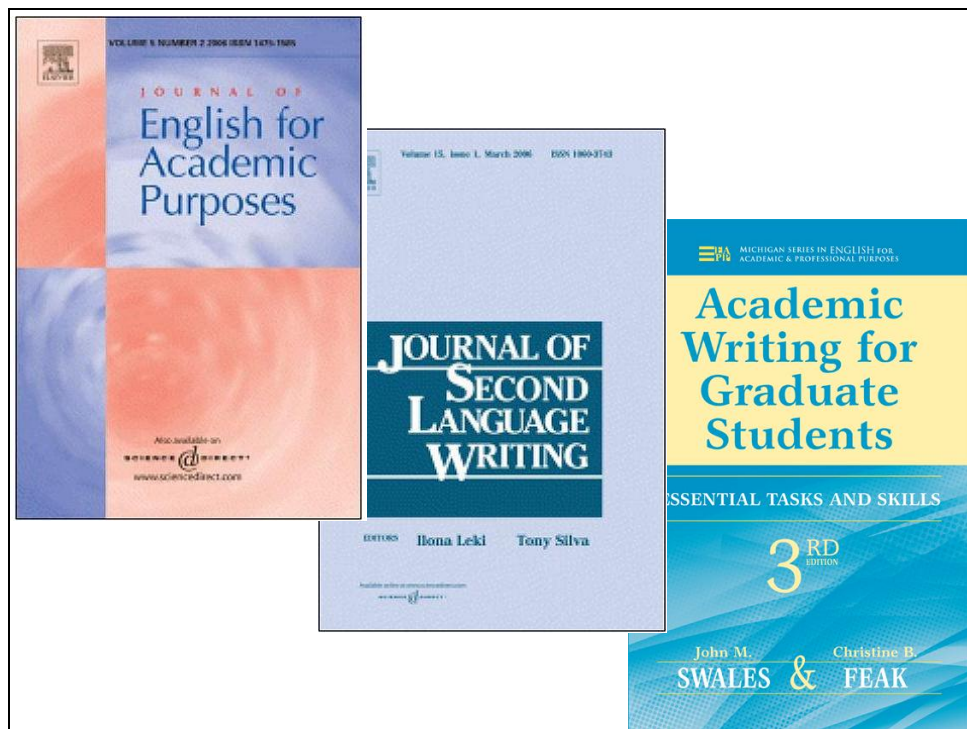# Learner creativity in the EAP classroom: Is it possible?

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2nd May, 2015

EAP = genre-based approach to teaching found in journals & courses such as these.

Genre = the conventionalised ways we get things done through language; e.g. if you want to buy something in a shop, you'll probably say predictable things in a predictable order.

Context & Choice

The language we use is shaped/constrained by context. To achieve their purposes the lawyer and the young people will use different forms of language. Some language forms have more power than others.

Example essay: Cannabis Legalization.

Cannabis legalization is an issue in some countries. While buying, selling, growing and smoking are criminal in most countries, there are also positive effects which are proved in some countries. Advocates of cannabis legalization often argue that cannabis should be used in medical purpose and could have benefits for economy. However, it is also believed that cannabis shouldn't legalize as cannabis usually causes health problems. Moreover, it is possible that it could lead to addiction.
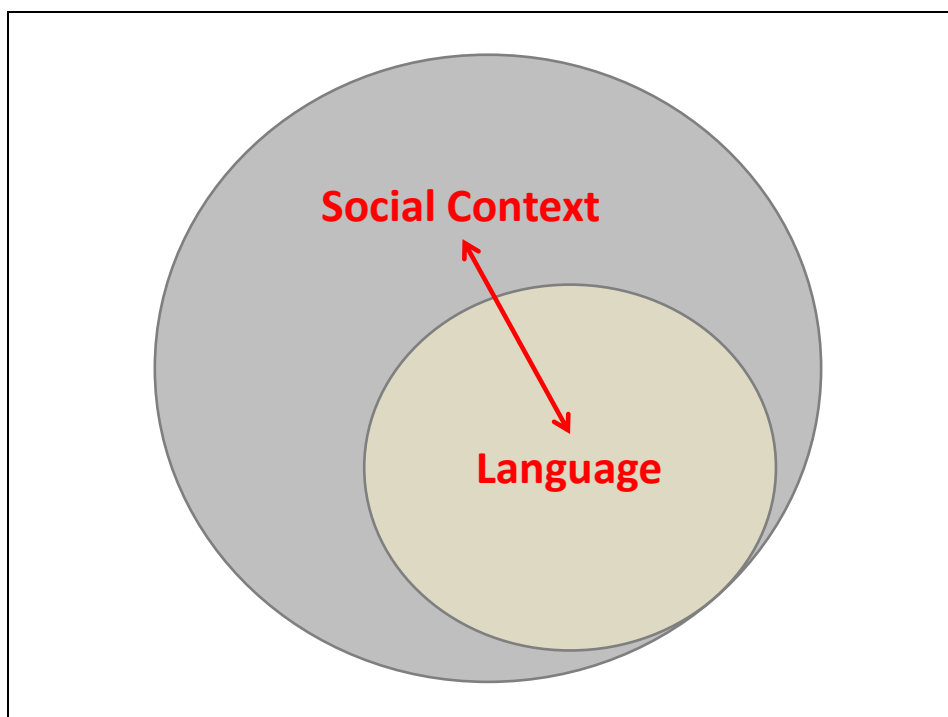
Firstly, there is a certainty that cannabis could be used for medical purposes. While cannabis has an analgesic effect, it is not allowed to medical purpose in most countries because of illegality of cannabis. For instance, an Australian father gave his cancer-stricken 2-years-old daughter cannabis to relieve her pain. After that, he was arrested by the law (Kelsey, 2015). Many people frequently claim that cannabis has already been recognized as a good pain reliever by the medical world. Therefore, using for medical purposes should be legalized.

Secondly, it is believed that cannabis legalization might be good for economy. By legalizing cannabis, probably, job opportunities would be increased. For example, after cannabis was legalized in Colorado, 100,000 people work in cannabis-related jobs (Sarich, 2014). This result shows that cannabis legalization certainly increases job opportunities. In addition, New York Times said that social costs which should pay for restricting far less dangerous substances than alcohol are too high (The Editorial Board, 2014). Restricting cannabis may be wasteful regulation. For this reason, people often argued that legalization and imposing high taxes would be more effective policy than restricting cannabis.

On the other hands, it is usually said that cannabis could lead to health problems including physical and psychological problems. Some evidence suggests that a person's risk of heart attack during the first hour after smoking cannabis is nearly five times his or her usual risk (Davies, 2014). Moreover, several studies say that cannabis would result in risk for mental illness, including psychosis, depression, and anxiety because hallucinating content may affect nerve disorders (Adams, 2015). Therefore, people argue that legalization could be not permitted.

Finally, it is possible that cannabis might cause changes in the brain that lead to addiction. Consequently, there is also a high probability that cannabis addiction could be linked to withdrawal symptoms. A study suggests that there are at least 200,000 people rely on cannabis in Australia. The people, for instance, may often suffer from irritability, sleep and mood difficulties, decreased appetite, restlessness (ncipc, 2001). As a result, it is arguable that legalization of cannabis is dangerous due to addiction as well as withdrawal.

In conclusion, although cannabis may lead to physical and psychological health problems and may also cause addiction and withdrawal for long term drug users, it should be allowed to medical usage for people who are in severe pain. Furthermore, if some countries spend lots of money restricting and controlling drugs, legalization could be more effective policy for their economy. Therefore, cannabis legalization is always necessary in medical usage and should be considered according to national situation.

Social context is realised through language. Language semiotically constructs social context.
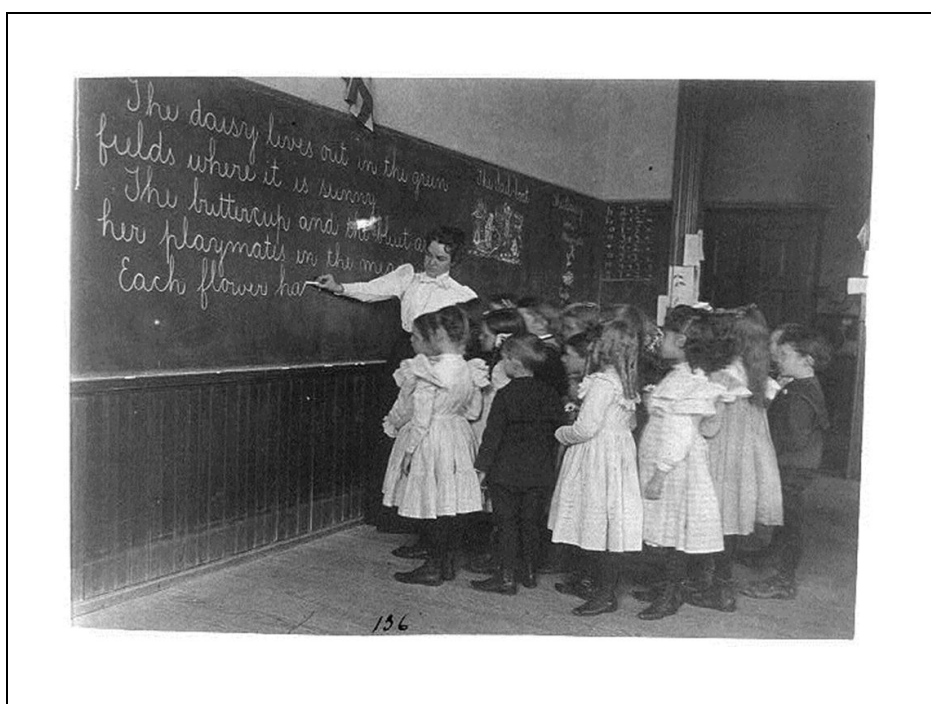
The teaching of typical language choices made in specific contexts and for a given social purpose = genre pedagogy.
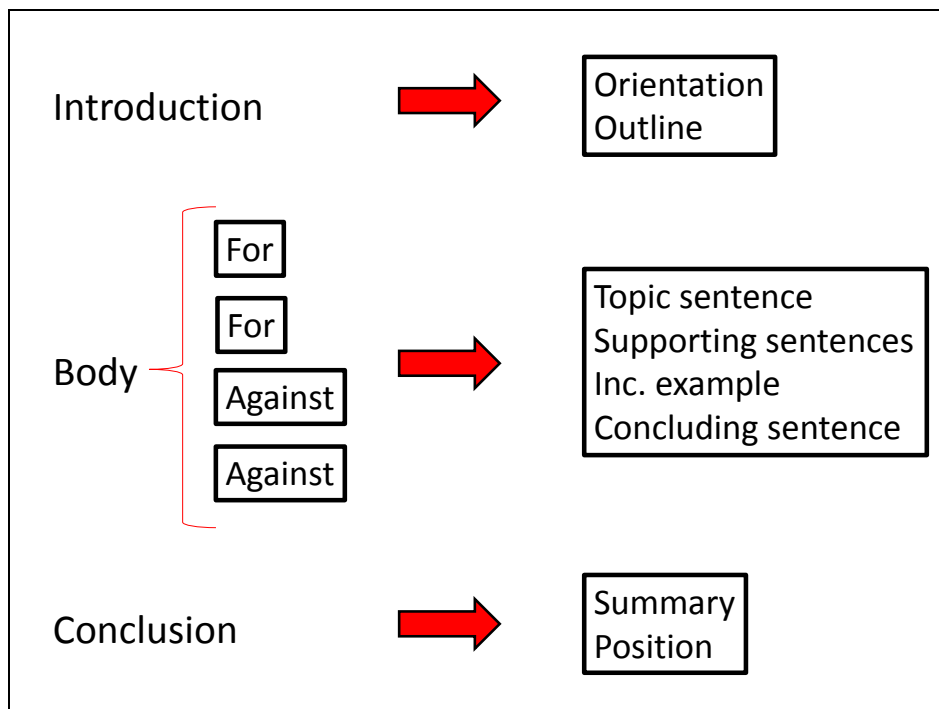
Example essay

➢Korean

➢Age: 27

➢IELTS: 5 (upon course entry)

➢Studied on a genre-based EAP course for 7 wks

➢ What is the genre of this essay?

➢ Which structural and grammatical features in the essay helped you to identify its genre?

➢ Is this a good example of the genre for a student of this level? Why?

Introduction ➡️ Orientation
Outline

For

For

Body ➡️ Topic sentence
Supporting sentences
Inc. example
Against Concluding sentence

Against

Conclusion ➡️ Summary
Position

The generic structure of a discussion essay.

Firstly, there is a certainty that cannabis could be used for medical purposes. While cannabis has an analgesic effect, it is not allowed to medical purpose in most countries because of illegality of cannabis. For instance, an Australian father gave his cancer-stricken 2-years-old daughter cannabis to relieve her pain. After that, he was arrested by the law (Kelsey, 2015). Many people frequently claim that cannabis has already been recognized as a good pain reliever by the medical world. Therefore, using for medical purposes should be legalized.

The grammar which is needed for an effective discussion essay: modality, distancing/attribution of ideas, contrast, cause & effect.

Explicit teaching of generic structure.

Explicit teaching of generic purpose, structure and grammatical features. (Slides from a PPT I use in class.)

Is this a good example of the genre for a student of this level? Why?

Yes. It follows the structure and uses the prescribed grammar.

➢ What would the result have been if the writer had used a completely different structure for this essay?

➢ Would the essay have been as successful if it had not used the prescribed language?
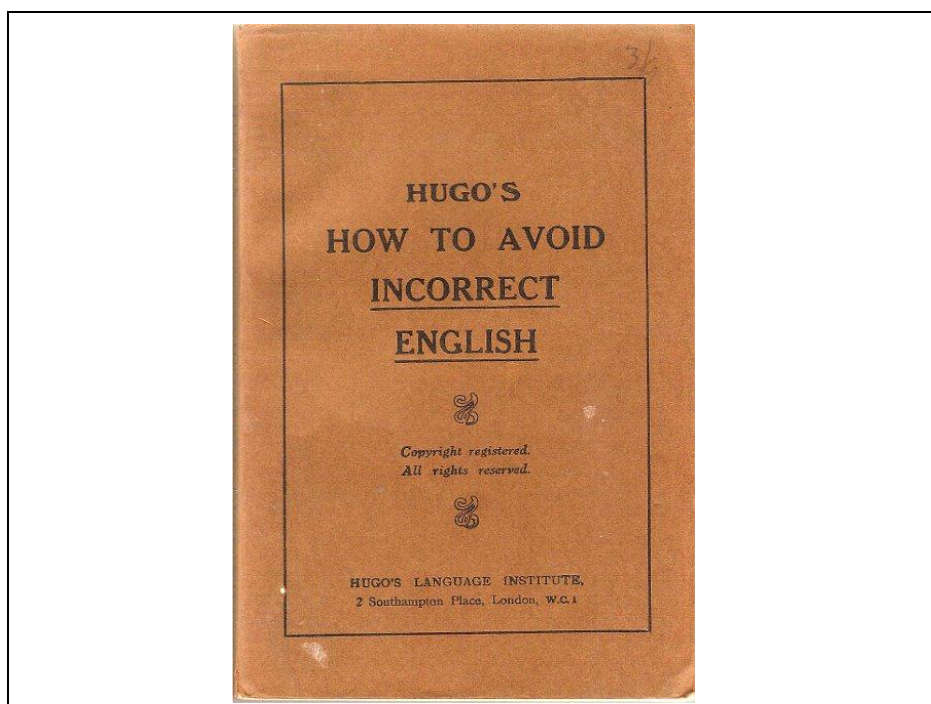
Genre pedagogy has been accused of prescriptivism.

Basil Bernstein argues that individualistic, creativity-focused teaching creates a 'hidden pedagogy'. Achievement of educational success is far easier for those brought up within the culture and social groups for which the pedagogy was created.

**Context
Limits
Choice**

People are not free to be completely creative. Context limits choice. Genre-based EAP is a 'visible pedagogy'. It makes those limits clear.

Academic style guides are prescriptive.

Once upon a time there was a word, and the word was...

tree
word

...tree was very isolated and didn't even know what class of word he was! He got lonely, and decided to join a group...

a	mulga	tree
Deictic	Classifier	Thing
determiner	noun	noun

...and so became as word class with a group function (he thus gained an identity and had a role to play). But he got bored with the group and grew into a clause...

a mulga tree	can drop	thousands of leaves	a year
Actor	Process	Goal	Extent
nominal group	verbal group	nominal group	nominal group

(Martin, 2013)

But some academic writers do bend generic conventions. What gives them the right to do so?

Creativity?

"genres must be fully mastered in order to be manipulated freely"
(Bakhtin, 1986)
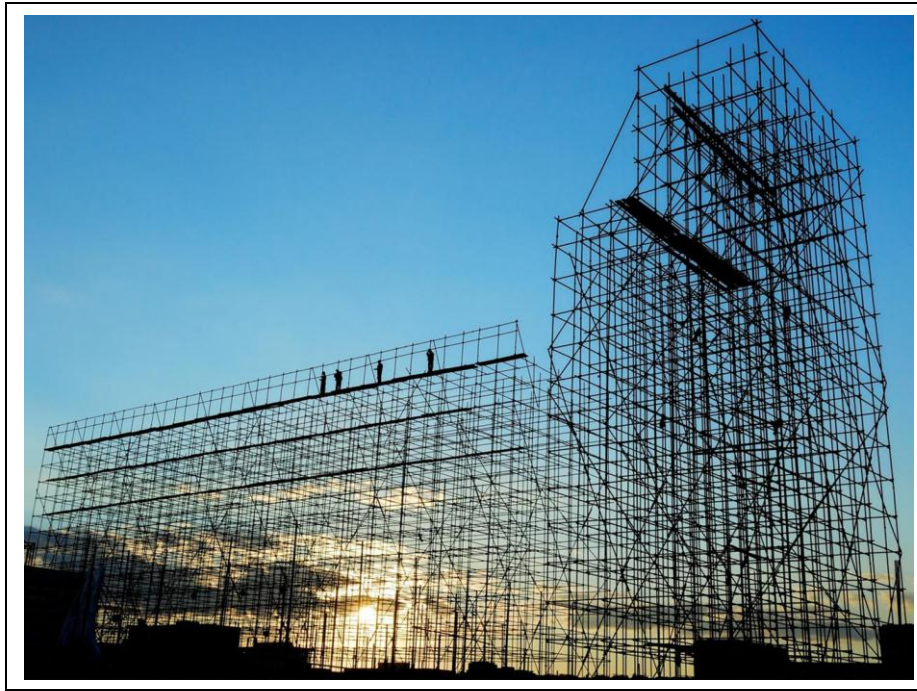
Genre pedagogy = scaffolding. The example discussion essay is not the finished product in terms of language learning.

➢In what other situations could discussion essay language, such as modality, be used?

Firstly, there is a certainty that cannabis could be used for medical purposes. While cannabis has an analgesic effect, it is not allowed to medical purpose in most countries because of illegality of cannabis. For instance, an Australian father gave his cancer-stricken 2-years-old daughter cannabis to relieve her pain. After that, he was arrested by the law (Kelsey, 2015). Many people frequently claim that cannabis has already been recognized as a good pain reliever by the medical world. Therefore, using for medical purposes should be legalized.

Discussion essay language.

They **should** have broken up years ago.

It's **because of** his mother's influence.

She claims that she still loves him.

Discussion essay language across contexts. It's not limited to the discussion essay, but can help learners make meaning in all areas of their lives.

➢ What choices has the writer made when composing this essay?

➢ Has the writer evaluated the opinions and examples discussed in the essay?

Choice & Opinion as Creative Space
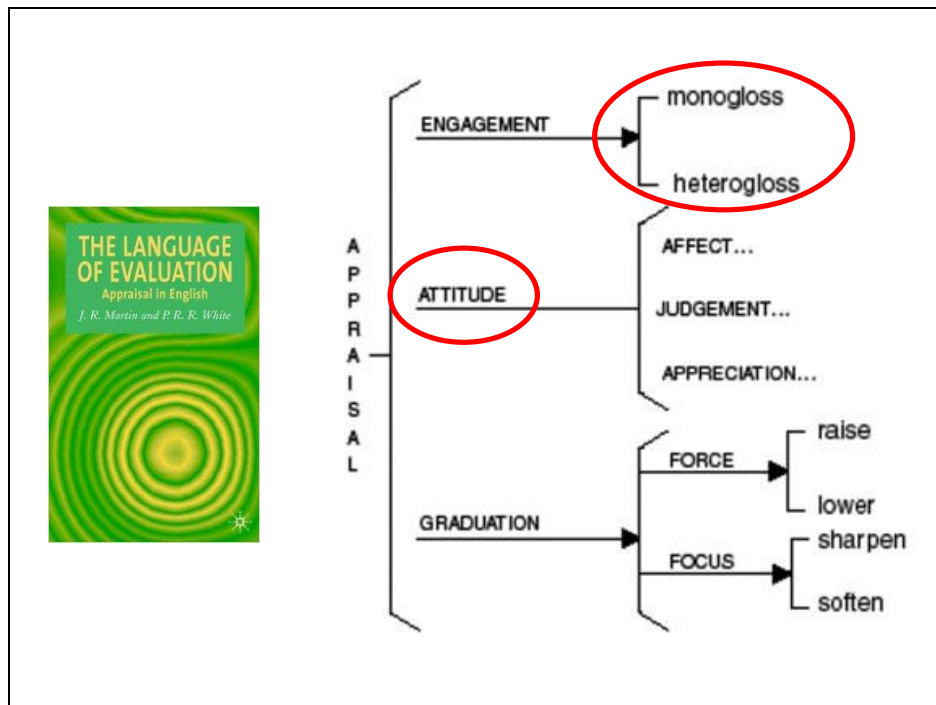
Use of evaluative language allows for creativity within generic constraints.

Monogloss = one voice; one perspective. Heterogloss = other voices; multi-perspective.

- Advocates of cannabis legalization often argue that…

- New York Times said that…

- he was arrested by the law (Kelsey, 2015)

Incorporation of other voices in the example essay.

- Restricting cannabis may be wasteful regulation.

- although cannabis may lead to physical and psychological health problems and may also cause addiction and withdrawal for long term drug users, it should be allowed to medical usage for people who are in severe pain.

Modality & countering also open up the text to other voices.
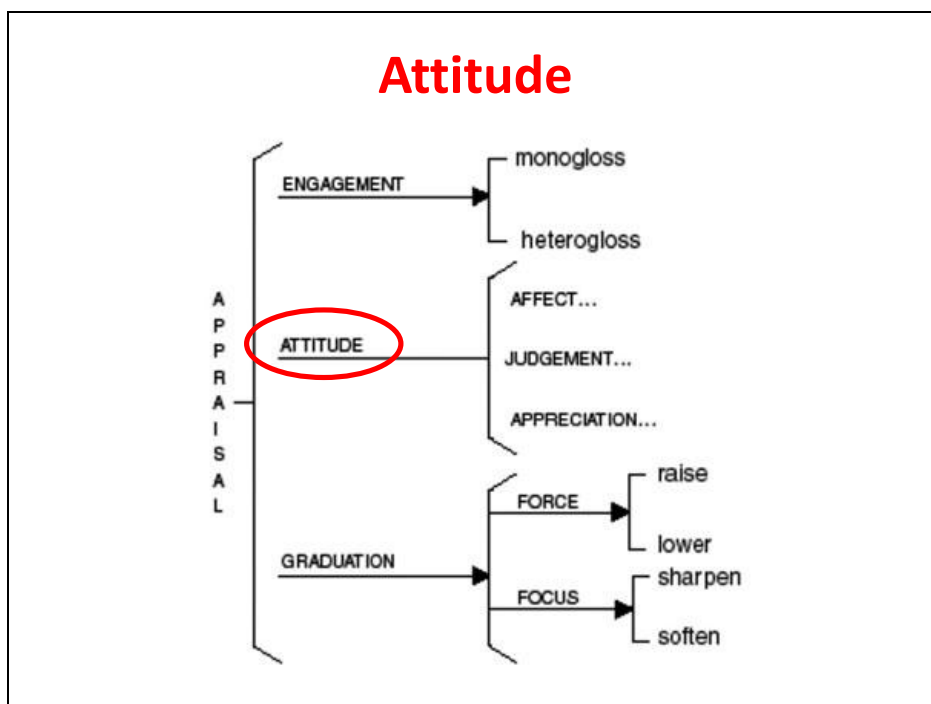
Expression of feelings through the resources of Attitude.

The objectivity of academic writing?

Sue Hood. (2004)

It is apparent that published academic writers do not achieve the characteristic 'objectivity' of their discourse simply through an avoidance of explicit Attitude (Hood, 2004).

An example from a biology paper

The rapid appearance and rise of the class 1 integron is one of the most stunning examples of evolution in action, driven by the power of natural selection....They have created a worldwide crisis in management of bacterial infections.

(Gillings et al., 2008)

Explicit Attitude in a science paper.

Firstly, there is a certainty that cannabis could be used for medical purposes. While cannabis has an **analgesic** effect, it is not allowed to medical purpose in most countries because of **illegality** of cannabis. For instance, an Australian father gave his **cancer-stricken** 2-years-old daughter cannabis to relieve her pain. After that, he was arrested by the law (Kelsey, 2015). Many people frequently claim that cannabis has already been recognized as a **good** pain reliever by the medical world. Therefore, using for medical purposes should be legalized.

Use of attitudinal language in the example essay: positive, negative, **inscribed**, invoked.

Cannabis legalization is an issue in some countries. While buying, selling, growing and smoking are **criminal** in most countries, there are also **positive effects** which are proved in some countries. Advocates of cannabis legalization often argue that cannabis should be *used in medical purpose* and could have **benefits** for economy. However, it is also believed that cannabis shouldn't legalize as cannabis usually causes **health problems**. Moreover, it is possible that it could lead to **addiction**.

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Finally, it is possible that cannabis might cause *changes in the brain* that lead to **addiction**. Consequently, there is also a high probability that cannabis **addiction** could be linked to *withdrawal symptoms*. A study suggests that there are at least 200,000 people **rely on** cannabis in Australia. The people, for instance, may often **suffer** from **irritability**, sleep and mood **difficulties**, decreased appetite, **restlessness** (ncipc, 2011). As a result, it is arguable that legalization of cannabis is **dangerous** due to **addiction** as well as *withdrawal*.

In conclusion, although cannabis may lead to **physical and psychological health problems** and may also cause **addiction** and *withdrawal* for long term drug users, it should be allowed to medical usage for people who are in severe **pain**. Furthermore, if some countries *spend lots of money restricting and controlling drugs*, legalization could be more **effective** policy for their economy. Therefore, cannabis legalization is always necessary in medical usage and should be considered according to national situation.

Use of Attitude in the example essay. Level of control? Too negative? Student's thesis a surprise due to ineffective attitudinal prosody?

More space for generic creativity in presentations?

Learner creativity in the EAP classroom: Is it possible?

❖ Genre & Genre Pedagogy

❖ Discussion

❖ Prescriptivism vs Visible Pedagogy

❖ Creativity?
→ Expertise

❖ Meaning making

❖ Choice & Opinion as Creative Space
→ Heterogloss
→ Attitude

Suggested reading

Genre in EAP

Hyland, K. (2009) *Academic Discourse*

Visible pedagogy

Rose, D & Martin, J. (2012) *Learning to Write, Reading to Learn*

Manipulation of Genre

Bhatia, V. (2004/2014) *Worlds of Written Discourse: A Genre-Based View*

Opinion as Creative Space

Hood, S. (2004) *Appraising research: Taking a Stance in Academic Writing*

Martin, J. & White, P. (2005) *The Language of Evaluation: Appraisal in English*

Thank You

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