# Practical use of corpora and concordancers in teaching rhetorical functions





#### I teach EAP to international PhD students at the University of Huddersfield



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I teach mix-discipline groups, mostly international students

My courses and workshops are short (2-4 sessions) not compulsory or credit-bearing:

- · Academic Writing Style
- · Avoiding Plagiarism
- · Summarising and Paraphrasing
- Critical Writing and Argumentation
- · Writing Literature Reviews
- · Writing Abstracts
- · Use of Tenses and Passive Voice in Academic Writing
- · Describing Visual Data
- · Writing about Methods and Methodology
- · Writing Results, Discussion and Conclusions Sections
- Improve Your Academic Writing with Corpora and Concordancers - Beginners (2 sessions)
- Improve Your Academic Writing with Corpora and Concordancers - Advanced (2 sessions)

Corpus consultations have a role in "stimulating enquiry and speculation on the part of the learner, and helping the learner also to develop the ability to see patterning in the target language and to form generalizations to account for that patterning"

(Johns, 1991).

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'One criticism aimed at DDL is that it ignores the "big themes" of language' (Boulton 2007: 1)

'Language points that seem to be the topic of DDL materials ... tend to deal with the minute details of phraseology of particular words, and may be difficult to reconcile with the 'big themes' of language teaching' (Hunston, 2002: 184).

The challenge of connecting surface forms with discursive meaning in teaching (Ädel 2010: 49)

#### Rhetorical functions: some previous research

Two collections, *Discourse on the Move: Using corpus analysis to describe discourse structure* (Biber, Connor & Upton 2007) and *Academic writing: At the interface of corpus and discourse* (Charles, Pecorari & Hunston 2009), are dedicated to using corpora in the analysing and teaching of academic discourse.

Discipline-specific rhetorical moves are discussed by Anthony (1999),

Flowerdew (2003) Problem-Solution rhetorical pattern in professional and students' writing

The use of a corpus to enhance 'rhetorical consciousness-raising' was described by Lee and Swales (2006: 58).

Charles (2007), rhetorical features, particularly concession strategies where writers anticipate and minimize potential criticisms

Flowerdew (2009) advocated using a corpus in teaching rhetorical elements of academic writing,

Marco (2010) conducted an analysis of rhetorical items in a learner corpus of technical writing.

Charles (2011) looked at lexico-grammatical patterns 'as realisations of the specific rhetorical function' (2011: 28)

Boulton, Carter-Thomas & Jolivet(2012) 'A criticism often levelled at corpus analysis is that while it is an extremely powerful approach for 'low-level' phenomena such as lexical and grammatical items, it is ill-adapted to 'higher level' considerations of discourse organisation, argumentation, and genre' (2012: 3)

Poole (2016) used a corpus-assisted approach in teaching rhetoric in undergraduate composition

Crosthwaite, et al (2019) 'We also see the need to move beyond corpus activities that focus solely on 'low-level' phenomena involving grammar and lexis, with corpora that facilitate analysis of 'higher-level' phenomena at the discourse or genre level' (2019:21).

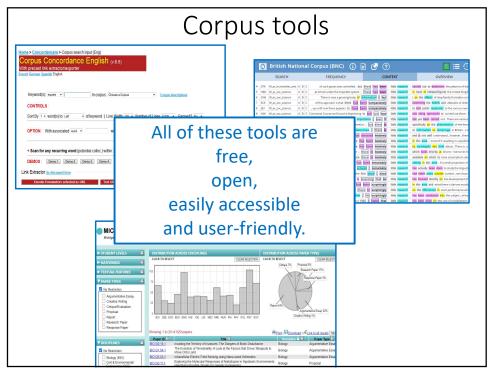
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'The question remains: is DDL appropriate for the big themes of language learning?'

'DDL should not be sidelined from the big themes, but nor should it be implemented wholesale; rather, it may best be considered **an additional learning technique** appropriate for some learners in some contexts'.

(Boulton 2007: 5, 8)

One of the barriers to using corpus consultations in everyday teaching practice is the fact that 'many DDL activities require considerable preparation time, and ready-made teaching materials are few and far between' (Vyatkina & Boulton 2017: 2, see also Karpenko-Seccombe 2018).





- 1. Rhetorical pattern *Creating a Research*Space
- 2. Problem-solution pattern
- 3. Counter-argumentation



#### Rhetorical moves in argumentation

Move 1

Establishing a research territory

- a. by showing that the general research area is important, central, interesting, problematic, or relevant in some way. (optional)
- b. by introducing and reviewing items of previous research in the area, (obligatory)

Move 2

Establishing a nichea

 a. by indicating a gap in the previous research, raising a question about it, or extending previous knowledge in some way. (obligatory)

Move 3

Occupying the niche

- a. by outlining purposes or stating the nature of the present research. (obligatory)
- b. by announcing principal findings, (optional)
- c by indicating the structure of the RP. (optional)

Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2009). Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks and skills Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, p 244

#### Move 1

Showing that the general research area is important, central, interesting, problematic, or relevant

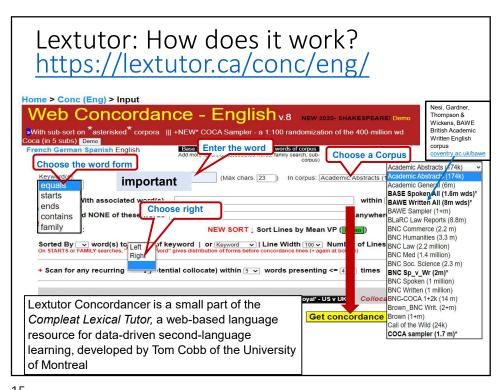


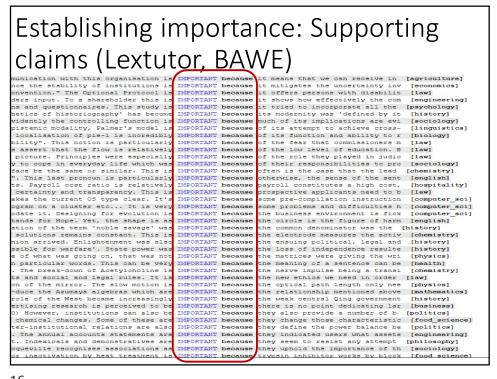
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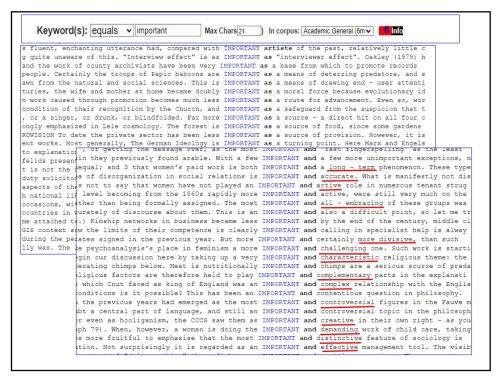
#### Importance of the field

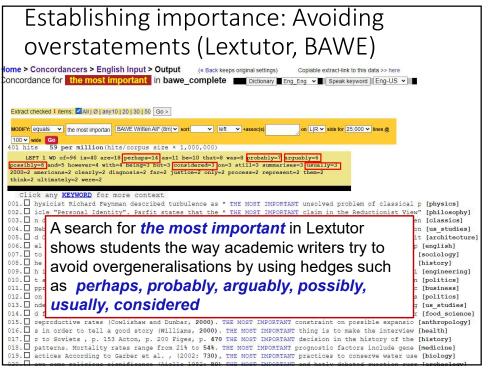
The adjective *important* is, according to Hyland and Jiang, the most common term across several disciplines (Applied linguistics, Sociology, Electrical engineering and Biology).

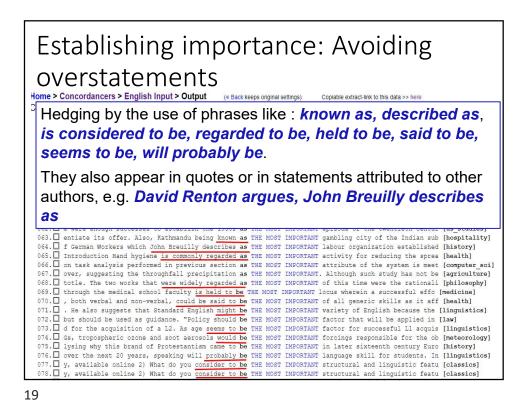
Hyland and Jiang 2016: 262



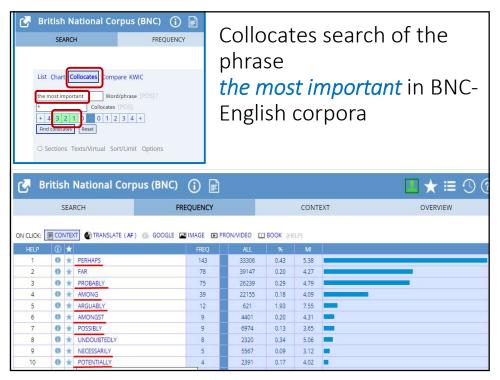


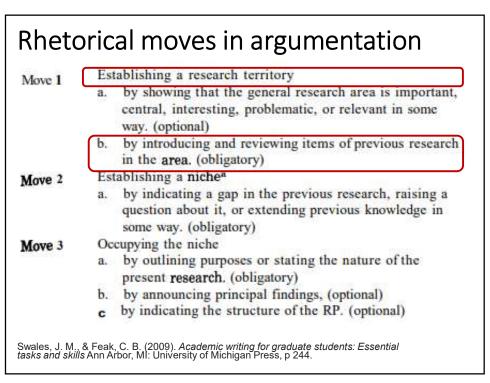






British National Corpus: How does it work? https://www.english-corpora.org/bnc/ Tools: **British National Corpus (BYU-BNC)** POS sections list List Chart Collocates Compare KWIC chart Find matching strings Reset collocate ☐ Sections Texts/Virtual Sort/Limit Options compare The British National Corpus (BNC, Davies, 2004, **KWIC** originally created by Oxford University Press) is a SPOKEN 100 million word corpus of British English texts. FICTION MAGAZINE NEWSPAPER NON-ACAD It represents a variety of genres: newspapers, fiction, spoken language. For academic writers the most relevant part is its 15 million word section of academic English. BNC-English corpora is a very rich resource which has a wide variety of functions.





#### Move 1

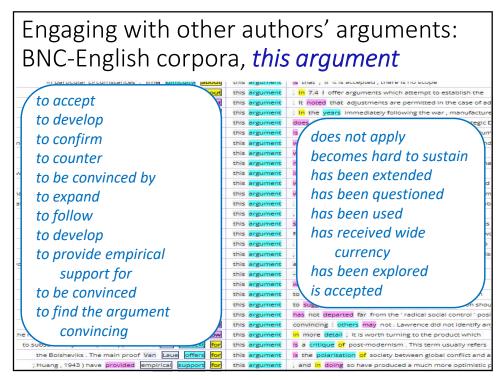
Introducing and reviewing items of previous research



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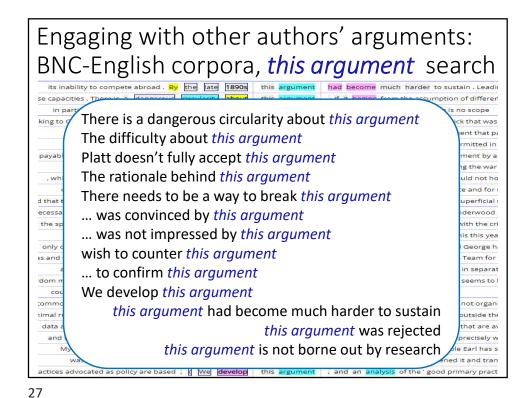
Engaging with other authors' arguments: BNC-English corpora, *this argument, KWIC* search





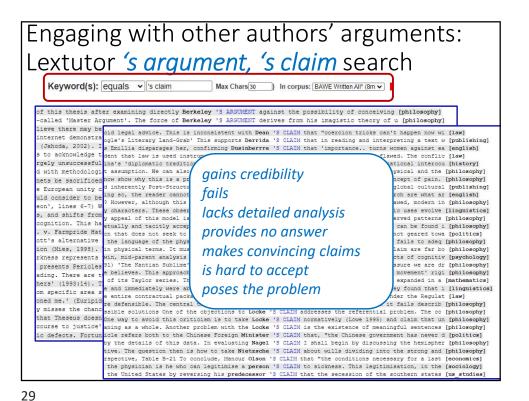
Alex Henry: the approach to teaching writing should 'encourage learners to develop their learning and analytical skills so that they can identify and use effectively the linguistic formulas'.

(Henry 2007: 463)



### Engaging with other authors' arguments: Lextutor (BAWE) *this argument* search

```
Simmel 1968 24 cited in Sherman 1970 126) THIS ARGUMENT links to the inability of a strong a [sociology]
nvolvement schemes (Cunninghamal. 1996). THIS ARGUMENT is reinforced by the findings of the [business]
t in that sense (see also Weberal. 2000). THIS ARGUMENT is advanced by Marginson and Sisson [business]
lity. (Carricaburu and Pierret, 1995: 301) THIS ARGUMENT reveals the way in which, rather tha [sociology]
being, period)." (Van Cleeve, 1999 p. 5) THIS ARGUMENT appears to be condemning all Idealis [philosophy]
aw (Hart Publishing, Oxford 1997), at 60. THIS ARGUMENT is adopted from P Cane, The Anatomy [law]
 things be removed." (Kant, 1787 p. 89). THIS ARGUMENT relies on the presupposition that we [philosophy]
), p. 244. Gottfried, Black Death, p. 94. THIS ARGUMENT is paramount in presenting the Black [history]
ther in favour or only against an action. THIS ARGUMENT is essentially based on examples whe [philosophy]
mit (\pi / 2)f(0). Dirichlet then adjusted THIS ARGUMENT to accommodate functions which were [mathematics]
ntroduce change. Storey (2005:4) advances THIS ARGUMENT by illustrating: [Employees] have, i [business]
is utterly indivisible." [3] Once again THIS ARGUMENT is aimed at demonstrating the differ [philosophy]
and is able to judge correctly. But again THIS ARGUMENT is by no means free from criticism. [philosophy]
ideologies were interconnected although THIS ARGUMENT rests partly on subjective interpret [archeology]
2001: 207; Perlès, 1992: 125). Although THIS ARGUMENT at first instance appears convincing [archeology]
Washington is filled with corruption, and THIS ARGUMENT has a renewed legitimacy with the cu [politics]
is important in the knowledge economy and THIS ARGUMENT leads to a contradiction within the [business]
ories, identities, cultures and...myths'. THIS ARGUMENT is grounded in the belief that such [politics]
ed and controlled by the elite appealing. THIS ARGUMENT could be criticised by the fact that [classics]
ing of the organised workforce approach.' THIS ARGUMENT is also present in Hall's analysis w [business]
ficult to state this was a solid trend as THIS ARGUMENT is based on assumption as opposed to [history]
objects. We shall now show the assumption THIS ARGUMENT is based on before passing on to con [philosophy]
d how a state cannot shield itself behind THIS ARGUMENT when the state itself is the perpetr [law]
gime. However, a good example that breaks THIS ARGUMENT is the recognition of arbitral award [law]
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Engaging with other authors' arguments
To support one's claim:

This argument can be invoked to support the programme of language immersion in Canada, referred to in Chapter 2 ...

Lextutor, Academic General

To accept an author's argument:

There's no reason to refute this argument ...

Lextutor, Academic General

To refute a previous argument:

I would reject this argument as calculated to undermine...

BNC, Academic

To evaluate an argument:

Though not without merit, this argument is weaker here

BNC, Academic

### Move 2: Establishing a niche by indicating a gap in the previous research

#### Move 1

Establishing a research territory

- a. by showing that the general research area is important, central, interesting, problematic, or relevant in some way. (optional)
- b. by introducing and reviewing items of previous research in the area. (obligatory)

#### Move 2

Establishing a nichen

 a. by indicating a gap in the previous research, raising a question about it, or extending previous knowledge in some way. (obligatory)

Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2009). Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks and skills Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, p 244

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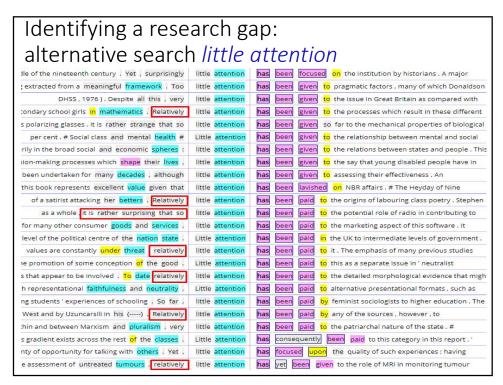
Move2

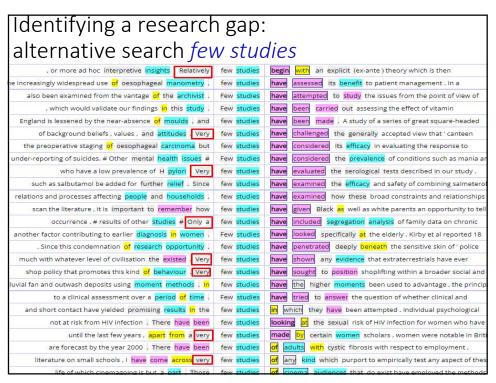
Establishing a niche or gap



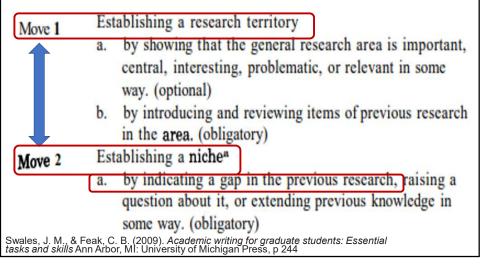








Transition between Move 1 and 2: from stating the importance/ presenting previous research to establishing the gap



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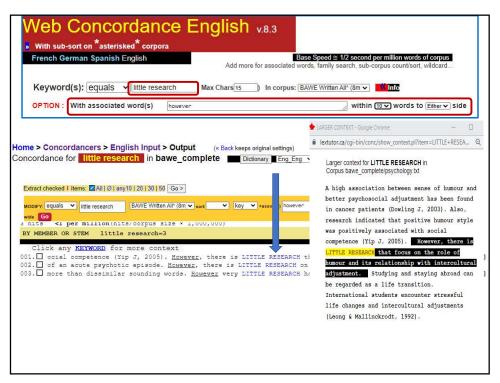
Transition between Move 1 and 2



#### However

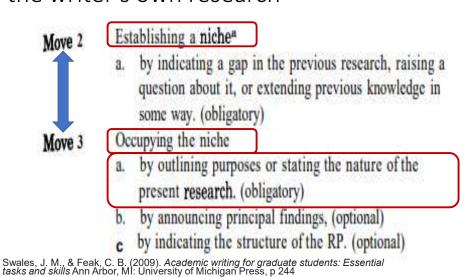
However can 'often lead to main points that academic authors want to make'

(Biber et al., 1999: 881).



#### Establishing the Transition from Move 1 to research territory by reviewing previous Move 2 research Many studies have tested the effect of wherent types of speech of recall, but most focus on the effect of phonological **Establishing the** dissimilar words on the number of items recalled research gap Results suggest that interference from background speech which is similar sounding disrupts working mer ory more than dissimilar sounding words. However very little research has been published testing the effects of semantically similar for action meaning) words as a distractor to memory. Establishing A high association between sense of humour and betty psychosocial adjustment has been found in cancer patients (**Dowling J, 2003**). Also, research indicated that presitive humour style was positively associated with social competence Yip J, 2005). However, there is little research that focuses on the role of humour and its relationship with intercultural adjustment. Lextutor, BAWE

Transition between Move 2 and 3: from establishing the gap to presenting the writer's own research

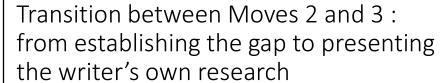


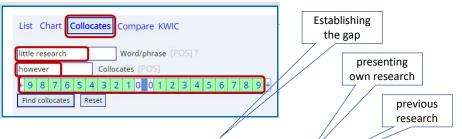
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#### Transition between Move 2 and 3



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There has, *however*, been *little research* or the se of computers in planning practice. The research aims to develop the work and findings of an earlier project (Bardon and Stothers 1982) by: (1) extending and deepening the investigation of computer applications in UK local authority planning departments...

**BNC-English corpora** 

### Transition between Move 2 and 3: lexical sharing (Swales, 2011: 60)

- Little research has been conducted in relation to the field of Machine Translation (MT). The purpose of this research work is to determine the feasibility of using MT techniques for CLTR.
- Little research in information systems security had previously focused on the internal control systems. As such, this research presents a new area in information systems security study. Lextutor, Academic General

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### Transition between Move 2 and 3: semantic sharing (Swales, 2011: 60)

- In the first place, since little research had taken place outside London, we chose to investigate a provincial city.
- 2. Although religious educators often refer to religion in the lives of children and young people, and recommend that religious education draw on this experience in their teaching, little research has been done in the area. Using techniques developed during an earlier study of British Hindu children, an ethnographic study of children and young people from Christian, Muslim, Jewish and Sikh backgrounds in the context of their families and faith communities will be conducted in parts of the West Midlands.

BNC-English corpora, KWIC search, expanded context

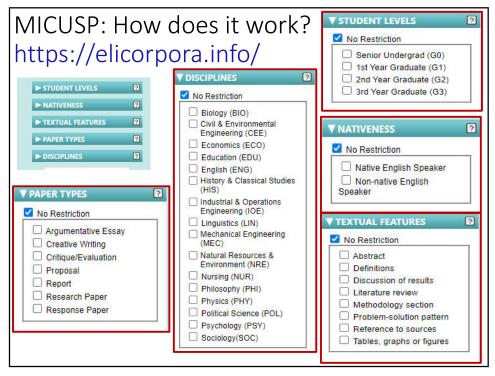
#### Differences in presenting one's own research

#### Move 3

#### Occupying the niche

- a. by outlining purposes or stating the nature of the present research. (obligatory)
- b. by announcing principal findings, (optional)
- by indicating the structure of the RP. (optional)

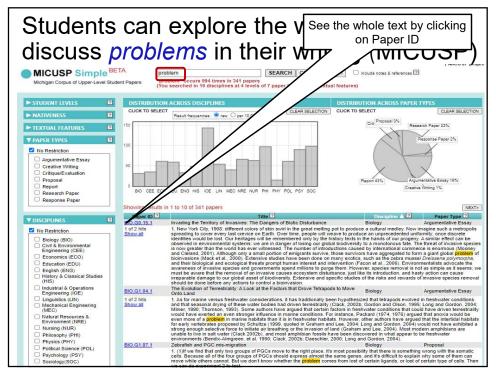
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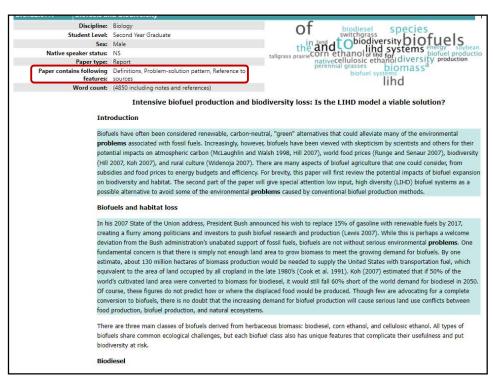


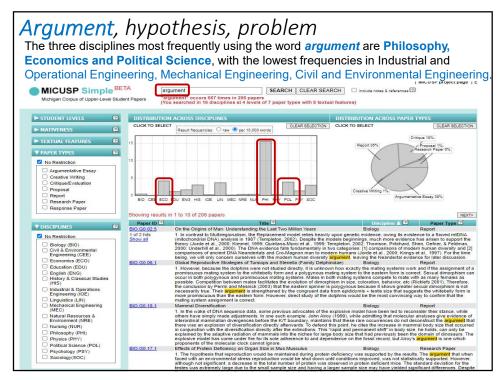
#### Learners need to be provided with

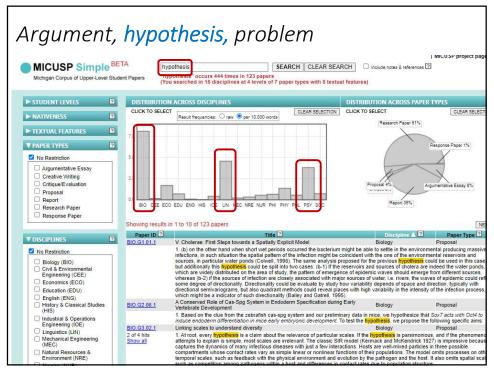
'a range of samples of a genre or its characteristic elements so that they can acquire a repertoire of linguistic and rhetorical devices from which to choose' (Petric, 2005, p. 224).

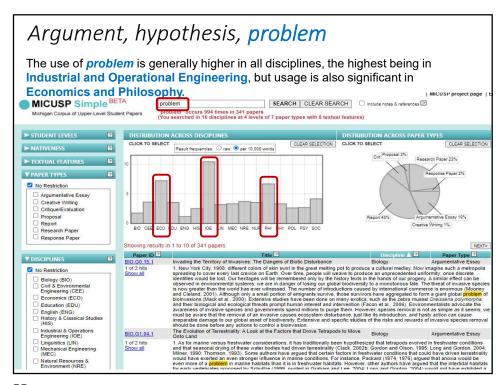
Such samples are very usefully provided by MICUSP

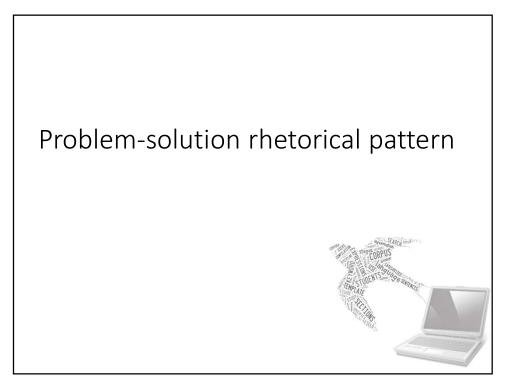


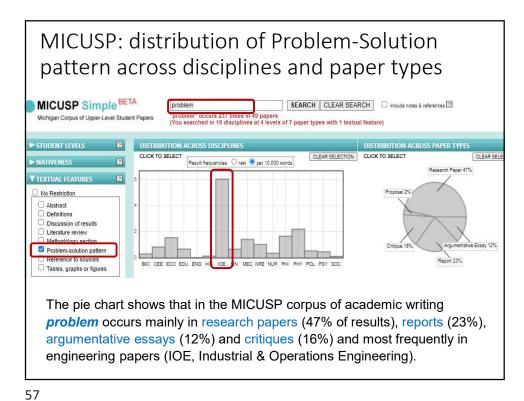












#### Problem-solution pattern

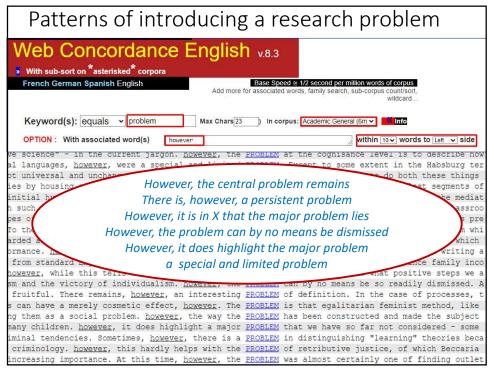
- 1. Description of a situation
- 2. Identification of a problem
- 3. Description of a solution
- 4. Evaluation of the solution

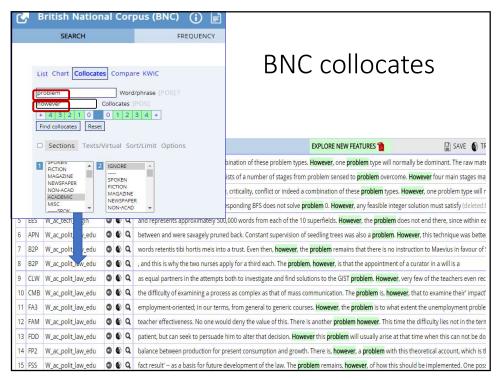
Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2009). Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks and skills Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, p 14

#### However

A 'common way to introduce a problem is to use an adversative sentence connector, such as *however* or *nevertheless*' (Swales and Feak 2009: 109)

Charles also noted the role of *however* in signalling the Problem (Charles, 2011: 56).





Problem-Solution: Transition between the moves

There has been much investigation in Mathematics into how to solve the problem efficiently as well as optimally. My original algorithm provides a quick and intuitively simple method for solving the problem.

- 1. Description of a situation
- 2. Identification of a problem
- 3. Description of a solution
- 4. Evaluation of the solution

Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2009). Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks and skills Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, p 85

Problem-Solution pattern: Describing the problem, evaluating the solution

- 1. Description of a situation
- 2. Identification of a problem
- 3. Description of a solution
- 4. Evaluation of the solution

Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2009). Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks and skills Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, p 85

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#### because

Adverbials of result/ inference are used to 'to connect the writer's claim to supporting facts' Biber et al.(1999: 881).



In the corpus of professional writing '95% of the tokens for problem ... fall into a causal category' whereas in students' corpus 'only 32% of the tokens occur in a causal relation'

Flowerdew (2003: 499).

### Problem-solution pattern: Supporting claims

Problem + reasons

Solution

This problem arises because each grid cell can only have a single attribute value and because the chosen grid dimensions are too large to resolve the spatial detail required. One answer is to use a finer grid to achieve finer detail (Walsh et al. 1987), but this causes a corresponding increase in the size of the database.

Evaluation of the solution

- 1. Description of a situation
- Identification of a problem
  - 3. Description of a solution
  - 4. Evaluation of the solution

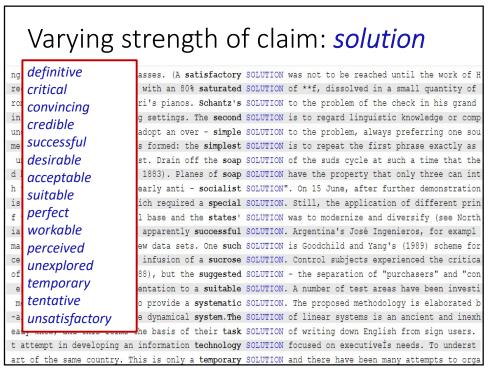
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Problem-Solution pattern: Evaluating the solution

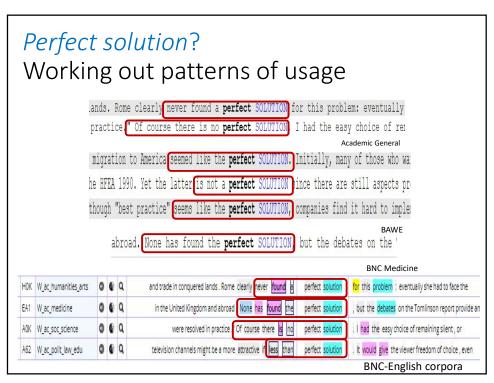
- 1. Description of a situation
- 2. Identification of a problem
- 3. Description of a solution
- 4. Evaluation of the solution

Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2009). Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks and skills Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, p 85

Evaluating the	solutio	n	
Home > Concordance > English > In	ut		
Web Concordance	e Englisl	<b>1</b> v.8.3	
With sub-sort on **asterisked** corpora French German Spanish English	Add more		ond per million words of corp. ly search, sub-corpus count/s wildcar
Keyword(s): equals ✓ solution	Max Chars 22	) In corpus: Acade	mic General (6m ✔)
OPTION: With associated word(s)			within 4 v wc
and NONE of these words			anywhere in th
Choose left Sorted By On STARTS or FAMILY searches "Choose left Right	OR V	Line Width 100 V Nu	mber of Lines 25,000 v
Euro	CALL, Online Gathering 2020	, 20-21 August	69



Solution	
Strong	Cautious
critical	acceptable
convincing	suitable
credible	temporary
definitive	tentative
successful	workable
effective	possible
optimal	
perfect?	



#### The best solution?

with testing in the wind tunnel remains the best SOLUTION for the aerodynamics department. Discussi [engineering] als and offer alternatives in order that the best SOLUTION is found. The process includes interested [politics] an time in the system, so this appears to be best SOLUTION. Of course, simply comparing point estima [business] cations of Scenario 9 In order to select the best SOLUTION, Common Random numbers are being used in [business] ese need to be analysed in order to find the best SOLUTION. In an economic sense, scheme A would be [architecture] he Proposal Microsoft Office seems to be the best SOLUTION for the Wye Valley Hospice and the Carhol [computer\_sci] hows that decentralisation is not always the best SOLUTION to development: a central state may be ne [politics] orgy and links to the High Street Agents. The best SOLUTION is therefore through a combination of mit [business] products across the countries may not be the best SOLUTION to compensate the lack of surplus, becaus [agriculture] rios to each other and see which offered the best SOLUTION. Table 6: 6 confidence interval compariso [business] s were found in style and navigation and the best SOLUTION. However as an overhaul of the primary so [psychology] tion. For maintenance purposes, however, the best SOLUTION. However as an overhaul of the primary so [psychology] tively seek the counselling she feels is the best SOLUTION for her. The variable experience has had [medicine] who felt that the proposal did not offer the best SOLUTION to meet the needs. Such as decision, howe [engineering] y or require more time, but may still be the best SOLUTION to meet the needs. Such as decision, howe [engineering]

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#### Counter-argumentation



#### Anticipating criticism

'Successful research writers construct texts by taking a novel point of view toward the issues they discuss while **anticipating readers**' **imagined reactions to those views**'

(Hyland, Jiang 2016 p 251).

Charles (2007) considered similar rhetorical functions of anticipated criticism and writers' defence as a two-move rhetorical pattern: anticipating-defence.

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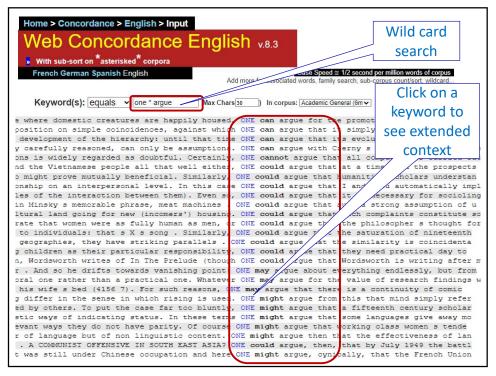
#### Counter-argumentation

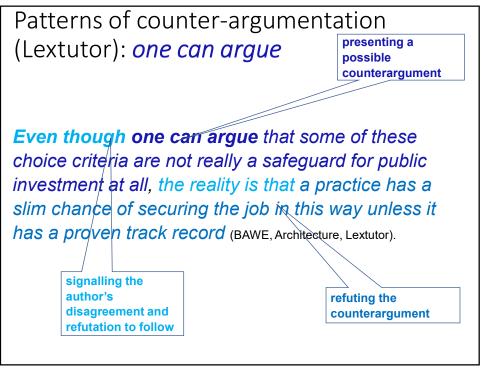
In counter-argumentation, the line of reasoning followed by the writer commonly incorporates three main moves (*plus signalling*):

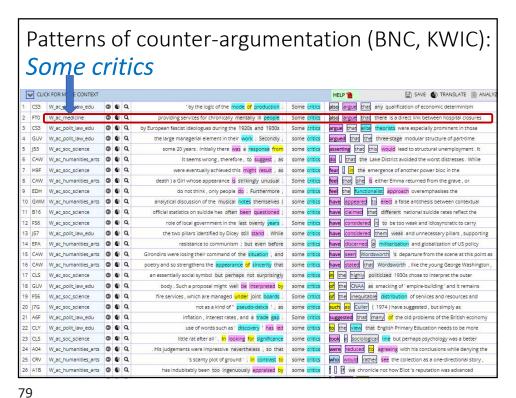
1. considering possible opposing views or counterarguments

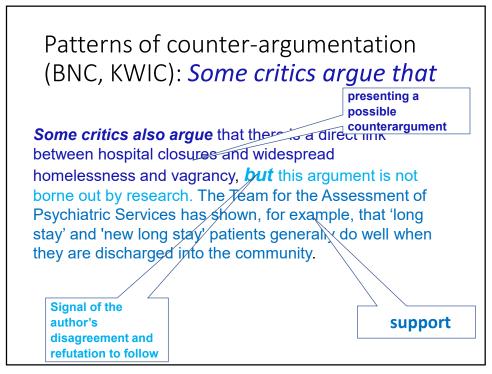
(signalling the non-acceptance of these views)

- 2. contesting or refuting the counter-arguments
- 3. reiterating one's own argument/ providing support









### Thank you!

Have you got any questions?

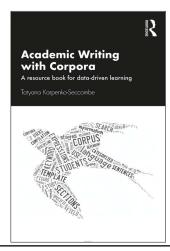


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## Similar suggestions for tasks can be found in my recent book Academic Writing with Corpora



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