated with Informational versus 'involved' production

DIMENSION 1: INFORMATIONAL VERSUS 'INVOLVED' PRODUCTION	
Features associated with informational versus involved focus texts	
positive factors	**negative factors**
private verbs	nouns
that deletion	word length
contractions	prepositions
present tense verbs	type/token ratio
2nd person pronouns	attributive adjectives
'do' as pro-verb	place adverbials
analytic negation	agentless passives
demonstrative pronouns	past participial 'whiz' deletion
general emphatics	present participial 'whiz'

43

DIMENSION 1: INFORMATIONAL VERSUS 'INVOLVED' PRODUCTION	
Features associated with informational versus involved focus texts	
positive factors	**negative factors**
1st person pronouns pronoun *it* 'be' as main verb causative subordination discourse particles indefinite pronouns general hedges amplifiers sentence relatives *wh*-questions possibility modals non-phrasal co-ordination *wh*-clauses final preposition adverbs conditional subordination	deletion

Biber's confirmation of the salience of the co-occurrence of these features in 'involved' texts by means of empirical data has far-reaching implications for the present study. It speaks for itself that if the present study could demonstrate that new Unisa study guides have higher counts for these features than old Unisa study guides, it will be valid to conclude that the new guides are more 'involved' than the old ones, as is posited by Hypothesis 1.

In his analysis of old and new versions of a study guide developed at Unisa, Hubbard (2001) makes a connection between the readability and 'involvement' of texts. According to him, Biber's textual dimension of involvement amounts to an empirically well-grounded elaboration of Flesch's (1950) 'human interest' formula for readability. According to this formula, human interest in a text is quantified in terms of a calculation of the text's percentage of 'personal words' (names, first and second person pronouns, and pronouns referring to people), and 'personal sentences'. Hubbard's (2001) interpretation of 'involvement' in terms of 'human interest' corresponds to the account presented in the present study to the effect that a connection can be made between the notions of 'involvement' and the 'social presence' of discourse participants in the discourse situation.

With the assistance of a concordancing programme, Hubbard carried out a comparison of the 'involvement' features in the first four chapters of an earlier and a later version of a study guide developed in the Department of Development Administration at Unisa. He found that the later version of the guide was more 'involved', and thus in at least one sense more readable, than the earlier version. He concluded that connections could be made between the higher success rate of the students who used the later guide and the relative 'involvement' and readability of the guide.

A consideration of Biber's and Hubbard's views on 'involvement' reveals that, in accounting for linguistic facets of 'involvement', Biber (1988) interprets 'involvement' primarily in terms of the linguistic options made by a speaker or writer to create a particular register. Hubbard (2001), on the other hand, interprets it in terms of how it affects the way in which the reader perceives the text with regard to readability and accessibility. In the present study I consider the potential interpersonal effect of some 'involvement' features in terms of the relationship the writer wants to establish with the readers. In considering 'involvement', neither Biber nor Hubbard directly interpret 'involvement' in terms of interpersonal discourse semantics. Put differently, neither of them focus on 'involvement' from a semantic point of view. As a result, they do not consider that, when analysed semantically, 'involvement' can be associated with the expression of attitudes and feelings and with the negotiation of such attitudes and feelings with addressees.

The association I make between 'involvement' and social presence stems from the fact that the discourses associated with 'involvement' tend to be interactional, affective discourses produced under circumstances where discourse participants are in fairly close contact with each other. Thus, I investigate in this thesis the extent to which new Unisa study guides are more 'involved' than the old ones in order to explore associations between 'involvement', interaction, affect (attitude) and student-centredness.

Below I discuss how notions such as truth function, evidentiality, politeness, evaluation and appraisal relate to social presence signification. As will be shown in the sections that follow, these notions relate to different views about how authors inscribe their own opinion into texts. The notions also relate to how authors signal that they acknowledge the presence of their readers in the discourse situation. In other words, what is in focus is ways in which the social presence of discourse participants are linguistically signalled in discourses.

2.2.2 Social presence as truth function, evidentiality and politeness

It has been pointed out (cf. 1.3) that scholars such as Bybee and Fleischmann (1995), Brown and Levinson (1987), Chafe and Nichols (1986), Drubig (2001), Halliday (1970) and Palmer (1986) explore the way in which the presence of interlocutors is signified in discourse from a truth functional perspective, that is, by indicating to their addressees how true the propositions are that are being put forward. In other words, the mentioned scholars' focus is on linguistic reflexes of speakers' or writers' commitment or lack thereof to the 'factuality' or 'truth' of their propositions (Palmer, 1986:51).

These scholars argue that speakers and writers give indications to their listeners or readers as to what the likelihood is that the content of their propositions might be true. In other words, propositions are defined in terms of 'conditions in the real world' (Crystal, 1994:362) and the extent to which a speaker or writer is willing or unwilling to commit to it. The focus of these scholars is largely on modal meaning. From a truth functional perspective, modality is typically divided into two broad classes: epistemic modality (e.g. modals of possibility such as *This may cause trouble*), and deontic modality (e.g. modals of proclamation such as *I will not do that!*). The meanings concerned play an important role in interpersonal positionings as they regulate the extent to which room is left for alternative stands to be taken.

Halliday (1970:349) comments on the interpersonal impact of epistemic modality by saying that epistemic modality is 'the speaker's assessment of probability and predictability. It is external to the content, being part of the attitude taken up by the speaker: his attitude, in this case, towards his own speech role as 'declarer''. Palmer (1986:54-55) views epistemic modality as 'the status of the proposition in terms of the speaker's commitment to it'. Bybee and Fleishman (1995:6) observe that '[e]pistemics are clausal-scope indicators of a speaker's commitment to the truth of a proposition', while Drubig (2001:144) expresses the view that '[e]pistemic modals must be analyzed as evidential markers'.

According to Crystal (1994:127), '[e]vidential constructions express a speaker's strength of commitment to a proposition in terms of the available evidence (rather than in terms of possibility or necessity)'. Chafe interprets such meanings as discourse participants' 'attitudes to knowledge'

(Chafe, 1986:262), or 'a speaker or writer's assessment of the reliability of the knowledge being communicated, the degree to which it can be taken as a fact' (Chafe, 1985:119). Chafe observes the following:

> People are aware, though not necessarily consciously aware, that some things they know are surer bets for being truer than others, that not all knowledge is equally reliable. Thus one way in which knowledge may be qualified is with an expression indicating the speaker's assessment of its degree of reliability. (Chafe, 1986:264)

Chafe (1986:266-269) demonstrates his point by means of the following examples categorised under different modes of knowledge: knowledge arrived at through belief (e.g. *I think that a lot of the time I've been misjudging her*); knowledge based on circumstantial evidence and thus arrived at through induction (e.g. *It must have been a kid*); knowledge acquired through sensory evidence (e.g. *It feels like there's something crawling up my leg*); knowledge acquired through hearsay (e.g. *It's supposed to be the most expensive place in Europe to live*); and knowledge acquired through deduction *(No normal phonological rules could account for the loss of this*). The clear relationship between a signification of the social presence of a speaker in the discourse situation with regard to the meanings at stake here is evident. So too, is the relationship between such meanings and a signification of the presumed presence of addressees.

Brown and Levinson (1987) interpret the semantics at stake in the evidential and truth functional approaches in terms of interpersonal 'politeness'. While focussing on language features such as possibility modals, hedges and amplifiers, they contend that these language features indicate to what extent speakers or writers act 'politely' in that they leave room for an addressee to respond. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), 'politeness' strategies are developed in order to save the speaker's or writer's *face*. The face-saving notion relates to the possibility that a speaker or writer may be proved wrong later on, hence the need for being imprecise or mitigating one's commitment to the truth value of a proposition or a claim. This makes it possible to say (if proved wrong) that the claim was only tentative or an approximation (Markkanen and Schröder, 1992). The following example from a Psychology study guide in my corpus demonstrates how *think* and *might* are used to save the lecturer's face should the possibility of the student having different findings than proposed:

I think that by drawing a map of your community you might find your community to be completely different than you imagined. (PYC205-A, *might* concordance)

This example supports Hübler's (1983) view that vague language is used to make utterances more acceptable to the hearer and thus increase their chances of ratification, which derives from the inherent negatability of utterances. Hübler claims that in all communication, while showing respect to the addressee, the speaker or writer also tries to protect him or herself from potential anger, contempt, or other humiliation. Both desires are present in all communicative situations, but one may be stronger than the other in a particular case. House and Kasper (1981:157) seem to share this view when they say that 'both these functions – one defensive and ego-oriented, the other protective or alter-oriented – are fulfilled by politeness'. Thus, in some situations, the desire to protect oneself from the potential denial of one's claims may be greater than the desire to show deference to the addressee. However, the surer a speaker or writer feels about his or her own position with regard to the listener or reader, the less need there is for self-protection.

The significance of the views expressed above to the concerns of the present study relates to the fact that the quoted scholars have shown that particular linguistic features are associated with the signalling of the attitude of the speaker or writer concerning the factual content of the statements that are made (e.g. modal verbs, hedges, and amplifiers). This phenomenon not only relates to the integrity of speakers or writers about how reliable their statements are, but also to their politeness towards addressees. Thus, features associated with truth function, evidentiality and politeness relate to the signification of the social presence of interactants in discourse. Below I discuss the work of scholars who argue that speakers or writers signal their own social presence in a discourse by the way in which they evaluate the world.

2.2.3 Social presence as evaluation

Scholars such as Biber and Finegan (1989), Channel (1994, 2000), Conrad and Biber (2000), Hyland (1989, 1999), Myers (1996), Nwogu (1997), Thompson and Hunston (2000) and Thompson and Zhou (2000) draw an association between the expression of attitudes and feelings and the social signification of discourse participants in the discourse. The meanings concerned have been discussed under terms such as stance, modality, affect, attitude, and evidentiality.

However, Hunston and Thompson (2000) use the broad cover term *evaluation* in this regard. Here the term 'evaluation' refers to all linguistic features that relate to the expression of one's personal attitude, commentary, perspective or perception. On the cover page of their book Hunston and Thompson observe the following:

> Evaluation is a broad cover term for the expression of a speaker's – or writer's – attitudes, feelings, and values. It covers areas sometimes referred to as 'stance', 'modality', 'affect', or 'appraisal'. Evaluation (a) expresses the speaker's opinion and thus reflects the value-system of that person and their community; (b) constructs relations between speaker and hearer (or writer and reader); (c) plays a key role in how discourse is organized. Every act of evaluation expresses and contributes to a communal value-system, which in turn is a component of the ideology that lies behind every written or spoken text.

Thompson and Hunston (2000) observe that lexical items that are clearly evaluative include adjectives (e.g. *splendid, terrible, surprising, important, untrue*), adverbs (e.g. *happily, unfortunately, plainly, interestingly, necessarily*), nouns (e.g. *success, failure, tragedy, triumph*) and verbs (e.g. *succeed, fail, win, lose*). However, evaluation is not always expressed explicitly in texts and relates to any evaluative stance a speaker or author takes. It is their opinion that '[c]onceptually, evaluation has been noted to be comparative, subjective, and value-laden. Identifying evaluation then, is a question of identifying signals of comparison, subjectivity, and social value' (Thompson and Hunston, 2000:13). Such subjective colourings are seen as interpersonal positioning strategies whereby speakers and authors position themselves with regard to the world.

Different scholars explore this *evaluation* in different ways. Biber and Finegan (1989), for instance, explore the over or explicit expression of stance through electronically tagged corpora of adjectives, adverbs and modals that can be associated with evidentiality and affect. The semantic notions at stake include: affect, certainty, doubt, possibility, necessity and prediction. Each of these categories is explored in terms of their expression through affect verbs *(it pleases me)*, affect adjectives (*I am shocked*), certainty adverbs (*indeed*), certainty verbs *(this demonstrates that)*, certainty adjectives (*impossible*), doubt adverbs (*perhaps*), doubt adjectives (*uncertain*), hedges (*at about, maybe, sort of*), emphatics (*really*), possibility (*might*); necessity

(*should*) and predictive modals (*will, shall*). Their views relate to the present study in the sense that their research confirms that the semantic exploration of 'involvement' features such as private verbs, emphatics, and possibility modals sheds light on the social presence notion associated with student-centredness. Below I discuss the views of other scholars whose work sheds light on what the signification of the social presence of interlocutors in discourse entails.

In exploring the association between the way in which speakers or authors evaluate their relationships with addressees and their use of personal pronouns, scholars such as Chafe (1985), Fortanet (2003), Holland (2001), Kamio (1994, 1997, 2001), Rounds (1987) and Tang (1999, 2000) associate pronoun use with evaluations of the relative closeness or intimacy between discourse participants. Chafe (1985), for instance, observes that the use of first person pronouns indicates 'self mention'. They thus signify narcissism and serve as a mechanism whereby authors either associate themselves with their work, or whereby they mediate a relationship between their arguments and their discourse communities (Holland, 2001:223).

Rounds (1987) points out that through the use of personal pronouns a distinction is made between different groups of people. For instance, the reference of first person pronouns *(I, me, we, us, my, our, myself, ourselves)* always includes the speaker or writer of a text and sometimes includes the addressee. Second person pronouns (singular as well as plural) inscribe the social presence of the addressee or addressees in the discourse. Thus, the use of second person pronouns is associated with a speaker's or writer's '[i]nvolvement with the addressee' (Biber, 1988: 225).

The use of the first person pronoun plural *we* is more problematic in the sense that its reference is dependent upon the context which it is used. According to Rounds (1987) such pronouns can be used either with inclusive reference *we* (I + you) or with exclusive reference *we* (I + my group - excluding you). Kamio (1994, 1997, 2001) associates the vagueness that characterises the first person pronoun plural with territorial space. While comparing the differences between English and Japanese personal pronouns, Kamio (1997) observes that a speaker or author identifies certain regions of space as his or her own, and he or she feels attached to or detached from them to different degrees. Regions of space are also attached to the hearer (second person) or to other people in the background (third person) and the extent to which these people are included in the speaker's or hearer's space depends on the speaker's or hearer's attachment to the space.

Kamio hereby acknowledges that the use of pronouns can be associated with the way in which speakers or writers evaluate the world.

Kamio's (1994:8) theory is based 'on the notion of psychological distance between a given piece of information and the speaker/hearer'. In Kamio's view 'the speaker's territory of information is a conceptual category which contains information close to the speaker him/herself' (Kamio, 1994:77). In this regard, Kamio (2001:1120–1121) points out that the use of *we*, *you* and *they* shows a progressive move away from closeness and towards distance. Kamio however observes that while *we* can signify the highest level of closeness between discourse participants, its reference is not fixed, and can change from one example to the next, varying the degree of closeness it signifies.

In his analyses of university lectures Fortanet (2003) shows that personal pronouns are one of the resources used by teachers to enhance their relationship with their students or, on the contrary, to create a distance. Fortanet (2003) observes that involvement between teachers and students can be traced by the choice of *I* versus *we* or *we* versus *you* in the sense that the use of *I* instead of *we* signals power and creates distance. In contrast, the use of *we* rather than *you* is a signal of the relinquishing of power. Thus, intimacy or closeness is established, provided that *we* is used with inclusive reference.

The association between evaluation and the signification of the social presence of discourse participants in a text is clear from the work of the scholars discussed above. In this regard, personal pronouns serve a dual purpose: first, they explicitly inscribe the social presence of the individual or group of individuals to which they refer in the text (e.g. *I think we should consider* ...); secondly, they inscribe the social presence of the writer in the text or discourse through the way in which such a writer evaluates the psychological distance between himself or herself and the text (e.g. *I want you to consider*) and between discourse participants.

Hoey (2000), Nwogu (1997) and Thompson and Zhou (2000) explore how writers leave their personal stamp on a text through the way in which they link their clauses. Thompson and Zhou (2000) argue that both coherence and cohesion depend on evaluation and on logical connections that can be made between different parts of texts. They argue that what they call 'evaluative coherence' runs alongside the more traditional 'propositional coherence' (Thompson and Zhou,

2000:139) and that, as a result of their attitudinal nature, the cohesive function of disjuncts such as *unfortunately, happily*, etc. is innately connected with their interpersonal meaning. As a result, such disjuncts not only connect sentences, but also signal to the addressee what the speaker's or writer's opinion is about the information given in the sentence that is being added on. In presenting their argument, Thompson and Zhou (2000:122) see propositional coherence as 'an interpersonal as well as textual phenomenon'. Based on their findings, Thompson and Zhou advocate that disjuncts contribute to the dialogic overtones of a text: they invoke both the writer's presence and the writer's awareness of the reader. Writers can, therefore, exploit them to make a monologue sound like a dialogue and thus achieve a more reader-friendly tone.

This observation by Thompson and Zhou (2000) is of cardinal significance to the present study in the sense that it underlines the fact that there is a direct relationship between certain lexical features of a text and the signification of the social presence of discourse participants in the text. This notion is extended by Channel (2000) whose research findings imply that the linguistic signification of the social presence of discourse participants in a discourse is strengthened through collocation.

Channel (2000) presents examples of words and phrases which have connotations of positive and negative evaluations (e.g. *self-important, regime*, and *fat*). She tests this notion on concordance lines from the Bank of English's corpus (i.e. it is base upon a systematic study of the most frequent lexis of English carried out during the compilation of the *Collins Cobuild English Dictionary*. She observes that the typical context of words, that is, the other words that a particular word usually occurs with, provides evidence of connotations of words that the reader might not have been aware of. Her research points to the need to consider the typical association of words in understanding their evaluative potential. She proposes that a word may convey a negative meaning by association if that word regularly associates with negative meanings, even though the word itself is not overtly evaluative in nature. Thus Channel (2000:39) sheds additional light on the work of scholars such as Sinclair (1991), Louw (1993), and Stubbs (1995), who also explore the positive or negative colouring, or *semantic prosody*, of words through collocation. However, these scholars do not associate the collocation of words with the strengthening of the social signification of discourse participants in the discourse.

In discussing the notion of semantic prosody, Louw (1993) suggests that words tend to have

typical collocates, e.g. *blonde* typically collocates with *hair*. Words also have certain semantic groups with which they regularly collocate. Through corpus comparisons he demonstrates, for instance, that the word *utterly* typically collocates with words that have negative meanings. In fact, Louw determined that in a 37 million word corpus *utterly* occurs almost always in negative collocations and that positive collocations with *utterly* are extremely rare. As a result, *utterly* has developed negative semantic prosody. This observation led Louw (1993) to conclude that when *utterly* is used with positive collocation, irony is usually intended. In commenting on examples such as *utterly*, Louw says:

> Examples of this begin to assist us in determining criteria for recognising semantic prosodies. It is only because the prosody on *utterly* is as consistent as it is that it admits the possibility for irony. (Louw, 1993:164)

Of significance to the present study though, is not so much Louw's observations about irony, but his findings that words acquire a consistent 'aura of meaning' (Louw, 1993:157) depending on their collocations. In similar fashion, Sinclair (1991) determined that *set in* has a negative prosody as a result of the fact that it usually collocates with the noun *rot*, which is associated with negative processes (e.g. *rot sets in*). In the same vein, Stubbs (1995) shows that more than 90% of the words collocating with the word *cause* are negative (e.g. *accident, cancer, commotion, crisis* and *delay*). The word *provide*, on the other hand, typically collocates with words such as *care, food, help, jobs, relief* and *support*. Such collocations cause *provide* to have a positive semantic prosody.

Significant about these observations is that as words are used in texts, their meanings are disseminated to other words in the text. The result is that texts acquire a particular ambience or undercurrent as a result of the semantic profile of the words of which they consist. Interpreted within the context of the present study, the implication is that if words associated with the signalling of the social presence of interactants are frequently used in texts, such texts acquire a personal 'feel'. Thus, they have the potential to be experienced by students as interactive, 'involved' and affective in nature.

In yet another approach to the exploration of the linguistic signification of the social presence of discourse participants in the discourse situation, Conrad and Biber (2000) consider evaluation

through adverbials. By analysing a conversation, an academic text and a news report, they identify: (i) adverbials expressing meaning associated with the speaker's or writer's attitude towards the content; (ii) the type of meaning most frequently found in each register; and (iii) the grammatical forms most frequently associated with each type of meaning in each register.

In considering these different realisations of stance, Conrad and Biber (2000) demonstrate that there are differences in the use of stance markers between conversations, academic prose, and news reportage. For instance, they found that there are almost twice as many adverbials in conversation as in written registers. They observed that '[t]his distribution fits well with the expectation that conversational partners are personally involved with their messages and therefore commonly frame propositions with their personal attitudes and assessments' (Conrad and Biber, 2000:63+64).

They also established that four stance adverbials are extremely common in conversation, each occurring more than 60 times per 100,000 words. These are *probably, actually, really,* and *sort of.* They observed that taken together, these four adverbials account for about 70 percent of all epistemic stance markers in conversation. As a result, there is very little diversity in the choice among stance adverbials in conversation, despite the fact that the use of stance markers overall is by far more common in conversation (Conrad and Biber, 2000:64). Interpreted in the context of the present study, the implication would be that should it be found that the adverbials *probably, actually, really,* and *sort of* occur more often in new than in old Unisa study guides, it could be concluded that such guides are more conversational than the old guides. Put differently, it could be said that high incidences of these adverbials would suggest that the social presence of discourse interactants is more actively signalled in new as opposed to old Unisa study guides.

Hunston (2000:176) explores evaluation in terms of Sinclair's (1991) views on the 'planes of discourse'. In this model, Sinclair interprets discourse as developing on two planes: the interactive and the autonomous. On the interactive plane, the text reflects (and constructs) the ongoing interaction between writer and reader – the writer signals to the reader what the role of any particular proposition is in the larger context of meaning expressed in the text as a whole. On the autonomous plane, the text 'says things' about the world. Evaluation on this plane relates to the writer's 'angle' on the world, for instance, whether a chance meeting is *fortunate* or *unfortunate*; whether a politician is a *statesman* or a *demagogue*. According to this model,

evaluation on the interactive plane relates to the function of a proposition in a text; as such, it signals to the reader whether it is the writer's opinion that is expressed, or the opinion of someone else.

Furthermore, she distinguishes between the status and value of statements on the interactive plane:

> On the interactive plane, each statement is of a particular type (e.g. a fact or an assessment) and has a source (e.g. averred by the writer, or attributed to someone else): these determine its status. At the same time many of the statements are given a positive or negative value (e.g. that it is supported by evidence, or that it is not true). (Hunston and Thompson, 2000:177)

The distinction between averral and attribution is crucial with regard to interpersonal negotiation. If a piece of text is attributed, it is presented as deriving from someone other than the writer. Thus, should a reader not agree with the evaluations expressed, the relationship between writer and reader is kept intact, and the tension will then exist between the reader and the attributed source of the information. However, if a piece of text is averred, any divergence of opinion on the side of the reader will cause a rift between reader and writer, with potential destructive effects on their interpersonal relationship and the reader's ongoing association with the text's evaluative position.

Parkinson (2001) follows Hunston (2000) in her analysis of interpersonal aspects of four genres of scientific writing: research articles, university textbooks, popular science articles and science books for children. The texts are analysed according to the three SFL metafunctions of meaning: ideational, interpersonal and organisational or textual meaning. The research questions she asks relate to the distinguishing characteristics of the different genres, the ideological assumptions of each genre, and the pedagogical relevance of these matters.

Of relevance to the present study are Parkinson's findings about how different relationships can be established through evaluation between the reader and writer in the different genres and the pedagogical implications of this relationship. For instance, she points out that the reader of a

textbook is assumed to be less powerful than the writer, while in the case of the research article, the reader is assumed to be more powerful (Parkinson, 2001:301). Another point of significance is that research articles present new information aimed at convincing subject specialists. The result is that the writer (or researcher) uses persuasive language and presents him or herself as a powerful, enlightened individual. The writers of textbooks, in contrast, summarise existing information, which has already been accepted as fact by the research community. In the process, references to people and their opinions are removed from the text. The result is that viewpoints other than those of the textbook are not accommodated.

Parkinson's findings about popular science texts are that they 'focus on people and what they say and think' (Parkinson, 2001:308). As popular texts are often structured as 'debates' between contesting voices, the sources of information in popular scientific articles are the human participants in the article. As a result, there is a very prominent difference in the attitude towards human participants expressed in popular science articles as opposed to academic science. This difference relates largely to the fact that the popular texts show solidarity with the reader in the sense that the findings reported upon are presented as those of ordinary people, and objectivity is achieved 'through attribution of ideas and utterances to human participants in the text' (Parkinson, 2001:308). This process of engagement or solidarity negotiation is expanded upon later in my thesis (cf. 2.2.4.4).

While Parkinson does not regard the popular research article to be suitable as the major model of scientific writing for science students, she nevertheless regards such articles as very suitable to be used in teaching. She justifies her point of view in the following remark:

> The fact that popular texts report on new findings, means that they afford a view of science at a stage before it participates in the ideologies of science as authoritative and science as difficult [...] they also give voice to scientists other than those of iconic status (the 'great' names of science, such as Einstein), who are the only scientists found in textbooks. (Parkinson, 2001:310)

One of the pedagogical implications of Parkinson's research is that students have difficulty relating to both research articles and to textbooks. As students are not yet influential researchers,

they find the powerful register of research articles, which are aimed at convincing peers of a particular point of view, inaccessible. The same applies to textbooks as a result of their objective, factual nature, which projects them as beyond criticism. As a result, students do not assimilate the research findings with their own knowledge and make very few critical remarks about the content of such articles.

Put differently, it could be said that as research articles are aimed at convincing subject experts of a particular point of view, such texts tend to acknowledge the social presence of subject experts and not apprentice scientists in their discourse. On the other hand, textbooks largely present their subject matter as incontestable facts, that is, the facts are not negotiated with an audience. As a result, the presence of apprentice scientists is not generally acknowledged. On the other hand, popular science articles are aimed at a wide audience including novice readers, apprentice and established scientists. As a result, the social presence of a wide variety of people is acknowledged. Thus, novice readers of scientific articles and apprentice scientists find such articles more accessible.

A further pedagogical implication of Parkinson's (2001) findings is that the content of research articles and textbooks needs to be unpacked for students in order for them to construct their own knowledge base. In this regard, Parkinson's findings show that the inclusion of popular science articles in study programs demonstrates to students that knowledge construction goes through various stages. They then realise that there is a stage where their voice is also significant. By implication, the suggestion is that when subject matter is negotiated with students in a non-authoritative manner, they are more likely to assimilate new knowledge to their existing knowledge.

On the strength of her findings, Parkinson (2001:323) suggests that 'using current popular texts as well as textbooks would contest the ideologies of science as authoritative because popular texts deal with ideas not yet accepted by the discourse community'. Still more relevant to the concerns of my study, she also observes that because popular texts are 'peopled with large numbers of human participants who are not afforded iconic status, providing popular texts for secondary and tertiary students would also contest the ideology of science as difficult' (Parkinson, 2001:323).

In this section I have presented a wide range of approaches to the notion of evaluation. I have mentioned that the term 'evaluation' is used as a broad cover term for the expression of a speaker's or writer's attitude or stance towards, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about' (Thompson & Hunston 2000:5). I have argued that evaluation can be associated with the signification of the social presence of an author in a text and in the section below, I show that evaluation can also be associated with the social presence of a reader in a text.

2.2.4 Social presence as appraisal

Scholars such as Martin (1997, 2000, 2002, 2004) and White (1998, 2000, 2002, 2003), use the term 'appraisal' when referring to the notion of evaluation. What distinguishes this approach from the approaches discussed above, is that it has a very explicit interpersonal nature. Martin (2000) observes that within SFL excursions into interpersonal discourse semantics have generally been grammatical in their foundation and that interpersonal systems such as mood and modality have served as points of departure for the development of discourse models. He observes that whereas the grammar-based tradition has focussed on dialogue as an exchange of goods and services, the semantics of how the interlocutors are feeling, the judgements they make, and the value they place on their different experiences, is neglected.

By exploring these notions in terms of 'appraisal', Martin adopts a comprehensive approach to demonstrate what the interpersonal effect of appraisal is. In this regard, the notion of solidarity negotiation is introduced. In 1.3 of the present study it was mentioned that in exploring the signification of the social presence of interactants as appraisal, the point of departure is that by evaluating or appraising the world, speakers or writers indirectly challenge their audience to either accept or reject the stance that is taken. In other words, by appraising the world, speakers or writers enter into dialogue with their addressees. The relationship that is established as a result of this dialogue depends on whether addressees accept or reject the speaker's or writer's stance. Acceptance of the stance leads to contact or solidarity between interactants, while rejection leads to alienation.

Interpreted in the context of the present study it could be said that writers of student-centred texts should pay careful attention to the way in which they appraise the world in order to maintain

solidarity with their students. The significance of maintaining or protecting solidarity relates to the notion that learning is best facilitated where there is a relationship of trust between teachers and learners. The view adopted by scholars who systematically explore how interpersonal relationships are affected by appraising language is that the language of appraisal 'positions us to feel – and through shared feelings to belong. In this respect appraisal is a resource for negotiating solidarity' (Martin, 2004:326). Because of the significance they attribute to appraisal in the negotiation of solidarity, scholars who see the use of attitudinal language in this light, developed a theory, Appraisal theory. This theory holds that the systematic analysis of attitudinal language exposes the interpersonal potential of a text. In this regard, the interpersonal potential of a text is seen as the potential of the text to establish solidarity or discord with its potential addressees. As the principles advanced in Appraisal theory are incorporated in the analytical framework of the present study, I pay particular attention to the details of this theory in the section that follows.

2.2.4.1 Appraisal theory: general background

According to White (2000), the primary impetus for the development of Appraisal theory has come from work conducted in the 1980s and 1990s for the Write it Right project of the New South Wales Disadvantaged Schools Program. In this project, researchers explored the literacy requirements of the discourses of science, technology, the media, history, English literature studies, geography and the visual arts (e.g. Christie, 1991,1997, 1998; Christie and Martin, 1997; Iedema *et al.*,1994; Rothery and Stenglin, 2000). Much of the focus of scholars from this school is on the identification of generic stages in texts, and on their realisation in choices of lexicogrammar. In this regard, issues relating to the semantics of the interpersonal were central to the various Write It Right projects. For example, across all the discourse domains, it proved necessary to explore in what contexts, by what linguistic means and to what rhetorical ends writers pass value judgements, attribute their propositions to outside sources, or modalise their utterances (White, 1998).

The researchers' starting point was the notion of 'tenor' and the interpersonal as treated in the literature of systemic functional linguistics. Included were accounts of speech functions and the information versus goods and services dichotomy, the interpersonal functionality of polarity and modality, interpersonal metaphor, comment adjuncts and attitudinal lexis. Write it Right scholars

such as those quoted above, took Poynton's work (Poynton, 1985) with respect to social context and the constitution and negotiation of social roles and relationships into account in their research.

In the process a need was identified for new linguistic accounts which could explain similar correlations between certain groups of texts and particular values of probability, attribution, causality, negation, and other meanings associated with the commitment speakers or authors show to the evaluative positions they adopt. Most particularly, a need was seen as emerging for a revision or at least a broadening of Poynton's (1985) notion of contact. For Poynton, contact tracks the frequency of interaction between the interactants in the communicative exchange, and the time that those interactants have been involved in social relationships of equal power (White, 2000).

Write it Right scholars, however, observed that such a formulation is directed towards the relationships between individuals who come into direct social contact. As the contact established between writers and readers and other mono-directional media and their audiences cannot be understood in such concrete terms, they established that the key issue in cases like these turned, not on the degree of social familiarity or intimacy between interactants, but on the way that texts went about constructing certain degrees of evaluative contact with their prospective readerships.

In this regard, Coulthard's (1994) notion of the 'imagined reader' comes to mind. He comments on the social signification of discourse participants in texts by saying the following:

> Because texts are designed for a specific audience, once they exist, they define
> that audience; indeed, as no writer can create even a single sentence without a
> target Imagined Reader, almost every sentence provides some clue(s) about this
> Reader which allows a Real Reader to build up cumulatively a picture of his/her
> Imagined counterpart. (Coulthard, 1994:5)

While Coulthard (1994) focuses on the ideational facets of discourse when making this observation, his views could well be applied to interpersonal facets of discourse by saying that in signifying the social presence of themselves and their imagined readers in a discourse, writers

need to consider that they simultaneously imagine and construct the image of the imagined reader. In the process they face the risk of alienating readers who do not fit the profile constructed.

Moreover, it was established that to appreciate the interpersonal effect of mono-directional texts, it was necessary to explore how the evaluative positions conveyed by a text were constructed as being more or less compatible, convergent and in sympathy with the anticipated positions of the text's prospective readerships (Martin, 1997). Martin (2000:148) observes:

> Working within the paradigm of SFL, we wanted a comprehensive map of appraisal resources that we could deploy systematically in discourse analysis, with a view both to understanding the rhetorical effect of evaluative lexis as texts unfold, and to better understanding the interplay of interpersonal meaning and social relations in the model of language and the social we were developing, especially in the area of solidarity (i.e. the resources for empathy and affiliation). (Martin, 2000:148)

Put differently, it could be said that these Write it Right scholars determined that the interpersonal effect of a text did not only depend on the extent to which is was involved, but also to the extent to which the evaluative stance taken in the text was presented so that bonding (a close interpersonal relationship) occurred between writer and reader. In other words, these scholars proposed that rather than contact (Poynton, 1985), the term solidarity was being preferred for this mode of social positioning.

An evaluative framework of Appraisal was thus developed in an effort to better understand an array of issues associated with evaluative language and the negotiation of intersubjective positions. Thus, it is concerned with the sometimes problematic question of how positive and negative assessments are actually conveyed or activated by texts, what categories of evaluation languages make available, how the use of different evaluative resources may vary across genres and registers, how the resources of evaluation may be manipulated towards a range of rhetorical ends, how differences in evaluative style may correlate with variation in social factors such as ideological positioning and/or relations of power and solidarity, and the role that evaluative

language plays in the construction of authorial personae (White, 2002).

In order to address these issues, Appraisal theory proposes three very broad domains of meaning or communicative functionality: ATTITUDE (resources of positive and negative assessment), GRADUATION (resources by which speakers vary the force of their expression or the precision of the semantic categories they employ), and heteroglossic ENGAGEMENT (resources by which speakers or writers adopt a stance towards the points of view expressed). The domain of ATTITUDE is subdivided into three different sub-systems of meaning. Firstly, attitudinal meanings associated with the speaker's or writer's emotional responses or reports of the emotional responses of third parties are indexed as AFFECT (e.g. *the boy laughed; the boy loved the present*). Secondly, meanings by means of which stance is expressed with regard to the social acceptability of human behaviour are indexed as JUDGEMENT (e.g. *he is intelligent; he is cunning*). And thirdly, meanings by which assessments are made of natural phenomena by reference to their value in a given field - typically by reference to their aesthetic qualities – are indexed as APPRECIATION (e.g. *an elegant lady; a beautiful flower*).

Martin (2000) points out that responses of AFFECT, JUDGEMENT and APPRECIATION are inter-subjectively charged and put the interpersonal negotiation process at risk. As a result, the speaker or writer invites the listener or reader to share or dismiss a particular emotional response by appraising events in these terms. When the invitation is accepted, solidarity or sympathy between speaker and listener will be enhanced. Once such an empathetic connection has been established, the possibility exists that the listener or reader will be more open to the broader ideological aspects of the text's position. When the invitation to share the emotional response is not taken up because the affectual value is seen as inappropriate, the potential to reach solidarity or accord is diminished and the potential for the listener or reader to reject the text's ideological position is enhanced.

As these categories of meaning are gradable, the Appraisal framework also encompasses a system of GRADUATION, which can be seen as the second pillar of Appraisal. It relates to values which scale other meanings along two possible parameters by either locating them on a scale from low to high intensity or FORCE, or on a scale of marginal membership of a category, or FOCUS (White, 1998). The systems of ATTITUDE and GRADUATION are linked in Appraisal with other meanings through the system of ENGAGEMENT (expressed by modality and related systems)

which covers meanings whereby the speaker indicates his or her degree of commitment to the appraisal. In other words, this third pillar of APPRAISAL projects meanings whereby speakers either acknowledge or ignore the diversity of viewpoints put at risk by their utterances. The systems of Appraisal are deliberated upon in more detail below.

2.2.4.2 ATTITUDE: the activation of positive or negative positionings

As was mentioned above, attitudinal (or evaluative) resources relating to emotion are analysed in Appraisal under the sub-system of ATTITUDE, which is considered to encompass three sub-systems of meaning: AFFECT, JUDGEMENT and APPRECIATION.

(a) AFFECT

White (1998) remarks that one of the most obvious ways in which authors or speakers can adopt a stance towards some phenomenon, is to indicate what their mental reaction is. Such reactions are accounted for in the APPRAISAL sub-system of AFFECT. Within Appraisal, AFFECT is taken to be construed as qualities (e.g. I am *happy* about that), processes (e.g. This *pleases* me), or as performance indicators (e.g. He *happily* agreed). It may also be realised as virtual entities (e.g. His *happiness* is contagious). Emotions of AFFECT are grouped within Appraisal into three major sets having to do with happiness or unhappiness, security or insecurity, and satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The happiness variable covers emotions concerned with affairs of the heart (e.g. sadness, anger, happiness and love); the security variable covers emotions concerned with emotional well-being (e.g. anxiety, fear, confidence and trust); and the satisfaction variable covers emotions concerned with the pursuit of goals (e.g. displeasure, curiosity, respect). The meanings referred to here are summarised in tabular form in the following way by Martin (1997:22):

Table 2.2: AFFECT

AFFECT	
Positive: Happiness	**Negative: Unhappiness**
laughter, cheerfulness, chuckle, like, love, rejoice, buoyant, jubilant	cry, wail, whimper, sad, miserable, hate, dislike, abhor
Positive: Security	**Negative: Insecurity**
confidence, proclaim, assert, together, trust, assured, comfortable	restless, shaking, uneasy, anxious, freaked out, tremble, fearful, wary, terrorised
Positive: Satisfaction	**Negative: Dissatisfaction**
engagement, attentive, busy, interested, absorbed, compliment, pat on the back, reward, satisfied, impressed, proud	fidget, yawn, bored, fed up, exasperated, cross, angry, furious

(b) JUDGEMENT

Within APPRAISAL, JUDGEMENT is the domain of meanings by which attitudes are construed with respect to human behaviour by reference to social acceptability and social norms (approval and disapproval of human behaviour). This involves, for instance, assessments of character or how people measure up to social requirements or expectations. The framework divides these judgements into those dealing with social esteem (e.g. *He is a <u>drifter</u>*) and those oriented to *social sanction* (*He is a <u>criminal</u>*).

Judgement constitutes the semantic resources for construing evaluation of behaviour in the context of institutional norms about how people should or should not behave. It has evolved out of the Write it Right research (Iedema, *et al.*, 1994) into media literacy and the problem of subjectivity and objectivity in media texts. Five major categories have been identified, each with a positive and a negative dimension. These five categories align with the categories of modality in that normality (fate) relates to usuality, capacity (competence) to ability, veracity (truth) to probability, propriety (ethics) to obligation, and tenacity (resolve) to inclination (Iedema, *et al.* 1994).

Iedema, *et al.* (1994:209-211) describe the subcategories of JUDGEMENT, by pointing out that: *Normality* assesses behaviour against expectations of what is usual or normal and the extent to which behaviour complies with these norms. For example, a statement such as *The existence of some risk is an <u>ordinary</u> incident in life* measures behaviour and the resulting risk it poses, and the damage it causes against an (unstated) norm of what is normal and therefore must be expected and tolerated. *Capacity* refers to the assessment of a person's ability to perform an action or achieve a result. For example, *... to hit the post would be a very <u>bad</u> aim on the part of the defendant* is a negative assessment of a boy's ability to hit a very close target with a dart.

Tenacity is the assessment of a speaker's state of mind and commitment to perform an action. To be 'brave', 'heroic' and 'energetic', for instance, is associated with a positive disposition while appraisals such as 'lazy', 'unreliable', and 'apathetic' encode a negative evaluation. *Veracity* relates to the modal system of probability that allows for degrees of possibility, probability, or certainty between the polar absolutes of 'yes' and 'no'. Under the subsystem of veracity, what is at stake are not degrees of certainty but honesty, credibility, authenticity (that is whether behaviour conforms to or deviates from expectations of adherence to the truth). For example, *The witnesses were <u>candid</u>* evaluates behaviour as conforming with the expectation and obligation in court to tell the truth.

Propriety is concerned with the evaluation of compliance with or resistance to ethical norms. To be 'right', moral', 'caring' is positive; for example, *the <u>thoughtless and selfish</u> act of an estate developer in building right up to the edge of the cricket ground* is evaluated as negative, implying that without this behaviour the legal dispute about cricket balls causing damage to the houses would not arise.

These five categories are grouped together into two categories of *social esteem* and *social sanction*. Normality, capacity and tenacity are grouped together under social esteem because their positive values result in increased social reputation and public esteem, while their negative values result in decrease or loss of social esteem. Veracity and propriety are grouped together under social sanction. It could thus be said that judgements of social esteem involve evaluations under which the person judged will be lowered or raised in the esteem of their community, but which do not have legal or moral implications. Thus negative values of social esteem will be seen as disfunctional or inappropriate, or to be discouraged, but they will not be assessed as sins or

crimes. Judgements of social esteem have to do with normality (how unusual someone is), capacity (how capable they are) and tenacity (how resolute someone is).

Judgements of social sanction, on the other hand, have to do with veracity (how truthful someone is) and propriety (how ethical someone is). Judgements of social sanction involve an assertion that some set of rules or regulations, more or less explicitly codified by the culture, are at issue. Those rules may be legal or moral, and hence judgements of social sanction turn on questions of legality and morality. From the religious perspective, breaches of social sanction will be seen as sins, and in the Western Christian tradition as 'mortal' sins. From the legal perspective, they will be seen as crimes. 'If you breach social sanction you may well need a lawyer or a confessor but if you breach social esteem you may just need to try harder or to practice more or to consult a therapist or possibly a self-help book' (White, 2002:8). The following brief overview of JUDGEMENT is based on White (2002:8):

Table 2.3: JUDGEMENT

JUDGEMENT	
Social Esteem	
Positive*: normality* custom, standard, average, lucky, charming, unusual, special, fashionable, avant garde	**Negative*: normality*** dated, unfashionable, eccentric, odd, maverick, unlucky, unfortunate
Positive: *capacity* skilled, clever, insightful, competent, athletic, strong, capable, powerful, sane, together	**Negative: *capacity*** stupid, slow, simple-minded, clumsy, weak, uncoordinated, insane, neurotic
Positive: tenacity plucky, brave, heroic, dependable, reliable, disposed, resolute, distracted, lazy, persevering	**Negative: tenacity** cowardly, rash, despondent, unreliable, undependable, unfocused
Social Sanction	
Positive (praise) accurate, honest, truthful, credible, honest, genuine, frank, direct	**Negative (condemn)** deceitful, dishonest, bogus, fake, prejudiced

JUDGEMENT	
Positive: Propriety (ethics)	**Positive: Propriety (ethics)**
good, moral, virtuous, law abiding, fair, ethical, beyond reproach, just, caring, sensitive, considerate	bad, immoral, lascivious, corrupt, unjust, unfair, cruel, mean, brutal, oppressive

(C) APPRECIATION

Within Appraisal Theory, APPRECIATION is the domain of meanings for construing evaluations of the products of human endeavour such as artefacts, buildings, texts, and works of art. Also included are evaluations of natural phenomena and states of affairs. One of the most salient systems for the assignment of such values is that of aesthetics. Human subjects may be 'appreciated' rather than 'judged', but for example, only when it is their aesthetic qualities that are being addressed rather than the social acceptability of their behaviour. The APPRAISAL framework sub-divides APPRECIATIONS into those assessments relating to human reactions to impact (the impression made), composition and social standing (balance and complexity), and their value (how innovative, authentic or timely things are). Like both AFFECT and JUDGEMENT, values of APPRECIATION have either positive or negative status. White (2002:10), for example, associates the following meanings with APPRECIATION:

Table 2.4: APPRECIATION

APPRECIATION	
Impact	
Positive: Impact	**Negative: Impact**
arresting, captivating, engaging, fascinating, exciting, moving, lively, dramatic, intense, remarkable, notable, sensational.	dull, boring, tedious, dry, ascetic, uninviting, flat,

APPRECIATION	
Impact	
	predictable, monotonous, unremarkable.
Composition and social standing	
Positive: Composition	**Negative: Composition**
balanced, harmonious, unified, symmetrical, proportioned, consistent, considered, logical, shapely, curvaceous.	unbalanced, discordant, irregular, uneven, flawed, contradictory, disorganised, shapeless, amorphous, distorted.
Composition: complexity	**Composition: complexity**
simple, pure, elegant, lucid, clear, precise, intricate, rich, detailed, precise.	unclear, woolly, plain, monolithic, simplistic.
Valuation	
Positive: Social value	**Negative: Social value**
penetrating, profound, deep, innovative, original, creative, timely, long awaited, landmark, inimitable, exceptional, unique, authentic, real, genuine, valuable, priceless, worthwhile, important, noteworthy, significant, crucial.	shallow, reductive, insignificant, derivative, conventional, prosaic, dated, overdue, untimely, everyday, common, fake, bogus, glitzy, worthless, shoddy, pricy.

(The lists of terms supplied for the different systems in Table 2.4 above are intended only as a guide to the types of meanings that are involved here and not as a dictionary of sub-types of AFFECT, JUDGEMENT and APPRECIATION).

As can be seen from Tables 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4, Appraisal theory is concerned with 'sets of options which are available to the speaker or writer covering the meanings that can be and are typically expressed in particular contexts, and the linguistic means of expressing them' (Hunston and Thompson, 2000:142).

According to White (2000), the Appraisal framework makes a distinction in terms of the way in which meanings associated with AFFECT, JUDGEMENT and APPRECIATION are activated in text.

Least problematically, they can be activated by explicitly attitudinal terms which generally carry a negative or positive meaning – such as those referenced above. More problematic, however, are activations that rely on implication and inference, that is, those that rely on the reader or listener to interpret the depicted happening or state of affairs as positive or negative according to the value system they bring to the text. In an example such as '*Clothes for Africa is a non-profit-making firm*', an essentially factual depiction points the reader towards an assessment of the firm *Clothes for Africa*. The positive or negative value attached to such an appraisal or evaluation depends on the viewpoint the individual reader brings to the text.

In moving from direct to indirect activation, a move occurs away from semantics towards pragmatics; that is, from meanings seen to be inscribed in the text, towards meanings seen to be operating only in the specific context. As untagged corpora are analysed for the purposes of the present study, such 'implied' appraisals will in general not be considered in depth. As was mentioned in Chapter 1, features associated by Biber with 'involvement' will be used to compare Unisa study guides with regard to their 'involvement'. These features will comprise explicit evaluation carried by involvement features such as private verbs, emphatics and amplifiers provides a clear indication of the interpersonal orientation of the texts analysed.

2.2.4.3 GRADUATION

GRADUATION, the second subsystem of Appraisal, covers values which scale other meanings by either locating them on a scale from low to high intensity, or from core to marginal membership of a category. Scaling according to intensity is most transparently exemplified by the set of adverbials which have typically been explored in the literature under headings such as 'intensifiers', 'amplifiers', 'emphatics', and 'hedges'. Included are the meanings denoted by words such as *slightly, really, very*, *extremely, sort of*. Via these values, the speaker or writer raises or lowers the intensity of a wide range of semantic categories. In Appraisal theory meanings such as these are sub-categorised under the Appraisal subsystem of GRADUATION into two meaning categories: FORCE and FOCUS.

FOCUS covers essentially the same domain as Lakoff's (1972:471) category of *hedges*. Lakoff discusses 'hedges' in the following terms: 'For me, some of the most interesting questions are

raised by the study of words whose meaning implicitly involves fuzziness – words whose job is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy. I will refer to such words as 'hedges''. For Lakoff, these hedges express degrees of category membership. Lakoff describes hedges such as *sort of* as modifying the terms in which predicates are assigned to a category. The same kind of meaning is explored by Channell (1994) in terms of *imprecise* language. However, while Lakoff (1972) and Channell (1994) are interested in hedges (values of FOCUS) in the context of theories of cognition, Appraisal theory is concerned with their discourse semantic functionality. In this sense, values of FOCUS are seen as allowing the speaker to blur or refine the boundaries of category membership.

FORCE includes resources which elsewhere have been analysed under the headings 'intensifiers', 'emphatics' and 'emphasisers' (e.g. Quirk, *et al.,* 1985: 590–97). Labov (1984) offers a detailed account under the heading of *intensity*. He describes the semantics at issue as 'at the heart of social and emotional expression' (Labov, 1984: 43). He defines intensity as 'the emotional expression of social orientation toward the linguistic proposition: the commitment of the self to the proposition'.

Under FORCE, White (1998) considers lexical items which form sets of terms by which degrees of intensity, from low to high, may be specified (e.g. *more, most, very*). Included also are meanings which only act to indicate high or maximal values of intensity (e.g. *extremely, completely*). Additionally, meanings that relate to 'measure' and 'counting' are also included under FORCE. Included are resources for grading with respect to extent or number (e.g. *many people, much force, millions of people*). The argument presented in Appraisal theory is that measure can be understood as the application of scales of intensity to various modes of counting, and hence as its interpersonalisation. It is argued that to assess some quantity as large or small is to make the utterance relative and therefore to foreground the role of the speaker's subjectivity.

The distinction between AFFECT and the other two systems (JUDGEMENT and APPRECIATION) is perceived to be a relatively unproblematic one in that the semantics of AFFECT are most typically realised through a verbal process undergone or experienced by a conscious human participant. In contrast, the semantic boundaries between JUDGEMENT and APPRECIATION are not always clearly demarcated. Under both JUDGEMENT and APPRECIATION *feelings* are recast as qualities.

The distinction made between meanings of JUDGEMENT and APPRECIATION is that under JUDGEMENT, feelings are reconstrued as proposals about correct behaviour. Thus, in *He cruelly left the cat out in the rain*, the negative feeling towards the perpetrator of this act is reworked as a proposal about what is right and wrong behaviour towards cats. Under APPRECIATION, feelings are reworked as proposals about aesthetic qualities. For instance, the positive feeling expressed in an example such as *I like that picture* gets reworked as *That's a beautiful picture* in APPRECIATION. As such, the reworked clause grounds the evaluation in the 'objective' properties of the evaluated phenomenon itself.

The main point of departure in Appraisal is that the expression of feelings is not simply a personal matter. According to Martin (2000:143), it is essentially an interpersonal matter as 'the basic reason for advancing an opinion is to elicit a response of solidarity from the addressee'. The significance of such responses is that they lead to the establishment of a relationship between speakers or writers and listeners or readers. In this regard, the way in which speakers or writers align and disalign themselves with the values of ATTITUDE expressed is very important, because it is essentially through such alignments that the discourse is positioned as being open or closed to alternative viewpoints. This notion is accounted for in the Appraisal subsystem of ENGAGEMENT.

2.2.4.4 ENGAGEMENT

In Appraisal, insights into the interpersonal impact of values of ATTITUDE are informed by Bakhtin's notion of *dialogism* and *heteroglossia*. From these points of view, all verbal communication, whether written or spoken, is 'dialogic' in that to speak or write is always to refer to, or to take up in some way, what has been said or written before. In other words, dialogic utterances anticipate the responses of actual, potential or imagined readers or listeners. In this regard, Bakhtin (1986:69) remarks:

> The desire to make one's speech understood is only an abstract aspect of the
> speaker's concrete and total speech plan. Moreover, any speaker is himself a
> respondent to a greater or lesser degree. He is not, after all, the first speaker,
> the one who disturbs the eternal silence of the universe. And he presupposes not

only the existence of the language system he is using, but also the existence of preceding utterances – his own and others' – with which his given utterance enters into one kind of relation or another (builds on them, polemicizes with them, or simply presumes that they are already known to the listener). Any utterance is a link in a very complexly organized chain of other utterances.

According to Martin (2000), the approach adopted in Appraisal holds that the functionality of resources of Appraisal can only be adequately explained when the dialogistic effects of such resources are taken into account. That is to say, it holds that by the use of meanings such as *possibly, naturally, admittedly, I believe…*, the textual voice acts first-and-foremost to acknowledge, to engage with, and to align itself with respect to positions which are in some way alternatives to that being advanced by the text. In this, Appraisal represents a departure from much of the modality and evidentiality literature (e.g. Chafe and Nichols, 1986; Lyons, 1977; Palmer 1986) and from the literature on hedging (e.g. Markkanen and Schröder, 1992) where accounts of epistemic modals and similar resources are assumed to reveal solely the writer's or speaker's state of mind or knowledge by indicating that the speaker or writer is uncertain or tentative and is not committed to the truth value of the proposition (Thompson and Hunston, 2000:2).

It should be considered that under the opinions expressed about modality, evidentiality, and hedging, for instance, the semantics at issue are represented as emerging from meaning making in which individual speakers apply a subjective colouration or slant to the propositional content of their utterances by hedging the truth value of that content or to indicate doubts about its reliability. The semantics are, in other words, construed as turning on whether individual speakers or writers present themselves as willing or unwilling to commit to the truth of that which they assert. Frequently the choice is construed as one between objective 'facts' and the subjective uncertainty of the modal or the evidential value – hence Lyons' (1977:794) contrast between 'factive' and 'non-factive'. The implication is that the overriding purpose of communication is to exchange truth values or certain knowledge and that these modal, evidential or hedging values are introduced only where doubt exists. Thus, speakers or writers are interpreted as adopting an interpersonal position when they fail to achieve an absolute commitment to the truth of their utterances. These are thus values to be used, so to speak, when the facts fail to convince.

Within the Appraisal framework, the expression of such values is seen in a social rather than individualised way. The result is that such values are seen as having a dialogic function in that they enter into dialogue with an audience. Thus every meaning within a text occurs in a social context where a number of alternative or contrary meanings could have been made, and derives its social meaning and significance from the relationship of divergence or convergence into which it enters with those alternative meanings. The focus is thus not on ideational content and its associated truth value (White, 2003), but rather on Bakhtin's (1981) opinion of the 'heteroglossic' nature of society. In commenting on this reality, Voloshinov (1995:139) observes as follows:

> Dialogue […] can also be understood in a broader sense, meaning not only direct, face-to-face, vocalised verbal communication between persons, but also verbal communication of any type whatsoever. A book, i.e. a verbal performance in print, is also an element of verbal communication. […it] inevitably orients itself with respect to previous performances in the same sphere […]. Thus the printed verbal performance engages, as it were, in ideological colloquy of a large scale: it responds to something, affirms something, anticipates possible responses and objections, seeks support, and so on.

Interpreted in this way, the role of language in positioning speakers and their texts within the heterogeneity of social positions and world views is emphasised. It is acknowledged that all texts reflect a particular social reality or attitudinal position and therefore enter into relationships of greater or lesser alignment with a set of more or less convergent or divergent social positions put at risk by the current social context. Thus, every meaning within a text occurs in a social context where a number of alternative or contrary meanings could have been made, and derives its social meaning and significance from the relationships of divergence or convergence into which it enters with those alternative meanings. In his interpretation of Bakhtin (1981, 1986), Lemke (1998: 85) remarks that 'lexical choices are always made against the background of their history of use in the community, they carry the 'freight' of their associations with them, and a text must often struggle to appropriate another's word to make it its own'. The notion of the heteroglossic nature of texts is accounted for by Foucault in his opinion on 'intertextuality'. In this regard Foucault points out that 'there can be no statement that in one way or another does not reactualize others' (Foucault, 1972:98). This notion is also fundamental to Fairclough's (1992) analysis of intertextuality and orders of discourse.

Under the Appraisal subsystem of ENGAGEMENT, modals, hedges, amplifiers and similar lexical features are thus seen as operating to reflect the process of interaction or negotiation within a text with other texts and with alternative attitudinal positions. Whereas modal values such as *maybe* or *I think that* are seen from an individualistic perspective as indicating uncertainty or lack of commitment to, or confidence in the truth values by the individual speaker, such values are seen from an ENGAGEMENT perspective as a reflex of the speaker's current state of knowledge with respect to some propositional content (White, 2002). Viewed from this perspective, rather than necessarily reflecting the speaker's state of knowledge, ENGAGEMENT values are seen as signalling that the meanings at stake are subject to heteroglossic negotiation. Such values may, in other words, have no connection at all with doubt or vagueness, but are used to acknowledge the contentiousness of a particular proposition and the willingness of the speaker to negotiate with those who hold a different view.

The fundamental choice in the system of ENGAGEMENT, therefore, is between that which might be termed the *mono-glossic* option (the so-called 'bare' declarative) and the network of *hetero-glossic* resources which inscribe the possibility of social heterogeneity into the text (White, 2002). In other words, a basic distinction under ENGAGEMENT is that between meanings which acknowledge in some way the heteroglossic diversity associated with all utterances (the heteroglossic) and those which ignore that diversity (the monoglossic). Monoglossic options could be said to suppress the basic heteroglossic nature of social reality (Bakhtin,1981:427). As such they enter into relationships of tension with whatever related set of alternative or contradictory utterances they bring into play. In contrast heteroglossic options are 'dialogic' assertions that acknowledge heteroglossic diversity. Of significance to the present study is that the dialogic nature of heteroglossic options can be either of dialogic contraction, or of dialogic expansion (White, 2002).

White (2002:12) presents the following options as enabling the textual voice to vary the terms by which it engages with alternative voices and alternative positions. Under the notion of dialogic contraction he classifies meanings relating to the following notions:

> *Disclaim* (deny, counter): The textual voice rejects a contrary position (e.g. *His claim to be famous is not true*), or presents a counter-expectation (e.g. *Is it compulsory to attend? Not at all*).

> *Proclaim* (concur, pronounce, endorse): By representing the proposition as highly

74

warrantable (compelling, valid, plausible, well-founded, generally agreed, reliable, etc), the textual voice sets itself against, suppresses or rules out alternative positions.   For example: *naturally, of course, obviously, admittedly, I contend, the truth of the matter is, there can be no doubt that*, etc. It is also enforced through rhetorical questions.

Under the notion of dialogic expansion White (2002:12) classifies meanings related to notions such as the following:

Entertain: By representing the proposition as grounded in a contingent, individual subjecthood, the textual voice represents the proposition as but one of a range of possible positions. For example: *it seems, the evidence suggests, apparently, perhaps, probably, maybe, it's possible, may/will/must,* and through some types of rhetorical questions.

Attribute: By representing the proposition as grounded in the subjecthood of an external voice, the textual voice represents the proposition as but one of a range of possible positions. For example*: X said, X believes, according to X, in X's view, X claims that, the myth that*, etc.

The inclusion here of 'attribute', highlights the significance of Hunston's (2000) notions of averral and attribution with relation to interpersonal negotiation. The importance of this dichotomy relates to the notion that a writer assumes responsibility for averral (his or her own viewpoints), but delegates responsibility for what is attributed (the attitudes of another person). The implication is that speakers or writers have to pay careful consideration to the dialogic potential of their averred utterances. Should such utterances contract the dialogic potential of the text, the interpersonal negotiation process is put under heightened stress. Should speakers or writers, however, attribute dialogically contractive opinions without endorsing them, the solidarity negotiation process is preserved. The mere 'act' of attribution serves as dialogic expansion.

As was pointed out earlier, the subsystems of Appraisal are all fundamentally interconnected. As such, ENGAGEMENT values of dialogic expansion or contraction should be considered in unison with values of AFFECT, JUDGEMENT and APPRECIATION in interpreting the interpersonal orientation of a text. The interrelatedness of the subsystems of Appraisal is illustrated by Martin (2004) by means of the sketch provided in Figure 2.1 below:

Figure 2.2 The system of Appraisal
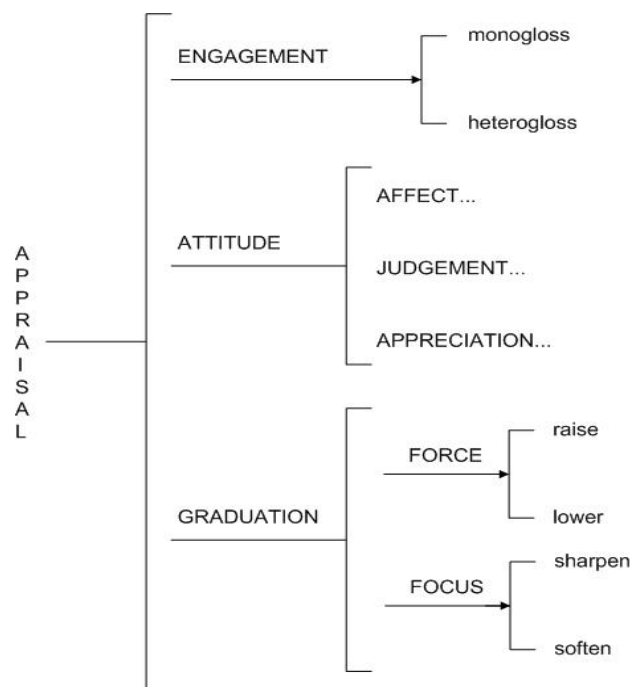
The relevance of Appraisal theory to the present study is that Appraisal allows for a comparison of texts in terms of what is sometimes referred to as the metadiscourse established through the evaluative language of a text. In this regard, metadiscourse is seen as rhetorical processes 'shaped by the writer's relationship with the intended audience' (Geisler, 1994:82).

> It is the discourse that calls attention either to the relationship between the author
> and the claims in the text or to the relationship between the author or the text's
> readers. (Geisler, 1994:11)

According to Hyland and Tse (2004), the metadiscourse of a text concerns self-reflective linguistic features which refer to the evolving text and to the writer and imagined reader of that text. In other words, the notion of metadiscourse is based on a view of writing as social engagement. In academic contexts, the metadiscourse of texts could be said to reveal the ways that writers project themselves into their discourse to signal their attitude towards both the

propositional content and the audience of the text. Because of the nature of Appraisal Theory it enhances a critical approach to discourse analysis by providing better understandings of how social norms and value systems are enacted through language and how discursive personae are construed.

2.2.4.5 Concluding remarks

In the above section I have pointed out that Appraisal theory is concerned with the linguistic resources by means of which a speaker or writer expresses and negotiates his or her emotive evaluation of the world with addressees. I have pointed out that Appraisal theory interprets evaluative language from an interpersonal point of view, in the sense that every act of appraisal is seen as having the potential to either strengthen or weaken a speaker's or author's relationship with his or her addressee. Because speakers or writers are aware of the threat posed by attitudinal language to personal relationships, they use various linguistic mechanisms to align or disalign themselves with the attitude expressed. I have argued that the process of solidarity negotiation associated with the use of attitudinal language can be seen as a signification of both an author's as well as an addressee's social presence in a text.

In section 2.2.5 below I briefly show how Appraisal Theory has been used by researchers to: analyse register variation in texts; explore ways in which authors position themselves with regard to their addressees; and expose the personae developed for discourse participants.

2.2.5 Appraisal Theory applied in practice

Notions such as voice or register shift, interpersonal positioning and the development of textual personae for discourse participants are of paramount importance to the present study. Firstly, it should be considered that in comparing study guides developed before and after a student-centred approach was adopted, I am to a very large extent comparing study guides developed within different ideological frameworks, namely a behaviouristic, content-centred, approach as opposed to a transformative, student-centred one. In this regard, I argue that these frameworks serve as context of situation variables that will be reflected in the text of study guides through register change.

Secondly, a move from content-centredness towards student-centredness implies a change in interpersonal positioning strategies adopted in texts. In this regard, it should be considered that student-centredness implies the negotiation of solidarity with students in order to facilitate the development of new knowledge. Thirdly, it should be considered that student-centredness implies that students are seen as cooperative inquirers in the knowledge construction process. In other words, the lecturer is no longer a figure of power, who possesses all the knowledge. Instead, the student's inherent knowledge base is acknowledged and as a result, some power is also attributed to the student.

Below I report briefly on how Appraisal analyses enabled scholars such as Coffin (2000), Eggins and Slade (1997), Hood (2004), Iedema, *et. al* (1994) and White (1998) to draw conclusions about voice or register shift, interpersonal positioning and the development of textual personae. It should, however, be considered that while linguists may focus on each of these notions individually, they are part of an integrated system (the interpersonal metafunction) of language. As a result, a shift in the textual voice implies a shift in interpersonal positioning and in the personae developed for interlocutors.

2.2.5.1 Appraisal theory and 'voice' analysis

According to Martin (1995:251), the genre of a text is determined by the intended function of the text. Thus, text development could be seen as a 'staged, goal-oriented purposeful activity'. This observation could be reformulated by saying that the 'voice' of a text is determined by the outcomes the author wants to achieve with it. This point of view is supported by the work of scholars who have used Appraisal to analyse media texts. By comparing different kinds of newspaper articles, Iedema, *et al* (1994) demonstrate that Appraisal theory enabled them to show that newspaper articles can be classified in the three different categories: reporter-voice articles, commentator-voice articles and correspondent-voice articles on the basis of the kind of ATTITUDE expressed in such articles.

They report that in the *reporter voice* texts, that is, objective hard news reporting, there are almost no explicit values of JUDGEMENT. In other words, meanings by means of which stance is expressed with regard to the social acceptability of human behaviour are not regularly utilised in reporter voice texts. Explicit values of JUDGEMENT that do occur are attributed to outside

sources, that is, the reporters do not risk alienating their readers and thus do not accept responsibility for such values. There is, however, a strong association between reporter voice and certain types of GRADUATION.

In contrast, all the various semantic categories of JUDGEMENT occur in the *commentator-voice*, that is, the style most typically associated with the commentaries of opinion pages regularly utilises values relating to human behaviour. In this regard, the behaviour of people is appraised both in terms of social esteem (normality, capacity, tenacity) and social sanction (veracity and propriety). In the *correspondent voice*, the style most often associated with the bureau chiefs and other correspondents, values of JUDGEMENT are largely restricted to social esteem (normality, capacity, tenacity). In other words, values of social sanction (veracity and propriety) do not regularly occur in this voice.

Not only do these research findings demonstrate that different generic types of texts utilise different values of Appraisal, but the findings also show that there is an association between the use of different values of Appraisal and the identity or persona developed for the writer. In this regard, Iedema, *et. al's* (1994) findings suggest that the identity developed for the news reporter is of somebody who covers news while maintaining solidarity with his or her readers. In contrast, the identity developed for the news commentator is of somebody who evaluates and interprets news events with the aim to influence opinions. On the other hand, news correspondents are projected as analysts and backgrounders who comment on what they see without condemning it. These findings are relevant to the present study because they suggest that a generic shift between old and new Unisa study guides and the personae developed for lecturers will show up in the values of Appraisal utilised by the two text types.

In his exploration of certain systematic patterns of interpersonal meanings which contribute to the distinctive style and communicative potential of the modern news report, White (1998) substantially expands Iedema *et al's* (1994) account. He argues that the modern mass-media news item is arguably one of the most influential written text types in contemporary society, as it influences many political, economic and cultural debates and news reporters might strive at being principally neutral and factual, but White (1998) uses Appraisal theory to demonstrate that there is a relationship between certain semantic patterns found generally across news items and the resultant potential of such texts to construe particular types of meaning, and to construct

particular relationships between writer and reader. In other words, Appraisal theory allowed White to demonstrate, via a semantic analysis, that newspaper articles are not necessarily unbiased and factual.

White shows that in addition to the favouring and disfavouring of values of JUDGEMENT, reported upon in the discussion of Iedema *et al*'s (1994) research, there is also a consistent pattern with respect to the use of ENGAGEMENT in the three media voices. He found that unattributed values of ATTITUDE only occur in commentator-voice texts. In contrast, attributed values of ATTITUDE occur across all voice types. As the attribution of attitude is associated with neutralising potential alienation with one's addressees, he draws the conclusion that it is only in commentator-voice texts that authors put solidarity with their readers at risk. White also exposes a clear pattern between the grading of values of attitude and particular voice types. He, for instance, established that while it is a common feature of journalistic texts, across the various voices, to grade values of ATTITUDE, the commentator-voice texts feature the highest frequency of such values.

Rothery and Stenglin (2000) also adopt a 'voice' approach in their attempt to determine what type of interpersonal styles will score well in secondary school English essay writing exercises. By analysing examples of student writing which received high marks, they establish that teachers prefer texts which make prominent use of both explicit JUDGEMENT and amplification. They also noted a surprisingly low use of values of APPRECIATION in the essays considering that the essay question asked students to evaluate a literary text in aesthetic, literary-critical terms, a task for which values of APPRECIATION might have seemed eminently suited. They conclude that because the teaching of English (as a school subject) in Australia mainly concerns the apprenticing of students into cultural values and a socioculturally determined ethical system of behaviour, schoolchildren develop a JUDGEMENT-oriented voice.

In similar fashion to the findings of Iedema *et al* (1994), the relevance of Rothery and Stenglin's (2000) and White's (1998) findings to the present study also concern the clear relationship between a shift in voice and a preference of values of Appraisal. Of significance to the concerns of the present study is also Eggins and Slade's (1997) findings that there is a clear relationship between power and the exclusion of values of AFFECT.   In comparing the conversation modes of various participants in informal conversational exchanges, Eggins and Slade established a

correlation between levels of dominance and expressiveness of speakers and the way in which such speakers use Appraisal resources.

They determined that the participants who speak most freely and who most actively direct the flow of the conversation, generally make greater use of Appraisal values. Moreover, they found that the different conversational styles of speakers relate to their preferences for Appraisal values. Thus, they found that a 'voice' which is assertively and forthrightly concerned with social norms of behaviour, favours values of JUDGEMENT (especially social esteem), while making very few expressions of APPRECIATION and AFFECT. Such assertive voices also regularly grade the Appraisal values utilised. I touch upon the association made by Eggins and Slade between authoritative voices and the exclusion of values of AFFECT in 4.2 where I draw conclusions about content-centred and student-centred texts and their different preferences for values of Appraisal.

In the following section, I briefly report on how the use of Appraisal Theory enabled Hood (2004) to explore how writers evaluatively position themselves with relation to other knowledge and other knowers. I focus on Hood's research results in this section because, in similar fashion to the present study, her research is conducted in the context of higher education. Her focus is on the language features associated with how critical thinkers position themselves interpersonally. However, her research results relate to the present study in that she reports on language features associated with interpersonal positioning – a matter which is of pertinent significance in an exploration of student-centredness in texts.

2.2.5.2 Appraisal theory and interpersonal positioning

Hood (2004) uses Appraisal analysis to explore the ways in which writers evaluatively position themselves and their readers in relation to other knowledge and other knowers in the introductory sections of published research articles and student dissertations. Her interest in the different ways in which experienced and novice researchers position themselves interpersonally, stems from what she refers to as the 'worldwide change' in the demographics of undergraduate students (Hood, 2004:1). Thus, from a linguistic perspective, there is a growing awareness that the genres and registers of academic discourse require students to engage with knowledge in new ways. She also observes that changes in the pedagogic context have focused more attention on critiquing the discourse practices of the academy, and have raised issues of

relevance and legitimacy in relation to those practices.

Hood's interest in academic practices grew out of her experiences in teaching and researching in academic literacy in English at tertiary level in Hong Kong. She remarks that one widely voiced concern amongst academic staff in Hong Kong is the lack of a critical perspective in students' work. As a result, she is interested in assisting students to develop a critical stance in exploring and constructing knowledge. Of significance to my research is that Hood identifies specific preferences and patterns whereby authors of research articles and dissertations either objectify or personalise their texts in the process of positioning themselves interpersonally. For instance, she established that: (a) a preference for encoding explicit ATTITUDE as APPRECIATION, rather than AFFECT or JUDGEMENT, and for encoding APPRECIATION as valuation rather than reaction, contributes an 'impersonal' orientation to expressions of explicit attitude; (b) while the overt expression of ATTITUDE functions to personalise the discourse, the preference for APPRECIATION as valuation functions to objectify it; (c) the evaluation of a particular phenomenon in terms of dichotomous values of ATTITUDE presents the textual voice as not being aligned with a particular opinion group and thus as open to negotiation; (d) discourses are made more personal by the use of more values of AFFECT or JUDGEMENT and by encoding APPRECIATION as reaction; and (e) there is a relationship between the field orientation of evaluations and the register of a text. These observations are referred to again in 4.2.3 of the present study when I draw conclusions about the testing of the present study's Hypothesis 2.

Another point of concern to the present study discussed by Hood (2004) relates to the association between the Appraisal subsystems and the prosodic nature of attitudinal meanings. In this regard, Hood (2004:114) observes that '[p]rosodies of interpersonal meanings 'colour' phases of discourse with an interpersonal implication'. Thus, Hood highlights the importance of the strategic use of explicit ATTITUDE in prosodically establishing a metadiscourse, and the role that resources of GRADUATION play in spreading the prosody across a phase of a text. She argues that the strategic inclusion of 'a single explicit attitudinal term' can function to give positive value to a whole phase of text that would otherwise be read as 'un-evaluated description' (Hood, 2004:114). She emphasises this point by saying: 'Resources of Graduation play an important role in the extension of prosodic domains' (Hood, 2004:233). This observation by Hood will be referred to again in Chapter 4 (cf. 4.2.2 and 4.2.3) when the variations in preferred expressions of ATTITUDE in content-centred as opposed to student-centred texts are discussed.

Due to the significance of private verbs as one of the features, which Biber (1988) singles out as very significant with regard to the coding of 'involvement', it is of significance to note that Hood observes that verbs such as *suggest, indicate,* and *show* relate to the Appraisal system of GRADUATION in the sense that degrees of modality 'are fused into verbal and mental processes' (Hood, 2004:210). As a result, such verbs code GRADUATION in terms of FOCUS. This matter is taken up in 4.2.2 and 4.2.3 of the present study, where I discuss my findings about the difference in appraisal through private verbs in old as opposed to new Unisa study guides.

2.2.5.3 Appraisal and identity development

Of particular relevance to the present study are views by Tang (1999, 2000, 2004), who explores the development of textual identity by using Appraisal theory. Tang (2004) shows how Appraisal analyses allow for an investigation of mechanisms and ways in which academic writers negotiate propositions with their readers.   In her research, Tang (1999, 2000, 2004) adopts a social constructivist approach to identity in that she assumes that an individual's identity is not a fixed entity or thing, but that it is created through discourse. In referring to the SFL view that language does not merely reflect an existing reality, but actually creates that reality, Tang (1999: 24) observes that:

> If we see the notion of self as one of the aspects of 'reality', we can then extrapolate from the above viewpoint to say that the idea of the self, too, is not fixed. Language does not serve merely as a tool to express a self that we already have, but serves as a resource for creating that self'.

This observation by Tang is in line with the view held by Brooke (1991:15) that 'a person's identity is not an 'inviolate core ... [or] fixed consciousness that never changes', but that people adopt different identities depending on 'surrounding circumstances as well as the social relationships in those circumstances'.

Explorations in the development of personal identity in texts flow from English second language research, where it has been found that there is a very close relationship between personal identity and the extent to which students are prepared to be critical and voice their own opinions.

In reflecting on the experiences she encountered in the process of having to write in English instead of Chinese, Shen observes:

> when I write in English I have to wrestle with and abandon (at least temporarily) the whole system of ideology which previously defined me in itself. I had to forget Marxist doctrines and the Party lines imprinted in my mind and familiarize myself with a system of capitalist/bourgeois values. (Shen, 1989: 461)

Shen continues by saying:

> Any time I write in Chinese, I resume my old identity, and obey the rules of Chinese composition such as 'Make the 'I'' modest, and 'Beat around the bush before attacking the central topic [...] But when I write in English, I imagine myself slipping into a new 'skin' [...] Looking back I realize that the process of learning to write in English is in fact a process of creating and defining a new identity and balancing it with the old identity. (Shen, 1989: 466)

The focus of the present study is not on the advantages and disadvantages of promoting one kind of textual identity over the other. Instead, my interest is on how identities for interlocutors are developed textually.

Tang (2004) shows that the writers of academic texts create identities for themselves through the way in which they appraise the world. Such appraisals include the use of attitudinal language, the grading of values of ATTITUDE and the use of sources of ENGAGEMENT. In this regard, she builds on earlier research (Tang, 1999) where she explored the notion of identity by investigating how academic writers use the first person singular pronouns. In commenting on the use of this pronoun Tang (1999: S23) observes that academic writing:

> [...] has traditionally been thought of as a convention-bound monolithic entity that involves distant, convoluted and impersonal prose. However, recent research has suggested a growing recognition that here is room for negotiation of identity within academic writing, and thus academic writing need not be totally devoid of a writer's presence.

84

Tang (1999) points out that the use of the first person singular pronoun signals the authoritative presence of authors in a text. By authorial presence she means that 'the writer displays a high level of authority within the text, where 'authority' has elements of both its common meanings of 'a right to control or command others' and 'knowledge or expertise in a particular field...'. Tang (2000) expresses the view that in developing identities for themselves, teachers should guard against being too authoritative as the taking of such a stance positions students as 'inferior beings in need of teaching' (Tang 2000: 165). She suggests that instead of positioning students as inferiors, teachers should be aware of the range of personas that they can cultivate. It is her opinion that teachers should choose to develop their identity according to the purposes they want to achieve. She says: 'Whatever the circumstances surrounding our roles, we need to be sensitive to the potential for some of these roles to exert control over our students ... we need to ensure that the teacher role we inhabit, allows ... student roles to flourish' (Tang, 2000: 167).

It is her opinion that in order to achieve success, a teacher should present him or herself as a non-authoritative 'collaborator and conversation partner' (Tang, 2000:164) rather than authoritative researcher. To achieve this, teachers should present their propositional claims in such a way that room is left for additional viewpoints, particularly the viewpoints of students. Viewed from an Appraisal point of view, the implication is that collocations of personal pronouns, particular first person singular pronouns referring to the author of a text, impact strongly on the identity developed for teachers and students (Tang, 2004). In this regard, collocations of the first person pronoun with dialogic expansive meanings are seen as non-authoritative and thus as the signalling of intimacy between teachers and students (e.g. *I think you might find it interesting*). On the other hand, collocations of the first person pronoun with undialogic expressions are authoritative and create distance between discourse participants (e.g. *I want you to submit your work by Monday*).

The significance of the views expressed above to the present study is obvious. The idea that identity is a textual construct carries with it major implications in teaching contexts, because if the self is not a fixed entity, but dependent on the context in which one operates, then teachers can be sensitised to the possibilities of inventing identities for themselves and their students through their language. It should be considered that a student-centred approach to teaching advocates that the relationship between teachers and students should be a close, intimate one where students are seen as cooperative investigators. Against this background, Tang's remarks

about the relationship between the accommodation of other viewpoints and the authority signalled by the use of personal pronouns are directly relevant. Close, intimate relationships are not likely to develop when teachers project themselves as authoritative parties who leave little room for other viewpoints.

As is evident from the discussions above (cf. 2.2.5.1, 2.2.5.2 and 2.2.5.3), investigations of how the social presence of discourse participants is signalled through appraisal, involve an exploration of language features associated with the Appraisal subsystems of ATTITUDE, GRADUATION and ENGAGEMENT. In this regard, the line of argument is that through appraisal, speakers and writers enter into negotiation with their addressees. The extent to which speakers or writers manage to align themselves with their addressees depends on the way in which they present the stance they take as non-authoritave and open to other viewpoints. In the process of doing so, textual identities are developed for discourse participants. These notions are referred to again in Chapter 4 (cf. 4.2.3) of the present study where I draw conclusions about the difference in the Appraisal strategies adopted in old as opposed to new Unisa study guides.

2.2.5.4 Concluding remarks

As can be seen from the research discussed above (cf. 2.2.5), Appraisal allows for a systematic exploration of how context of situation variables (such as a change in teaching paradigm at Unisa) gets reflected linguistically. Appraisal analysis also enables the researcher to uncover the personae developed in the text for different interlocutors. It also allows for an exploration of how speakers or authors position themselves heteroglossically in terms of their addressees' knowledge systems and in terms of existing knowledge. In this regard, Appraisal analysis also reveals how personal or impersonal texts are.

2.3 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have discussed the literature in the two areas that most significantly influenced my development of an analytical framework for the testing of my hypotheses. In discussing educational theories underlying a student-centred approach, I focussed on the principles advanced in transformative learning theory, constructivism and whole-person learning and

cooperative inquiry. Because of the association I make between a student-centred approach and the signification of the social presence of students in distance education teaching texts, I briefly discussed views relating to the Social Presence Theory.

In exploring how the social presence of discourse participants is signified linguistically, I have discussed certain features of Systemic Functional Linguistics. I also presented different views on how the social presence of discourse participants has been explored by linguists. In this regard, I have considered the work of scholars who make an association between notions such as 'involvement', truth function, evidentiality, politeness, evaluation and appraisal and the signification of the social presence of discourse participants in discourse. Special attention was paid to Biber's (1988) views on 'involvement' and the views expressed in Appraisal Theory. I also showed how Appraisal has been used successfully to expose register change and interpersonal negotiation strategies, and how it can be used to make conclusions about the personae the text establishes for the discourse participants.

The discussions were aimed at showing that notions such as 'involvement', attitude and engagement with the attitude expressed: (a) play a central role in pedagogical views on student-centredness; (b) can be associated with the social presence of writers and readers in a text; (c) can be explored linguistically; and (d) can be used in analysing and comparing texts with regard to their relevant student-centredness.