Writing and Blogs: Omani college students' texts and experiences

Azita Farhadi Shamsabadi

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Dedicated to my beloved family

Acknowledgements

Abstract

This study investigates the language variation of English as foreign language (EFL) learners in the virtual environment of blogs in an Omani context. To this end, multiple data resources were used comprising student-writers' blog-texts with their comments and hyperlinks, and interviews with them. The corpus comprises eight posts in Blog 1 and fourteen posts in Blog 2, written over two semesters of an English foundation course. The study responds to four primary questions, 1. To what extent can my students' blog-texts be conceptualised as belonging to a register? 2. To what extent can my students' blog-texts be conceptualised as belonging to a genre or as an emergent genre? 3. How do the student-writers construct their voice and express themselves in their blog-texts? 4. What is the role of blogs in EFL writing classes in the context of this study? The study uses a systemic functional framework focusing on register and genre analyses. The register analysis was carried out using UAM software, through which the ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions of the blog-texts were examined. The register analysis showed that these blogs are an informative type of blogs with a weak tenor indicating the characteristics of both spoken and written modes of language. The genre analysis showed that the blog-texts are generally consistent with Rose and Martin's (2012, p.130) genre categories. It also indicated a genre hybridity in some blog-texts, through which blog-texts signify the stages of various genres. The register analysis also helped in understanding how student-writers construed their textual self-expression, voice and stance. This study contributes to the present knowledge on how meanings are constructed throughout the discourse in online environments such as blogs; it supports and advances the previous investigations regarding online genre/s and register. The findings can have implications in ELT, as teachers can identify the particular lexico-grammatical features that need to be introduced in writing classes regarding text types; it can be also a way to recognise what learners know and need to know about the genre and register of texts. The findings offer some further study in the field of language and technology, particularly the role of blogs in EFL classes.

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Chapter 1 Introduction and background of the study

In higher education in Oman, English medium universities and colleges require students to be able to read, comprehend, interpret and write skilfully. Of the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing, in my experience, as an EFL practitioner in an Omani academic context, writing skills were the weakest skills among students entering top courses such as Business, Accounting and Dentistry. There may be several reasons for this including the nature of writing classes, which tends to be product-oriented, as explicit attention is paid to teaching grammatical points and syntactic complexity; this can result in the type of text-book-based teaching that promotes "the mastery of content over comprehension and performance" (Al-Issa, 2006, p.227). Therefore writing-teachers are not encouraged to pay much attention to the crucial notions of the process of writing, its social purpose, its genres, and the sense of audience and the author's self-expression. Such an approach to teaching writing skills has led students to become skilful test-takers but less adequate in other aspects of writing (Al-Issa, 2006, p.227).

What draws my attention to blog-writing has its roots in my teaching experience in Iran. As an EFL teacher, I witnessed how student-writers struggled to master English grammar in writing classes. I also observed how the texts that student-writers texts prepared for their assignments differed from the texts that they produced in informal and relaxed contexts such as their blogs. The differences could be noticed in aspects such as self-expression, self-positioning, lexico-grammatical choices, sentence patterns and text types. For instance, student-writers' writing often lacked the charismatic word 'I' and the writer's voice, which helps to draw the audience to the text to explore the thoughts, feelings and beliefs of the writer; by sticking to the formal conventions of the written language, student-writers are generally encouraged to write impersonally, distance themselves from the audience, and write based on their tutors' desires to obtain a good score.

However, with blog-writing, learners might, arguably, find writing classes more stimulating, since this would engage them in a more active and social environment, where writing is not a solitary act. In other words, such an environment can provide student-writers with a platform (Kress, 2013) to experience collaborative learning (Taki and Fardafshari, 2012), with a sense of community, of an audience (Nardi et al., 2004) and of identity work (Qian and Scott, 2007).

Substantial research has been carried out on different aspects of language learning and virtual environments such as blogs. In the field of second language acquisition, the impact

of blog-writing on the development of language skills has received substantial attention over a decade such as: blogs in education (Shih, 2012, Downes, 2004), academic research (Wrede, 2003), and literacy in classrooms (Noytim, 2010, Arslan and Şahin-Kizil, 2010, Huffaker, 2005). In addition, the focal point of some research on blogs is the impact of blogs on the social, psychological and cultural aspects of the blog-writer' life, such as the sense of identity (Lee, 2014), of self and of self-positioning on the Web (Boyd, 2008, Ewins, 2005, Lam, 2000). However, investigating the influence of the blog context on student-writers' language use in relation to self-expression, creating stance, positioning, relating to the audience as well as the social purpose of writing, genre, has received little attention.

Examining student-writers' language variation in their blogs can be a way in which to find out if and to what extent the writers' lexico-grammatical choices are related to the context they are engaged in and to the social purpose of the text they try to achieve. This can also help in understanding how student-writers create their stance, construct their voice and self-expression and relate to the audience. Therefore, among the issues that are of interest to this study is a focus on the nature of blog-texts in terms of their linguistic features and their mutual interactions with the social purpose of the texts. This is done by drawing on Halliday's (1987) notion of register, and Rose and Martin's (2012) genre studies.

1.1   The context of Oman and personal background

Although blog-writing has been common in language teaching classes in Western countries such as the UK and USA, it has been less promoted in the domain of ELT in countries such as Oman. This reflects a variety of reasons that are beyond the focus of this study. However, one of the main concerns is that the use of technology (such as blogs, Twitter, Web 2.0) is a new trend in the EFL educational context of Oman and still rare in some academic contexts. In fact, I have not been able to find a single study about Omani EFL learners' language in relation to blogs and blog-writing up to now.

I now address the nature of ELT in Oman with particular reference to the context of this study, the College of Banking and Financial Studies (CBFS). First, I will discuss the background of ELT in Oman, then ELT issues at CBFS and the need for developing writing skills in English at CBFS, with a focus on teaching, learning and evaluating writing skills. Finally, I will discuss the new trend of teaching and learning English through technology in Oman.

1.1.1   ELT in Oman

Arabic is the dominant language in Oman and the means of instruction in governmental schools, while English is a foreign language. According to Al-Bulushi (2009) and Jabur (2008), the Arabic language is the mother tongue for a large number of Omani people and the second language for those whose first language is, for example Bulushi, Swahili or Urdu. This is because there are a large number of expatriates from different countries who are not familiar with Arabic work in Oman. Therefore, English has been a lingua franca and the main means of communication among these nations for nearly thirty years.

After the discovery of oil in the Gulf States in 1970, Oman "embraced English as an officially taught language in its institutions" in order to expand its relationships with non-Arabic and non-English countries (Al-Jadidi, 2009, p.21). This led to English being taught in both the private and governmental sectors in Oman. In the new educational system introduced by the ministry of education, English is taught in grade 1 in the governmental and in kindergarten 1 in the private sector till year 12 (Salim and Al-Jardani, 2012, p.41). However, the students coming to the College of Banking and Financial Studies, that was the context of this study, were educated in the old system. In this system, Al-Issa (2006), Al-Bulushi (2009) and Jabur (2008) explain that learning English, as a mandatory school subject within the curriculum, starts at the age of eleven and in private schools at the age of seven; and is learned through rote learning and memorisation. Al-Issa (2006, p.9) outlines the characteristics of English classes in Oman: large classes with 35-45 mixed-ability students and a lack of educational technology facilities. Classes are textbook-based and production-oriented. Furthermore, Emenyeonu (2012, p.243) defines Omani classes as being teacher-centred, which persuade "students to study for utility - a case where they memorize and regurgitate facts without understanding them just to pass exams". The same issue can be found in some higher education contexts, according to Porcaro (2011, p.102), who claims that "lecture, memorization and high stakes assessment are the norm". As an EFL teacher in an Omani context, I observed that teachers tend both to be highly dependent on textbooks and to marginalise the process of language learning and teaching, thus neglecting students' motivation and the implementation of communicative approaches. This concurs with Al-Jadidi (2009), who points out that English language teaching in Omani classes is heavily dependent on the prescribed books which eradicates creativity and motivation in the English language learning and teaching. For this reason, she argues, although students are aware of the crucial role of English language in their future career, they are hardly motivated or willing to learn it. Such a negative attitude and lack of interest hinders the learning of English.

The school textbooks in English classes are provided by the Omani Ministry of Education. However, whether or not the textbooks used out of the school context are suitable for the traditional Muslim society of Oman is a controversial matter. Al-Jadidi (2009) addresses the lack of cultural compatibility of Western prepared textbooks with Omani socio-cultural values and norms. For instance, they contain themes such as the Western culture of dating and drinking alcohol, which is socio-culturally unacceptable in Oman, but such issues are often ignored by the Ministry of Education. Al-Jadidi (2009, p.22) also refers to concerns that are raised about the cultural and practical aspects of learning English in Oman as a Muslim country. She emphasizes that Omani students do not study English to "become a part of the English speaking community or for English to become a language of social identity" (Al-Jadidi, 2009, p. 22). Despite these cultural tensions, English has been intensively taught and widely used in Oman and "the government affirmed English as Oman's only foreign language to be used officially in the country" (Al-Jadidi, 2009, p.23).

In summary, the Omani government recognises the key role of English as the language of science and the means of modernisation and Omanization, with the aim of replacing the skilled expatriate workers with Omani manpower (Al-Issa, 2005). Al-Jadidi (2009, p.23) quotes from the Ministry of Education (1995, p. A 5-1),

> The government recognises that facility in English is important in the new global economy. English is the most common language for international sectors such as banking and aviation. The global language of science and technology is also English as are the rapidly expanding international computerized databases and telecommunications networks, which are becoming an increasingly important part of academic and business life.

Consequently, English has been taught for general, academic purposes (EAP) and specific purposes (ESP) in several Omani universities, such as the first state university of Sultan Qaboos University, colleges, such as the College of Banking and Financial Studies, Higher Colleges of Technology, and other institutes in Oman.

Having explained the system of education and teaching English in Oman, I now turn to discuss if and to what extent language and technology are integrated in the Omani language classrooms and if this new approach can benefit Omani learners and language practitioners.

1.1.2   Language and technology in Oman

With the emergence of the use of ICT in language teaching and learning, Omani language practitioners and policy-makers have been trying to draw it into the educational context of

Oman. Al-Adi (2009) conducted a study to find out about incorporating the Internet into English language teaching in Oman and reported that most teachers had positive attitudes towards this; but due to certain limitations, their anxiety levels were high. As the teachers stated, these limitations were the low level of their computer literacy skills, insufficient Internet access and inadequate technical and pedagogical support. These issues prevented them from using this technology in their classes.

In spite of such barriers, Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) has adopted educational technology (Porcaro, 2011) and combined it with normal face-to-face classes. Researchers at this university have carried out several studies in this regard. For instance, Naqvi and Ajiz,(2006) investigated the attitudes of students towards WebCT and learning; they report finding that it improved the students' learning and understanding of their course materials. Al-Senaidi et al. (2009) investigated the barriers to adopting technology for teaching and learning in Oman. They report that despite the insufficient time for using the technology in classes and inadequate institutional support, web-assisted instructions and education were as efficient as face-to-face education in student achievement. Others, including Al-Musawi (2007, p.396) claim that educational technology (ET) can improve the quality of teaching and learning process. He also stresses that "Oman needs a vision by which its higher education can adapt ET [educational Technology]" (AL-Musawi, 2007, p.369).

Despite such investigations carried out in the domain of language learning and technology and research into how EFL student-learners use their language in the online environment of blog-space to construe their inner and outer world, their textual voice, self-expression and stance as well as the social purpose they pursue is still scarce and need further investigation. At this point, I will turn to the context of this study, the college of Banking and Financial Studies (CBFS). This comprises the levels of the English foundation course, teaching hours, student-recruitment, students' background and their need for writing skills.

1.2   The context of the research: College of Banking and Financial Studies (CBFS)

According to the official site of CBFS, the college is governmental and was "established under a Royal Decree (No.64/83)" in 1983. It was set up to address the needs of training highly skilled bankers and other professional manpower in finance-related areas to replace the expatriates in the similar fields. Supporting the policy of Omanization, this college has been trying to provide students with teaching and learning programs of high quality in various fields for more than 27 years. According to Al-Issa (2006), CBFS is affiliated with different internationally recognised foreign institutions: the Universities of Strathclyde and of Bradford in the UK, the UK Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, the Institute

of Canadian Bankers in Canada and the National Computing Centre in the UK. CBFS provides diplomas and undergraduate degrees as well as a Master's of Business Administration. Consequently, the students at CBFS value English as an international language and are aware of the importance of English language proficiency for their future employment. Therefore, to fulfil the students' needs, the medium of instruction at CBFS is English (Al-Bulushi, 2009).

Classes are offered in two shifts, morning and evening. The morning shift comprises students who are mainly fresh from secondary school. They are regarded as fulltime students and study for five hours a day. Except for the small minority of students who have graduated from private schools, the students' English language knowledge is limited since Arabic is the medium of instruction in primary and secondary schools. However, the evening shift comprises students who are almost all working professionals, who completed their secondary education some years ago and have been exposed to English in their workplace. These students are mature students between the ages of 18 and 40.

CBFS provides all of the students with a foundation course to prepare them for commencing their specialised degree courses. To be eligible for enrolment, depending on the level at which they hope to start, they have to obtain a score of 5.5 or above in the IELTS exam. Those who do not achieve the required score to enter their degree need to pass the appropriate foundation course. Therefore, all applicants take a placement test so as to begin at the right level. This test includes grammar, reading and writing. This leads to the point of why writing skills have received significant attention at CBFS, which I will be explained in the following sub-section.

1.2.1 The need for writing skills at CBFS

Writing skills are of high importance at CBFS since students' proficiency in their discipline is examined through their performance in written assignments. For instance, the University of Bradford Foundation programme, which prepares students to enter degrees in accounting or business and management, assesses the students through their written assignments, projects and portfolios, which require standard written English. However, in my experience as an examiner and EFL teacher, among the tested skills, students' writing skills are the weakest in the placement test. To qualify students for specialisation programmes, CBFS offers a large number of hours of writing classes in two foundation programmes: General and Pre-Degree. The General Foundation Programme is offered at six levels over a period of twelve months and prepares the students for the International English Testing System (IELTS). This programme consists of:

Level	
	• **General Foundation Course**
Level 1	•Elementary 1 •Elementray 2
Level 2	•Pre-intermediate 1 •Pre-intermediate 2
Level 3	•Intermediate 1 •Intermediate 2
Level 4	•Upper-intermediate 1 •Upper-intermediate 2
Level 5	•EAP 1 •EAP 2
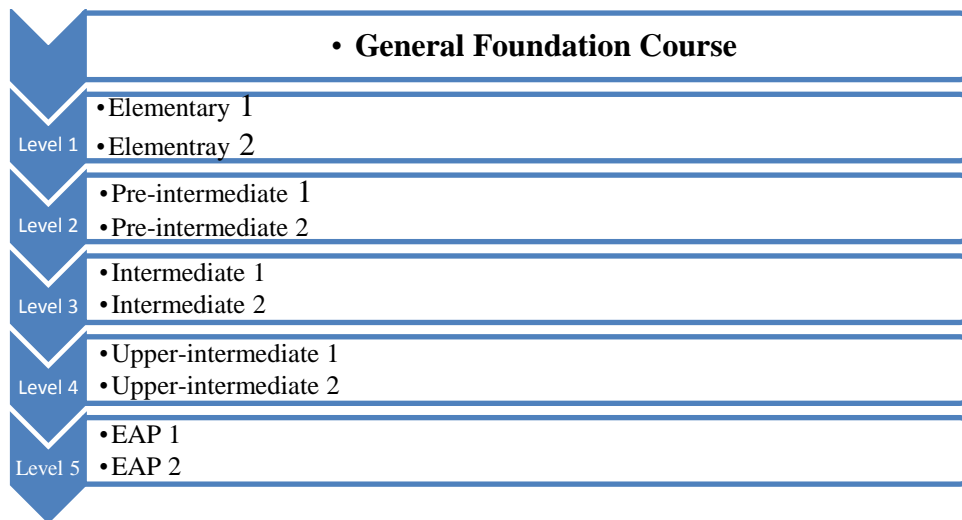
Figure 1: General Foundation Course

A Pre-foundation Course is also offered for students whose scores do not meet the requirements of the General Foundation Programme, but it is not covered here. The writing curriculum of the General Foundation Programme covers the introduction and practice of writing skills, including basic sentence structure, paragraph writing, letters, essays and research projects. However, most of the writing classes are heavily focused on teaching grammar and text organisation. Al-Bulushi (2009) raises concerns about the poor writing ability of the students at CBFS. She underlines the issue that, although students are under intensive training for more than one year, "there are a huge numbers of failures when they join their specialization"(Al-Bulushi, 2009, p.9). She further states that there is no guide for writing teachers to follow or to help their students to improve their writing skills.

Student assessment tends to be product-oriented, focusing on grammatical accuracy, which limits creativity and obliges students to base their writing on their tutor's tastes in order to progress to a higher level. In my experience, the tutors tend to be subjective when correcting students' assignments, although a systematic set of guidelines has been provided by CBFS. As a result, the students try to memorise the corrected written samples practised in class and produce them in the final exam. According to my own observations, some of the students do not even read the topic of the essay in their writing exams, but rather write what they have memorised, which almost always produces an incorrect answer to the topic of the test.

As may be expected, this approach has not been very effective in helping CBFS student-writers to improve their writing skills. These students tend to use their language as a tool to produce grammatically correct sentences in their texts and may ignore the fact that text is beyond structures and grammatical patterns; in fact, they are not likely to appreciate that all texts serve a social purpose and address a specific community and that each type of text has its own linguistic features. Therefore, they might be unable to recognise the characteristics

of genre/s and understand the reasons for making specific lexico-grammatical choices. This calls for a needs analysis of the students' writing so that the assistance given to them in the skills of writing English may be re-configured to fit their needs. Understanding student-writers' online language helps to identify what they can already do and so helps to identify the gap between what they can do and what they need to be able to do.

Introducing language and technology to writing classes can be a way in which to enhance learners' writing skills. However, this is still a new concept at CBFS and is not sufficiently developed to be introduced into the curriculum. As an EFL tutor in the college, I believe that this can be for several reasons such as: the packed curriculum that does not allow tutors to explore how they can exploit web tools and online activities in language teaching. The college has provided students with some computer clusters where students can use the Internet during breaks; however, they are often unavailable since they are reserved for teaching courses such as Mathematics and IT, and if they are free, not all of the computers are working properly. Apart from such issues, the speed of the Internet is not constant; however, this may be improving all the time. These can be among the reasons why using ICT and online web tools are not much encouraged in language classes, except for showing slides through PowerPoint, at CBFS. Thereby, the tutors and students' knowledge of web tools, such as blogs, and online activities is very limited.

The organisation of this thesis is as follows. The literature review of this study is written in two separate chapters: the first section of Chapter 2, 'Genre and register', is divided into two sections. The first deals with the notion of genre, its elements and genre analysis approaches to genre. The second section, register, outlines the concept of register, gives an overview of systemic functional linguistics perspective on language and explains the context of situation, within which language functions. In order to show that writing cannot be separated from its context, I focus on Halliday's (1987) view of language, through which he explains that language is social, and text is a means of meaning making. I then discuss the elements of the context of situation - field, tenor, and mode - the key aspects of register analysis are organised around TRANSITIVITY, MOOD and THEME/ RHEME. Chapter 3, 'Blogs', provides information about the linguistic and non-linguistic characteristics of blog-space as a platform to engage with the audience, interact with them and create a community to pursue the social purpose of blog-texts. This is followed by the role and effectiveness of blogs in EFL writing classes and student-writers' self-expression, voice and stance in blog-texts. From this, I draw my research questions and move on to the next chapter. Chapter 4 'Research methodology' covers the methodology used to collect the data. It presents the procedure of selecting the participants and explains the instruments and the actual process of gathering the data. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 present the data analyses. Chapter 5 presents the

analysis of Blog 1, Chapter 6, the analysis of Blog 2; these chapters comprise the register and genre analysis of the blog-texts along with the analyses of the interviews, hyperlinks and comments. Chapters 5 and 6 also present the analysis of student-writers' self-expression, voice and stance throughout their blog-texts. Chapter 7 is a comparison of Blog 1 with Blog 2 in terms of register and genre; this chapter finishes with a section about the role of blogs in EFL writing classes in the context of this study. Chapter 8, 'Discussion', discusses the findings in relation to the literature on genre, register and blogs. Chapter 9 draws the thesis to a conclusion.

Chapter 2 Genre and register

In the previous chapter, I discussed the context of where and why this study was motivated and ended with the aim of this study: to examine Omani EFL student-writers' language variations, in terms of genre and register, in their blogs. This chapter deals with genre and register. First, I will discuss previous studies and various views regarding language, genre, register, and their relations with one another. Following that, I will address the technical aspects of genre and register analyses that this study can benefit from. This will serve the purpose of developing an analytical framework, and will also contribute to the methodological decision I had to make in gathering my data.

2.1   Introduction

This study examines Omani EFL student-writers' language use in their blogs and, in this chapter, I explore the concepts of genre and register and how their analyses may serve the purpose of this study. In the first section, I will explain different notions of genre: first, Miller's (1984) notion of genre as social action; then, Swales'(1990, p.59) definition of genre as "a class of communicative events" where the members of community have a common purpose; and finally, Martin and Rose's (2008, p.6) view of genre as "staged", "goal-oriented" and "social". I will discuss how this study can benefit Rose and Martin's view of genre and Swales' definition of discourse community and purpose. Next, I will present the features of genre: its purpose and discourse community, and how they are inter-related. Then, I will provide an overview of Systemic Functional Linguistics approach to genre. To understand the nature of language used in the student-writers' blog-texts, I will then discuss Halliday's (1987) view of register and language in relation to its context. Finally, I will explain the metafunctions of language and the elements through which they are realised in discourse.

2.2   Genre

In recent decades, the social functionality of genre, as being purposive and staged, has been highlighted by different scholars. For instance, Miller (1984) raised the issue of social function; she states that "A genre-set represents a system of actions and interactions; they have social specific locations and functions as well as repeated or recurrent value or function" (Miller, 2012). Eggins and Martin (1997, p.236) write about the social purpose of genre and the context of culture where genre evolves: "[…] different genres are different ways of using language to achieve different culturally established tasks, and texts of different genres are texts which are achieving different purposes in the culture". They believe that the variations in the purposes of genres affect the "coherence of the text" and "the way each text unfolds" (Eggins and Martin, 1997, p.236). Martin (2001) refers to

culture as an important factor in making meaning through genre; he (2001, p.160) writes that genre constructs meaning through forming register; this is by influencing the way the elements of field, tenor and mode blend and interact with each other; in other words, the integration of these elements is under the influence of the culture in which they are functioning, which leads to the formation of purposeful schematic structures or stages of genres.

The concept of stages through which a genre unfolds has been also explored by scholars. Eggins and Martin (1997, p.236) noted that a genre can be distinguished from other genres "by the sequence of functionally distinct stages or steps through which it unfolds"; in other words, based on the function of the texts in the context of culture, genres unfold through certain steps or stages. Martin (2001, p.115) also states that "genres are staged activities" such as the procedure of "making a dental appointment, buying vegetables, telling a story etcetera". Later, Martin and Rose (2008, p.6) define genre as "a staged, goal-oriented social process": social because interactants take part in genres and use them for a certain purpose and the whole process is done through a series of stages. Martin (2009, p.13) describes genre as having three main characteristics ; genre is

> **Staged:** because it usually takes us more than one phase of meaning to work through a genre;
>
> **Goal-oriented:** because unfolding phases are designed to accomplish something and we feel a sense of frustration or incompleteness if we are stopped;
>
> **Social:** because we undertake genres interactively with others.

Martin's (1992) definition of genre is useful when examining if my student-writers' blog-texts are an instance of genre or genres; it can help me to find out if there are stages, and if so, through which stages the texts unfold, what purpose these stages pursue and how student-writers engage the readers within the discourse and relate to them. Martin's (1993, p.143) examples of the procedure and procedural Recount genres are helpful; he writes that the staging of the procedure genre involves "a Title, optionally conflated with (i.e., acting as) or followed by its Aim, optionally followed by a specification of Materials needed, followed by the Steps in the experiment". The procedural recount, which is "telling of the instantiation of a procedure", contains "Title, Aim, Record of events, and Conclusion" (Martin, 1993, p.144).

Rose and Martin (2012, p.56) refer to three major categories of genres from which this study can benefit when examining the student-writers' blog-texts: stories, factual texts and arguments. The category of stories comprises Recount, Narrative, and Anecdote; the

category of factual texts comprises Exemplum, Report, Explanation, Procedure and Protocol; the category of Argument comprises Exposition and Discussion. The stages and the elements of these genres will be expanded in Section 2.7.1

The concept of the social purposes of genres has been also highlighted in Nunan's (2008, p.57) definition of genre. He writes that any type of genre, from a simple recipe to political debates and literary texts, consists of a particular "structure and grammatical form that reflects its social purpose". To identify genres, Nunan (2008, p.57) refers to three characteristics which each genre should share: "a common communicative purpose", a similar "overall structure" and the same "grammatical and lexical features". This implies that not only the purpose of the genre but also its particular lexico-grammatical features can be recognised by the members of the community where the genre is used.

Drawing on Martin's (1992, p.505) view of genre, scholars have tried to identify the stages and purpose of genres. For instance, Taboada (2011, p.247) identified the stages of online movie reviews genre as "Descriptive stages" and "an obligatory Evaluation stage". Gardner and Nesi (2012, P.7) also used the concept of staging and purpose when classifying their students' written assignments; they identified and classified the texts in terms of their similar stages and purpose and grouped them into particular genres; then based on such similarities among those genres, they grouped genres into genre families. Therefore, the notion of genre as purposive and staged functioning in the context of culture seems to be helpful when examining if the ecology of blogs can provide a purposeful setting through which student-writers' genre can emerge; it can also be useful to unfold the stages which the student-writers go through to construct meanings in their texts and if the characteristics of the virtual environment of blogs can influence their language use within this community.

This leads to the next important aspect of genre: the discourse community. The notion of purpose is central to Swales' (1990) definition of a discourse community. Swales (1990, p.24) states that people in a discourse community share similar knowledge and a set of similar goals. For Swales (1990, pp.24-27) a discourse community

1. 'has a broadly agreed set of common public goals'[…],
2. 'has mechanisms of intercommunication among its members'[…],
3. 'uses its participatory mechanisms primarily to provide information and feedback',
4. 'utilizes and hence possesses one or more genres in the communicative furtherance of its aims',
5. 'has acquired some specific lexis'[…],

6. 'has a threshold level of members with a suitable degree of relevant content and discoursal expertise'.

Drawing on Swales' definition above, blog-space along with its content, as a genre (Miller and Shepherd, 2004) will have its own related discourse community whose members, consisting of the blog-writer and the blog-visitors, can be related to each other through shared goals and a set of particular communication techniques and skills. This then raises the questions of how such a community is constructed in blogs, how it can be sustained and what purpose it pursues. Barton (2007, pp.75-76) offers a different explanation of discourse community; for Barton, a discourse community is a means of connecting various groups of people through language, whether it is written or spoken. He refers to the notion of discourse community as

> a group of people who have texts and practices in common, whether it is a group of academics, or the reader of teenage magazines. In fact, discourse community can refer to several overlapping groups of people; it can refer to the people a text is aimed at; it can be the people who read a text; or it can refer to the people who participate in a set of discourse practices both by reading and by writing.

This definition suggests that a discourse community is a social network where members are engaged in rhetorical actions and pursue a common goal by producing or receiving texts. That is, being a member of a discourse community is not limited to producing texts but contains listeners and readers too. Therefore, this is the purpose of the community which determines the use of language and eventually the texts. In this network, knowledge of the conventions and having the same interests help the members fit into the community.

Taking Swales'(1990) characteristics and Barton's (2007) views of discourse community into account, it can be said that Swales' view is more closely related to academic contexts where the members follow specific rules and conventions to accomplish a certain function for a specific purpose. This purpose can be achieved through the use of certain types of lexis suitable for a specific type of discoursal content in a particular context, whereas Barton's view is not limited to any specific context or participants or any specific discoursal content. Considering the dynamic environment of blogs where the writer and blog-visitors interact through writing and commenting, Barton's definition of discourse community encompasses various groups of people and contexts, whether academic or non-academic, which can be related to the discourse community evolving in the blog throughout the period that the blog is alive. Such a community can contain both the specific audience of the written texts

involved in various socio-cultural discourse activities through writing, reading and commenting in blogs and those who just lurk. In such a dynamic environment, purpose is one of the key elements in constructing and maintaining the community. Swales' (1990) view of purpose in using a genre is useful when examining student-writers' blog-texts. As Swales (1990, p.24) notes, this is "the set of common public goals" which can lead to constructing a discourse community where the members possess a particular set of genres. As a result, it is necessary to investigate if blog-writing can help a discourse community to emerge; a community through which student-writers follow a set of rules based on the conventions of achieving a common purpose.

In this section, I have discussed the characteristics of genre as being purposeful (Swales, 1990), as happening in the context of culture (Martin, 2001) and as emerging through staged activities (Martin and Rose, 2008). Also, I have explained the importance of the concept of discourse community defined by Swales (1990) and Barton (2007) in genre theory. Following the above definitions of genre, I will consider genre as "a staged, goal-oriented, purposeful activity" with an associated discourse community (Martin, 2001, p.155), since my student blog-writers, as members of a community, are involved in the social activity of constructing and exchanging meanings within the context of culture and situation. Thus, in the first step, genre analysis offers a useful framework to pursue the purpose of this study.

2.3   Genre analysis approaches to teaching writing

Genre-based analyses have been used in various aspects of teaching and research. For instance, in many countries, practitioners exploit these approaches for pedagogical purposes to design "their syllabuses, materials and curricula", at any level of education for both native and non-native English speakers (Derewianka, 2003, p.134). Contributions to genre have been made by various scholars such as Swales (1990), on the conceptualisation of genre by proposing the concept of discourse community and a classification of genre features, Nunan (2008), on the different functions of genres in speech and various texts, and Bahatia (2002b), with his suggestion of a comprehensive model of genre and register analysis.

Bhatia (2002b, p.4) believes that the variations in genre analyses are the result of different motivations for applying genre analysis. These, according to Derewianka (2003, p.134), might be investigations into "the social, cultural and historical contexts where the genre operates" or attempts at "understanding the nature of genre themselves". However, to design a framework for genre analysis, it is first necessary to understand the most important objectives of genre theory, that is

> to represent and account for the seemingly chaotic realities of the world; to understand and account for the private intentions of the author, in addition to socially recognized communicative purposes; to understand how language is used in and shaped by socio-critical environment; and to offer effective solutions to pedagogical and other applied linguistic problems (Bhatia, 2002b, p.5).

Bhatia's points are very useful when framing an analysis for this study since the focal points of this study are: how student-writers express themselves and construct their voice, their understanding of the world and their experiences through their linguistic choices in their blog-texts, how they create a relationship with their audience and interact with them, what their motives and purposes are when writing in their blog, what reason underlies their lexico-grammatical choices in their blog-texts and whether writing in a different mode, that is blogs, with a wide sense of audience can affect their linguistic choices when constructing meanings in their texts.

Hyon (1996) refers to three approaches of genre analysis which have influenced scholars' and practitioners' views of genre: ESP, North American New Rhetoric Studies and Australian Systemic functional linguistics. However, the variation among these approaches can be the result of the variation in what they are concerned with in genre analysis, "the roles of texts in social communities, or the ways that texts are organised to reflect and construct these communities" (Hyland, 2002b, p.114). Also, it can be said that these approaches are variations of one another with different theoretical perspectives but without contradicting each other. For instance, Flowerdew (2005, p.324) writes that New Rhetoric and ESP "should be seen as complementary to one another as they both recognise the importance of the socio-cultural context and linguistic knowledge for shaping a genre, albeit to quite differing degrees". Similarly, Flowerdew and Wan (2010, p.79) state that ESP and SFL are similar in being rather " more linguistic approaches" than the New Rhetoric approach which is "more contextually oriented". In this study, I am concerned with the language variation of Omani student-writers' in their blogs; I explore how my student-writers make meanings through their linguistic choices in their blog-texts. To examine their linguistic choices in relation to the social purpose of their texts and find out the reasons behind them, I need a more linguistically oriented approach such as systemic functional linguistics.

The Systemic functional analysis approach to genre analysis, according to Paltridge (1994, p.280) and Hyon (1996), has roots in Halliday's functional view of language. For Halliday,

language is "the ability to 'mean' in the situation types, or social contexts, that are generated by culture" (1987, p.34). This definition stems from a social semiotic view of language where, according to Eggins (2004, p.3), every use of language has a function which is making meaning: meaning which can be affected by the social and cultural context, within which it is functioning. Additionally, in this view, "language use has a semiotic process, a process of making meanings by choosing" (Eggins, 2004, p.3). Martin (2009, p.4) stresses that the focus of this approach "is on paradigmatic relations - on what you say in relation to what you could have said". This point is interesting when examining the student-writers' texts in blogs where student-writers are free from the boundaries of formal language prescribed in the classroom. In blogs, they may use language differently and this can provide evidence of how they think through the language and how they choose the features of the language to achieve their purposes.

In terms of genre, systemic functional linguists claim that language is social, interactive and a means of doing something and meaning making. Thompson (2004, pp.42-43) defines genre as "register plus communicative purpose"; that is "what interactants are doing through language, and how they organise the language event, typically in recognisable stages, in order to achieve that purpose". He explains that socio-cultural factors affect what individuals are going to do through language; in fact, they directly influence what they say. He also claims that genre functions by implementing the "resources of a register (or more than a register) in particular patterns to achieve certain communicative goals" (2004, p.43). By patterns, he is referring to a group of linguistic resources (grammar) which are necessitated by the meanings individuals make. This is consistent with the view that there is mutual interaction between the components of genres and the elements of register when producing discourse.

As discussed above, the motivation behind the analysis of genre plays a critical role in choosing the type of genre analysis approach; in the domain of SFL, genres are considered as a social process and unfold through the stages that the users go through to achieve a goal. This last definition of genre, the SFL approach, suits the analytical framework of this study, since the aim is to investigate what student-writers do through the use of language to construct meaning in their texts. This involves examining their language choice and function in relation to the context in which they are interacting with their audience.

Attending to the features of the context of situation and culture as important factors which can influence the use of language, it can be true to say that genre analysis does not suffice to achieve the purpose of this study. Genre analysis maps factors responsible for an emerging

genre, such as purpose and discourse community, and it shows how a text unfolds; however, it provides little knowledge about the context where language is functioning.

In this study, it is believed that the language produced in blog-texts and the context where it is functioning are in mutual interaction and can help to determine one another's features and functions. As a result, it is important to understand how context and its features are defined and characterised in the literature. The concept of context is highlighted by Malinowski (2003, p.6)

> Since the whole world of 'things-to-be expressed' changes with the level of culture, with geographical, social and economic conditions, the consequence is that the meaning of a word must be always gathered not from a passive contemplation of this word, but from an analysis of its functions, with reference to the given culture.

Taking Malinowski's view of the role of context in constructing meaning and its interpretation, it is necessary to examine the context of situation where student-writers used the language to construct meanings in their blogs. In SFL, context, its features and its relation to language can be explained through the concept of register. According to Martin (2001, p.160) "it is impossible to find examples of recognisably human activity without register", which I will discuss in the following sub-section.

2.4   Register

Malinowski (2003, p.6) writes, "utterance and situation are bound up inextricably with each other and the context of situation is indispensable for the understanding of the words". Halliday (1987, p.28) stresses that language cannot exist in isolation and lives through functioning in a context. Halliday defines the context of situation in relation to language social functions; these functions, according to Martin and Rose (2008, p.11), are responsible for "enacting speakers' relationships, construing their experiences of social activity, and weaving these elements and construal together as meaningful discourse". These elements in Halliday's (1987) terms are interpersonal, ideational and textual metafunctions of language which organise "the systems and structures of the language" (Martin, 1992, p.145). These metafunctions will be discussed in Chapter 3. To understand these metafunctions, it is first necessary to know the notion of the context of situation and its elements. According to Halliday (1987, p.28), individuals experience language "in relation to a scenario, some background of persons and actions and events from which the things which are said derive their meaning". This is the situation. Further, he explains that situations vary from one

another in three aspects: "what is actually taking place", "who is taking part" and "what part the language is playing" (Halliday, 1987, p.31). The context of situation has been termed as register and it is shaped by the elements of field, tenor and mode (Halliday, 1987).

Field is "the on-going activity and the particular purposes that the use of language is serving within the context of activity" (Halliday, 1987, p.62). Martin (2001, p.173) defines it "*as the cultural activity or subject matter with which the writers/speakers are concerned*" (Martin, 2001, p.173) (emphasis as in the original). Thus, field is concerned with not only the action but also the reason why participants are involved in it. Later, Martin (2009, p.13) notes that fields tend to be characterised by two aspects: "what people are doing and what they are doing it to". According to Martin (2009, p.13), field can be realised through probabilistic and indexical realisations. In probabilistic realisations, "field is realized by making certain experiential choices far more likely than others"; here the shared and exchanged lexical items illustrate the field of the discourse. The indexical realisations are "words, very technical ones, which tend to be used almost exclusively in a given field" (Martin, 2009, p.13).

Tenor is the "interrelations among the participants (status and role relationships)" (Halliday, 1987, p.62). Martin (2001, p.152) describes it as "the way you relate to other people when doing what you do". He raises three key factors: status, contact and affect (Martin, 2001). Status is the varying power relations among members of society. This shows equality or inequality of the participants' social ranks. Martin (1992, p.526) explains contact in accordance with how much the participants are involved with each other, highlighting "alignment and affinity with others" (Martin, 2001, p.160). Affect, refers to the time when "the language is emotionally charged" which can be categorised in terms of the degree of negativity to positivity (Martin, 1992, p.526). In brief, tenor is the function of structure in discourse which reveals 'the status', 'nature', 'roles' and the relationship among the participants (Kołata, 2010, p.61). How blog-writers relate with their audience through their texts is one concern of this study; to tackle this issue, I will only briefly examine the linguistic features of their texts in relation to power relation and involvement (see Chapter 4).

Mode is defined by Halliday and Hasan (1989, p.44) as "what role language is playing"; it is "the channel or wavelength selected, which is essentially the function that is assigned to language in the total structure of the situation"(Halliday, 1987, p.110). This channel consists of two means, spoken or written. Martin highlights the notion of interaction in his definition of mode. "Mode is a semiotic construct and functions in our culture as a resource for constructing interaction" (Martin, 1992, p.514). He adds that the channel individuals choose

to transmit information through interaction makes texts vary in a given culture (2001, p.153).

Martin (1992) identifies two types of meaning which can be constructed through mode: interpersonal and experiential; "since symbolic reality (i.e. text/process) has the function of constructing social reality, mode is oriented to both interpersonal and experiential meaning" (Martin, 1992, p.506); "interpersonally, mode mediates the semiotic space between monologue and dialogue" (Martin, 1992, p.509). This is the effect of mode on interaction and communication. Martin (2009, p.14) stresses that modes can create "barriers" among interlocutors which will have an impact on their relation in the discourse. This issue is of interest to this study, since blog-writers sometimes open the text with a question as if in face-to-face conversation but this changes to a monologue, which can be because of the imposed restrictions on the virtual environment of blog-space such as the delay in exchanging information and low degree of turn taking in blog-writing. The second dimension, the experiential mode, "mediates semiotic space between action and reflection" which is the abstract way through which "a text constructs or accompanies its field" (Martin, 1992, p.509). In other words, mode refers to "the degree to which language is part of or constitutive of what is going on" or "how much of the social action is constructed by language" (Martin, 1992, pp.516-517). As a result, in Martin's (2009, p.14) terms, mode can affect "the relation between language and what it is talking about".

Halliday (1987) explains how language, its function and the context where it is happening can be realised through field, tenor and mode. Halliday (1987, p.31) stresses that field, tenor and mode are "a conceptual framework for representing the social context as the semiotic environment in which people exchange meanings" which makes it possible to predict "the semantic properties of texts associated with it" (1987, p.110). Similarly, Bruce (2008, p.20) points out that the paradigm of field, tenor and mode can be a suitable approach "for the analysis of transactional discourse (where the social and interactive element of the discourse is in the foreground and changing)".

The roles of field, tenor and mode in the discourse, according to Martin (1992, p.147) "are explored in terms of their realisations as different patterns of language forms and genre structures". Eggins and Martin (1997, p.233) stress that these three dimensions of the context of situation can be transferred to the text, which "is the weaving together simultaneously of several different strands of meanings". These meanings can refer to 'a reality' (ideational), the author's relation with the audience and their attitudes to the subject matter (interpersonal) and how the text is "organised as a linguistic event" (textual) (Eggins and Martin, 1997, p.233). Laying emphasis on the relationship between the elements of the

context and language, Eggins and Martin (1997, p.239) write that Halliday's model of language is 'naturally' related to the organisation of context, with ideational meaning used to construct field (the social action), interpersonal meaning used to negotiate tenor (the role structure) and textual meaning used to develop mode (symbolic organisation). Martin (1999, p.37) shows how metafunctions organise the social context and language in his model of context :
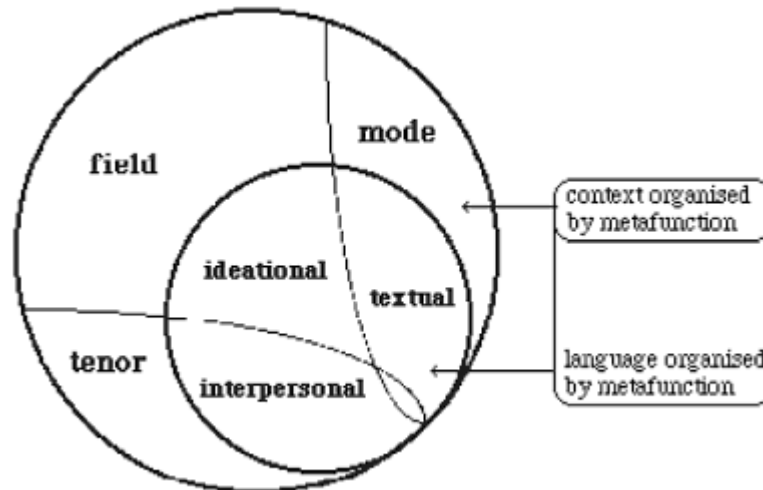
Figure 2: Context (Martin, 1999, p.37)

Through this model, Martin (2001) shows the tight relation between the register variables and the metafunctions of language. He states that it is through "the relationship between register variables and metafunctions that the predictability of context from text or text from context is possible" (Martin, 2001, p.178). Eggins and Martin (1997) refer to this relationship as realisation, which can be examined from the dimensions of context and language. Examining this relationship from the context perspective sheds light on the key function of the context variables (field, tenor and mode) in determining and organising the metafunctions of the language (ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings); however, from the language perspective, it will reveal how the various metafunctions of the language (ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings) can "construct different types of field, tenor and mode" (Eggins and Martin, 1997, p.241).This implies that register consists of the organisation of both context and language.

The notion of register is of great importance in this study since examining the characteristics of the context of blogs - where language is functioning - will make it possible to understand the linguistic features of the language produced in student-writers' blog-texts. Halliday (1987, p.32) states that analysing register - the context of situation - can help to establish "what situational factors determine what linguistic features". Using Halliday's framework of field, tenor and mode can help to show how the students' language use varies in relation to a varied social context such as the blog. The patterns and the grammatical

systems through which field, tenor and mode are realised in texts will be discussed in Chapter 3.

As discussed above, register analysis provides linguistic evidence about the subject matter of the text, the participants involved in it and the role that language has taken in the produced text; however, it pays little or no attention to the social purpose of the discourse. This will raise the issue that a combination of genre and register analysis can provide more detail about the language used by student-writers in their blog-texts.

Scholars such as Eggins and Martin have used register and genre analysis together, and explained how to do this. As Eggins and Martin (1997, p.231) write, "the first step to register and genre analysis would be to describe the linguistic patterns (words and structures)" to find out about the differences between texts. They categorise these differences into three groups: "the degree of formality of the language" (the extent to which text the text is close to the spoken or written mode of the language), "the amount of attitude/evaluation expressed by the text-producer" (the role the author of the text has taken in the text), and "the background knowledge drawn on in the texts" (the amount of the 'technical or everyday' language the author used in the text, based on the knowledge of the audience and the topic), (Eggins and Martin, 1997, p.231). As they suggest, the next step is to "*explain*" the recognised linguistic differences in the first step (Eggins and Martin, 1997, p.233). This procedure will help understand the connection between the linguistic choices and the socio-cultural purpose, genre, of the discourse: the point being that "the linguistic features selected in a text will encode contextual dimensions, both of its immediate context of production and of its generic identity, what task the text is achieving in the culture" (Eggins and Martin, 1997, p.237). Therefore, register and genre analysis systematically specify the linguistic features that construct the stages and eventually the genre of a text.

2.4.1 **Summary**

Taking Halliday's view (1987, p.32) that "All language functions in the context of situations" and the notion that the features of the context of situation determine the lexico-grammatical system, genre and register analysis can be useful to unpack the student-writes' blog-texts and their layers. In other words, the relation and interaction between field, tenor and mode with genre in order to construct meanings in blog-texts is of high importance in this study. Martin's model shows the relation between the elements of context and genre:
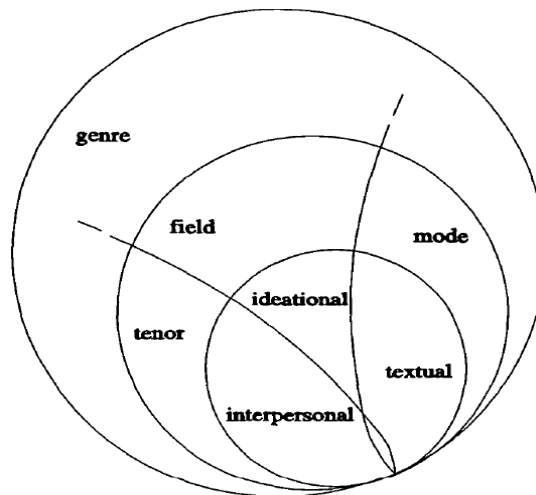
Figure 3: Modelling tenor, mode and field as the realisation of genre (Martin 1992, p. 157)

As illustrated in this model, genre and the elements of the context of situation affect language users' choices. This implies that each genre obliges certain types of lexico-grammatical choices. Genres are staged, so I will investigate whether student-writers' choices differ at each stage and how these choices helped to construct meanings in their texts. This can help to find out the relationships between the purpose of language choices and the cultural features of the context of situation (field, tenor and mode). This includes whether the readers' thoughts and expectations influenced or determined the language use in their texts, which may explain the organisation and style of their texts too.

The concept of context is not limited to texts in blogs in this study; looking at blogs as a dynamic environment where the student-writers are involved in constant interaction with their audience, the context has two various aspects: the linguistic aspect, the linguistic elements within the blog-text, and the non-linguistic elements offered by blog-space: such as photos or music, through which the author can construct meaning; these elements are both needed to understand and interpret the blog-texts. As a result, both the linguistic and non-linguistic elements of the context should be analysed to gain a thorough understanding of what blog-texts are about (field), who are involved (tenor) and how language is used in texts (mode). As my student-writers' language variation in their blogs is the main focus of this study, the non-linguistic elements of their blogs will not be examined thoroughly. I will only explore the hyperlinks in their blogs to gain a better insight into the discourse community.

In the following section, I give an overview of the elements used in the analytical framework of this study. I will first summarise the SFL view of the layers of language including the layers of context and genre. Then, I will review the notion of text within SFL and describe functional grammar and its essential role in shaping texts. The section, then,

explores the clause as the main unit of syntax, along with the systems that organise it in discourse. This will include a detailed discussion of the metafunctions of language - ideational, interpersonal and textual - and the systems of TRANSITIVITY, MOOD and THEME [1] through which meanings are constructed in clauses and eventually in text. I will also discuss the categories of genre proposed by Rose and Martin (2012).

2.5   A systemic functional view of language, context and genre

Systemic functional grammar views language as being context-bound and varying from one situation to another; in this approach, language is structured according to four strata which are closely related: context, semantics, lexico-grammar and phonology (Halliday, 1997). Halliday and Matthiessen (2006, p.375) explain that "Contextual features are realized by preselections within the semantic system, semantic features are realised by preselection within the lexicogrammatical system, and lexicogrammatical features are realised by preselection within the phonological/ graphological system".

As noted previously, Halliday (2002, p.55) writes that the layer of social context is organised by three essential elements: "a ***field*** of social action, a ***tenor*** of role relationships, and a ***mode*** of symbolic organisation" (emphasised as in original): the elements that, in Halliday's terms, form the register of discourse. Halliday (1997, p.58) writes that each of "these elements in the semiotic structure of the situation activates the corresponding component in the semantic system, creating in the process a semantic configuration, a grouping of favoured and foregrounded options from the total meaning potential that is typically associated with the situation type in question. This semantic configuration is what we understand by the *register*" (emphasis as in the original).

Halliday (1987, p.68) considers register within the semantic stratum, where its elements, field, tenor and mode, are realised through the ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings: the meanings constructed through the linguistic features of the language in discourse. In other words, these meanings realise the elements of the context that are "realized by grammatical systems (in combination)", Lukin et al. (2011, p.193). This implies that the semantic stratum contains the linguistic variations of the language through which the register of the language can be investigated.

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[1] I follow the convention in SFL described by Fawcett (2010) through which the names of system networks are written in capital letters and the names of the features in the networks in lower case letters.

From a slightly different perspective, Martin (1992, p.494) interprets context "as a system of social processes". He provides a model of language with six layers. Martin sees the language strata of context, semantics, lexico-grammar and phonology, introduced by Halliday, as being in contact with two upper layers, genre and ideology. Figure 4 shows these upper layers are above the layer of context, or in Martin's term register, which manifest the lexico-grammatical choices of the language users in discourse semantics.
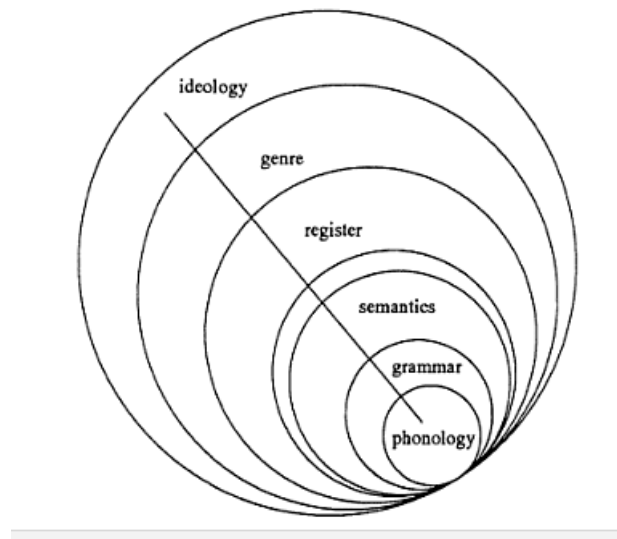
Figure 4: Language and its semiotic environment (Martin, 1992, p.469)

Through this model Martin (1992, p.496) stresses that meaning is not limited to any specific level and "is constructed on all levels". He notes

> Thus the tendency at the level of phonology to focus on syllables and phonemes, at the level of lexicogrammar to focus on the clause, at the level of discourse semantics to focus on an exchange or "paragraph", at the level of register to focus on a stage in a transaction, at the level of genre to focus on whole texts and at the level of ideology to focus on discourses manifested across a range of texts (Martin, 1992, p.496).

This view suggests that there is a close relation between the socio-cultural level of language, genre, and its linguistic level, register. In Martin's model, "register (encompassing field, tenor and mode) contextualizes language and is in turn contextualized by genre" (Christie and Martin, 2005, p.7). My study can benefit from Martin's view of context since the layer of genre can be the manifestation of the linguistic choices of the student-writers in their blog-texts. In other words, genre embodies the internal layers of language including their relations and interactions with one another - which leads to a structured and organised discourse, based on the socio-cultural purpose of the language users. Definitions of the

elements of context, field, tenor and mode have been given in the section on Genre and Register. Before describing the linguistic layer of language, I will review the concept of text and discuss the notion of functional grammar and its role in structuring text in SFL.

2.5.1 Text and grammar

Halliday (2002, p.45) views a text as more than a string of sentences:

> A text, as we are interpreting it, is a semantic unit, which is not composed of sentences but is realized in sentences. A text is to the semantic system what a clause is to the lexicogrammatical system and a syllable to the phonological system.

Other scholars highlight the notions of interaction and context in their definitions of text. Eggins (2004, p.23) defines texts as "authentic products of social interaction" within a socio-cultural context; therefore, they "need to be analysed as metafunctions of the culture they in large measure construct" (Martin, 1992, p.492). The relation between text and context can be explored through examining the lexico-grammar of the language used in text; in particular, the linguistic features which are organised and explored through grammar. The term grammar is also referred to as 'lexico-grammar' showing that it is both systemic and functional. At this point it is important to clarify what Halliday means by lexico-grammar. Halliday (1969, p.180) describes grammar as a system where a system is "a set of things of which one must be chosen, together with a statement of conditions under which the choice is available". For Halliday, grammar is "a very large network of systems" including a large number of options through which individuals can make their own choices according to the context they are involved in, when exchanging meanings. In Halliday's terms, this is the grammar "that formalizes the notion of choice in language" (Halliday, 1969, p.180) and determines how these choices should be arranged and integrated. Halliday's view of language and his understanding of grammar suggest that each sentence, whether spoken or written, has a purpose that is achieved by the use of grammar in the social context. This underlines the claim that analysing grammar can help to explain the form of linguistic features in relation to the functions they have in the context they are produced.

In other words, the systemic functional approach takes language as a system that is a response to our functional demands in context, and highlights the key function of language, which is communication. Therefore, "there must be aspects of the grammar that can be identified as enabling us to interact through language" in a specific context (Thompson, 2004, p.45). To understand the function of a language, its syntactic elements should be examined. This is possible through capturing the features of the clause and what is happening there.

Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p.10) explain, "The clause is the central processing unit in the lexicogrammar - in the specific sense that it is in the clause that meanings of different kinds are mapped into an integrated grammatical structure". Fawcett (2013, p.47) states that the clause is "the major unit of syntax". In this framework, clauses can be simplex or complex units. Eggins (2004, pp.255-256) describes a clause simplex as referring "to single clause units (for sentences of only one clause)" while a clause complex is a "clause cluster of two or more clauses". Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p.365) refer to the role of clause complexes as being "to 'choreograph' the rhetorical development of text in real time". They illustrate the role of clause complexes in an extract of a Narrative, which makes the discourse more conversational than written:

> [2] ///And Joanne came up//**and** she <u>said</u>,// 'Oh, can you do this?'//**and** I <u>said</u>,// 'Look you're at the end of a very long line;//be prepared to wait!'//**and** she <u>said</u>,// 'Well, she's at the Oncology clinic right now.'//**and** I <u>said</u>,// 'But these have to be done as well,//[…] (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, p.365).

This is an interesting issue to examine when analysing my student-writers' texts and can provide a systematic way to find out how they organise their choices in different types of clauses and how their choices affect their texts in terms of organisation and interpretation.

Up to this point, language has been defined as a context-bound phenomenon; the concept of context in SFL and how its elements contribute to meaning making have been described. It has been shown that the constructed meanings are realised through the lexico-grammatical choices of the authors in the text. Then, the notions of text and functional grammar as a tool for patterning and organising the author's choices have been discussed. Also, clause, as an important unit of syntax, and its types have briefly been reviewed.

Referring to the meanings constructed in a clause, Fawcett (2013, p.48) points out that any type of clause is formed by "several strands of meaning, each being of a different type and each serving a different function". These strands of meanings, in Martin's (1992) terms, are the systems through which ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions of language can be organised. In other words, they are the social functions that language is used for: expressing experiences, creating and maintaining relationships as well as arranging texts. Martin writes:

> in grammar of the English clause, the system of TRANSITIVITY
> organises experiential oppositions, MOOD organises interpersonal

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[2] The symbol // is used to show the clause boundaries in SFL.

oppositions, and THEME textual ones. Critically, these three systems cross-classify the clause, which selects relatively independently for TRANSITIVITY, MOOD and THEME (Martin, 1992, p.9).

In this study, I am concerned with the elements of context (field, tenor and mode) and semantic strata (the ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions) as well as how they are realised through the lexico- grammatical patterns (TRANSITIVITY, MOOD and THEME); examining these issues can help to find out how my student-writers construct meanings through their choices in their text. How the metafunctions of language are defined and the systems they are realised in are explained in the following section.

2.6   The metafunctions of language

2.6.1   The ideational metafunction of the clause

For Halliday (1973, p.99), the ideational component of grammar is "concerned with the expression of experience, including both the processes within and beyond self - the phenomenon of external world and those of consciousness - and the logical relations deducible from them". Fawcett (2013, p.51) states that through this strand of meaning, individuals "interpret - or construe the world". The ideational metafunction of the clause has two other constituents: the experiential and the logical.

According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p.169), "experientially, the clause construes a quantum of change as a **figure**, or configuration of a process, participants and any attendant circumstances" (emphasis as in the original). In other words, TRANSITIVITY, refers to the choice of processes, which according to Fawcett (2013, p.49) is "a part of semantic description of a clause" and the organisation of the participants, who are "directly involved" in the process, as well as different types of circumstances, which "are attendant on" the process (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, p.170). According to Fawcett (2013, p.91), TRANSITIVITY is concerned with

1. the TYPE of **Process,**
2. the NUMBER of **Participants Roles (PR)** in each type of Process,
3. the TYPES of **Participants Roles,** and
4. whether the PRs are **overt** or **covert** (emphasis as in the original).

The TRANSITIVITY analysis of a clause is shown in Eggin's example in Table 1. This table shows the types of circumstance, participant and process used in the clause.

Table 1: TRANSITIVITY analysis of a clause (Eggins, 2004, p.211)

But	George	in Switzerland	they	give	you	a cognac.
		Circumstance: location	Actor	Process: material	Beneficiary	Goal

As shown above, the nominal group *they* is a participant called an 'Actor' as it does an action; the verbal group *give* is a doing process called the 'material process'; the nominal group *you* is another participant called the 'Beneficiary' indicating for whom something was done; *Cognac* is also a participant affected by the doing process and is the 'Gaol'.

As Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p.170) write, TRANSITIVITY "construes the world of experience into a manageable set of **PROCESS TYPES**" (emphasised in the original). A process, according to Fawcett (2013, p.49), "functions as the pivotal element of a situation" and can be of six types: material process, "happening and doing" (Martin et al., 1997, p.102); mental process, "perception, cognition, affection" (Martin et al., 1997, p.102); and relational, "attributive, identifying" (Martin et al., 1997, p.102). According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p.171), behavioural processes are between material and mental processes, which are "the outer manifestations of inner workings"; and verbal processes are between mental and relational; processes, which are the "symbolic relationships constructed in human consciousness and enacted in the form of language" and existential processes are between relational and material processes " by which phenomena of all kinds are simply recognised to be" (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, p.171). Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) divide participants into those who are directly/indirectly involved in the process and those who are obliquely involved in it. The type and role of each the participants are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Process types, their meanings and characteristics participants (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, p.260)

PROCESS TYPE	category meaning	Participants, directly involved	Participants, obliquely involved
material: action event	'doing' 'doing' 'happening'	Actor, Goal	Recipient, Client; Scope; Initiator; Attribute
behavioural	'behaving'	Behaver	Behaviour
mental: perception cognition desideration emotion	'sensing' 'seeing' 'thinking' 'wanting' 'feeling'	Senser, Phenomenon	
verbal	'saying'	Sayer, Target	Receiver; Verbiage
relational: attribution identification	'being' 'attributing' 'identifying'	Carrier, Attribute Identified, Identifier; Token, Value	Attributor, Beneficiary Assigner
existential	'existing'	Existent	

As shown in Table 2, each type of process assigns a particular role to each the participants, which causes the clauses to vary. Martin et al. (1997, p.103) define the types of participants according to the type of clause:

In material clauses, four types of participants can appear: Actor, Goal, Beneficiary and Range. The "**Actor**" is "the one doing the material deed"; the "**Goal**" is "a participant impacted by a doing", as in "*she made the coffee*"; the "**Beneficiary**" is a participant benefiting from the doing (the one given to or done for) or else (in clauses without a Goal)" (Martin et al., 1997, p.103), for example, "She gave his aunt a teapot" (Martin et al., 1997, p.105); a Range is "a participant specifying the scope of happening"(Martin et al., 1997, p.103), as in "She climbed the mountain" (Martin et al., 1997, p.105), (emphasis as in the original). In mental clauses, two types of participant can occur: the Senser and the Phenomenon. The "**Senser**" is "the participant sensing, i.e. involved in conscious processing" (e.g. "The man knew too much".); the "**Phenomenon**" is what "is being sensed", for example "*I like swimming early in the morning*; *I like the fact that he apologized.*"(Martin et al., 1997, p.105) (emphasis as in the original).

There are two types of relational clauses: attributive and identifying. In attributive clauses, the participants are "**Carrier + Attribute**"- for example, "Maxine is energetic" and in identifying clauses, the participants are "**Token + Value**"- for example, "Maxine is the

goalie" (Martin et al., 1997, p.106). Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p.237) write about a third type of participant in attributive and identifying clauses, which represents "the entity assigning the relationship of identity of attribution – for example, *they* in *they made Mary the leader* and *they made Mary happy"*. In the identifying clauses, this participant is called "**Assigner**" and, in the attributive clauses, "**Attributor**" (emphasis as in the original).

Martin et al. (1997, p.108) refer to three types of participant in verbal clauses. The "**Sayer**" is "the participant saying, telling, stating, informing, asking, querying, demanding, commenting, offering, threatening, suggestion and so on", as in "<u>She</u> told me a strange story"; the "**Receiver**" which "is the addressee of the speech": They told <u>me</u> → to leave at one" (Martin et al., 1997, p.108). The "**Verbiage**" which is the "content of saying" and can be presented as a different clause, as in "They told me <u>a story</u>" (Martin et al., 1997, p.108) (emphasis as in the original). In behavioural clauses, the participant is called "**Behaver**" as in "<u>I</u>'m listening to John working" (Martin et al., 1997, p.109). In existential clauses, the "**Existent**" is the only participant "involved in a being process", as in "There will be *a real bunfight* the next meeting" (Martin et al., 1997, p.109).

The third participant in a clause is circumstance. Martin et al. (1997, p.103) state that circumstances "are less centrally involved in the process than participants". Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, pp.262-263) classify circumstances into nine categories: "Extent: distance, duration, frequency", "location: place, time", "Manner: means, quality, comparison, degree", "Cause: reason, purpose, behalf", "Contingency: condition, default, concession", "Accompaniment: comitative, additive", "Role: guise, product", "Matter", "Angle: source, viewpoint". Some scholars have explained the delicacy of circumstances such as place which this study has benefited from. Dreyfus and Jones (2011, p.77) show the type of Place in a figure.
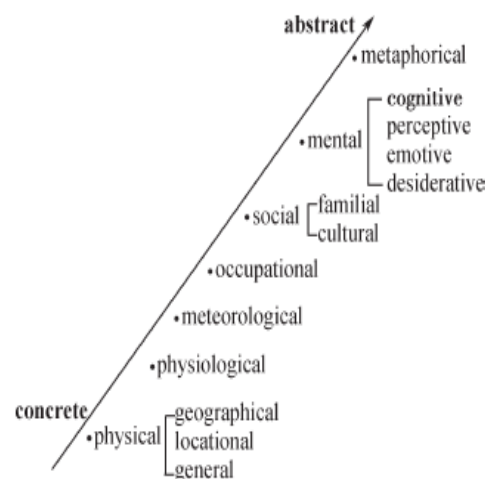
Figure 5: Cline of circumstances of *place* (Dreyfus and Jones, 2011, p.77)

Their studies extend Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004) category of location with the introduction of space and show that space can represent more than the concrete and physical and it can also be abstract and metaphorical.

TRANSITIVITY analysis has been used to investigate and compare texts, providing language practitioners with pedagogical implications; Gusrayan (2008 p.71) has investigated children's comprehension of vocabulary through comparing children songs and stories used in classes. With the help of THEMATIC and TRANSITIVITY analysis, Gusrayan (2008) has found that "the story bounds the messages in a better way and this boundary helps contextual realisation of each vocabulary item to be better grasped by children". Shokohi and Amin (2010, p.388) studied the role of familiarity with generic structures in 90 samples of Persian and English newspaper editorials to realise a specific genre through TRANSITIVITY. They reported both types of editorials as having the same "generic features" and that familiarity with "content and context and not the structure of the texts" can affect students' performance in reading comprehension texts (Shokohi and Amin, 2010, p.387). TRANSITIVITY analysis will help this study to show how student-writers build and construe their inner and outer world through their lexico-grammatical choices (processes, participants and circumstances), what is happening in their texts and who or what objects are involved in them. Following Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), it can be said that a clause is more than embodying processes, participants and circumstances; Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p.29) assert that "while construing, language is always also **enacting**: enacting our personal and social relationships with the other people around us". This brings us to the second metafunction, the interpersonal metafunction of a clause, through which language users can construct a stance for themselves and relate to their audience. This issue is discussed in the next sub-section.

2.6.2   The interpersonal metafunction of clause

Halliday (1973, p.99) writes that the interpersonal constituent of grammar "expresses the speaker's role in the speech situation, his personal commitment and his interaction with others". Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) also note the notion of relationship when describing the concept of clause as message. From the perspective of interpersonal meaning, Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p.106) claim that, in the flow of discourse, "clause is organized as an interactive event involving speaker, or writer, and audience"; that is, clause is simultaneously used to exchange information and giving or demanding goods and services. These are, according to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p.108), the components of three vectors of the semantic system of the speech function, "MOVE" (initiate and respond), "INITIATING ROLE" (give and demand) and "COMMODITY" (goods-and-services and information) (emphasis as in the original).

Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) stress the notion of interactivity when distinguishing the interpersonal metafunction from the ideational metafunction. They explain, "this kind of meaning is more active; if the ideational function of grammar is 'language as reflection', this is 'language as action'. We call it the interpersonal metafunction, to suggest that it is both interactive and personal" (2004, p.30). Throughout interactions in discourse, according to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p.106), the speaker or writer assumes "a particular role and in so doing assigns to the listener a complementary role which he wishes him to adopt in his turn". Eggins (2004, p.144) also states that participants "can establish and develop the social roles" and "social identity" while communicating. This point is valuable in this study as it can help examine how student-writers build up a relation and interact with their audience in their blog-texts.

Interactive shifts in discourse can be realised through the grammatical resource of the MOOD system, which according to Fawcett (2013, p.51) is the most important "type of interpersonal meaning expressed in the clause". The MOOD element, according to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p.120), "has a clearly defined semantic function" which "carries the burden of the clause as an interactive event". Fawcett (2013, p.52) points out that the significance of MOOD "lies in the fact that it is the main way through which we represent, in the semantic and syntax of the lexicogrammar, the **discourse act** that is performed through uttering the clause". Martin (1992, pp.31-32) defines MOOD as "a resource for negotiating meaning in dialogue...engender two fundamental oppositions: *information* as opposed to *goods and services (indicative vs. imperative)* and *giving* (declarative) as opposed to *demanding* (interrogative)" (emphasis as in the original). He adds that there are possible variations of these oppositions: for instance, giving and demanding information can be in the form of a statement and question respectively or giving and demanding goods and services can be in the form of offer and command correspondingly.

The MOOD system is concerned with independent clauses (that is, clauses with speech functional value in discourse) and consists of three elements: polarity, Subject, Finite. Eggins (2004, pp.150-153) describes these as follows:

- An expression of **polarity:** "to make something arguable it has to be either positive (*something* is) or negative (*something* is not)" (emphasis as in the original). An example is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: An example of polarity (Eggins, 2004, p.154)

Henry James	*didn't*	*write 'The Bostonians'*
Subject	Finite: negative	

As shown in Table 3, the negative Finite, *didn't,* constructs an arguable issue in the clause which helps the flow of the discourse.

- A nominal-type element – **Subject:** "the person or thing in whom is vested the success or failure of the proposition" (emphasis as in the original). Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p.119) explain Subject with reference to interaction: "Subject is best understood by starting from the concept of the clause as an exchange, a move in dialogic interaction". This is important when examining my student-writers' flow of language in their texts since it can illustrate how their meaningful choices as Subject can affect both the purpose and interpretation of their language in their texts. The presence of Subject can also determine how and if the discourse in their blog-texts tends to be dialogic or monologic.

- A verbal-type element - **Finite** which "carries either tense or modality" (emphasis as in the original). An example of Finite tense type is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: An example of Finite operators (Eggins, 2004, p.152)

George	*was*	*reading Henry James*	*wasn't*	*he?*
Subject	Finite		Finite	Subject

The nominal element *George* is followed by the Finite carrying tense that is past. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p.115) explain its significance: "it brings the proposition down to earth, so that it is something that can be argued about"; it can link the "proposition to its context in the speech event" in two ways: through "primary tense and "modality" (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, p.115). They explain further:

> primary tense construes time interpersonally, as defined by what is 'present' to you and me at the time of saying. With modality the dimension is that of assessment: modality construes a region of uncertainty where I can express, or ask you to express an assessment of the validity of what is being said (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, p.116).

Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p.111) also explain that sometimes "the finite element and the lexical verb are 'fused' into a single word", such as "simple past or simple present (tense), active (voice), positive (polarity) and neutral (contrast)".

They also refer to another element in MOOD: Adjunct. "Adjunct is an element that has not got the potential of being Subject"; that is, "arguments cannot be constructed around it"

(2004, p.123). They introduce different types of Adjuncts in the clause as shown in the table below.

Table 5: Metafunctions and types of Adjunct (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, p.125)

Metafunction	Type of Adjunct	Location in MOOD structure
experiential	circumstantial Adjunct	in Residue
interpersonal	modal Adjunct	in MOOD or Comment
textual	conjunctive Adjunct	(not in mood structure)

As shown in Table 5, the interpersonal metafunction can be realised through Modal Adjuncts. These "add interpersonal meaning to the clause" that are responsible for constructing and sustaining the dialogue (Eggins, 2004, pp.160-162); Modal Adjuncts can be categorised into four groups:

1. MOOD Adjuncts add a sense of modality to the clause and comprise "expressions of probability", "usuality", "intensification or minimization", "presumption" and "inclination" (Eggins, 2004, p.160);

2. Polarity Adjuncts refer to "Yes and No, and their common conversational alternative" (Eggins and Martin, 1997, p.161);

3. Comment Adjuncts "express an assessment about the clause as whole"(Eggins and Martin, 1997, p.161);

4. Vocative Adjuncts "control the discourse by designating a likely next speaker" (Eggins and Martin, 1997).

Halliday and Mattheissen (2004, p.147) state that the system of modality is positioned between the systems of polarity and construes "the region of uncertainty that lies between yes and no". This system has four different elements: modality (modalisation and modulation), orientation, value (median and outer) and polarity (positive and negative). Modality, which is one concern of this study, consists of two types: modalisation and modulation. "Modalization" is the "degree of probability" and "degree of usuality" in propositions, according to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p.147). "Modulation" refers to "obligation" and "inclination" in proposals (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, p.147) (see Table 6).

Table 6: Kinds of modality (Martin et al., 1997, p. 64)

Kind of modality		Finite: modal	MOOD Adjunct
Modalization	Probability	May, might, can, could; will, would; should; must	Probably, possibly, certainly, perhaps, maybe
	Usuality	May, might, can, could; will, would; should; must	Usually, sometimes, Always, never, ever, seldom, rarely
Modulation	Obligation	May, might, can, could; should; must	Definitely, absolutely, possibly, at all costs, by all means
	Readiness: Inclination ability	May, might, can, could; will, would; must; shall, can, could	Willingly, readily, gladly, certainly, easily

Examining the MOOD Adjuncts in my students' blog-texts can give a better insight into how student-writers express the certainty, likelihood or possibility of a proposition in their discourse. MOOD analysis has also been used to analyse texts to understand how the writer or speaker creates a relationship with their audience and develops a stance during the discourse and how they express their purpose, through their lexico- grammatical choices. Ye (2010, p.146) investigated Obama's victory speeches and found that through the use of the first person plural pronoun "we", Obama promotes people to believe that they share one interest; through using the third person pronoun, he constructs an authoritative stance in his speech, and through using the second person pronoun he lessens the wide gap between him, the president, and ordinary people. Ye (2010, p.146) suggests that

> (1) positive clauses are recommended to convey information and convince the audiences with positive facts; (2) Modal verbal operators with high modal commitment can show the addresser's firm determination to finish tasks and build up the addresser's authority; (3) the frequent application of "we" and "we" - "you" - "we" pattern" help to create an intimate dialogic style, which can shorten the distance between the addresser and the audience and further persuade the audience to share the same proposal of the addresser.

Therefore, analysing the interpersonal metafunction can help me understand how my student-writers adopt a role and assign a role to their audience in their blog-texts. This, in turn, can illustrate how interactive their language is and if their language tends to be spoken or written. How the experiential and interpersonal metafunctions combine and what factor organises clauses and makes a text coherent can be explained through the textual metafunction of language, which I turn to in the next sub-section.

2.6.3   The textual metafunction of language

Within the system of the language network, the textual metafunction plays an important role in bringing the other metafunctions together and revealing the coherence of the text coherent. Halliday (1973, p.99) states that this metafunction is the part of the grammar that is "concerned with the creation of text". Martin et al. (1997, p.21) explain that this system "is concerned with the organisation of the information within individual clauses and through this, with the organisation of the larger text". In other words, it "is what sets the scene for the clause itself and positions it in relation to the unfolding text" (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, p.66). It "organizes the clause to show what its local context is in relation to the general context of the text it serves in" (Martin et al., 1997, p.21). This component of grammar has two elements: THEME and RHEME. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p.64), THEME "is the element which serves as the point of departure of the message; it is that which locates and orients the clause within its context". It is the old/given information in the clause and "the remainder of the message, the part in which THEME is developed" is the Rheme" - that is the part of the clause which contains new or unfamiliar information (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, pp.64-65). Berry et al. (1996, p.18) draw attention to two important issues about THEME: it indicates what the language user is concerned with and "it is the cumulative force of the Themes of the clauses of a text that indicates these concerns, rather than the Theme of any one clause individually" (Berry et al., 1996, p.18). Thus, THEME shows the authors' choices expressing the concerns in the clause and in their texts (that is what the clause or the whole is about); THEME analysis also illustrates the lexical chains of the clauses and eventually the cohesion of the text. THEME has been categorised into three groups, textual, interpersonal and topical (Martin et al., 1997, Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004).

The Textual THEME has three types: Continuative, conjunction and conjunctive Adjunct. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p.81) define these THEMES as follows:

> Continuative: A continuative is one of a small set of words which signals a move in the discourse: a response, in dialogue, or a new mover to the next point if the same speaker is continuing.

> Conjunction: A conjunction is a word or group that either links (paratactic) or binds (hypotactic) the clause in which it occurs structurally to another clause.

> Conjunctive Adjunct: These are adverbial groups or propositional phrases which relate the clause to preceding text.

These THEMES can be shown in Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004, p.81) analysis of the question: "Well, but then suddenly Jean, wouldn't the best idea be to join in?". To make the table easier to read, I added the third row.

Table 7: Multiple THEME (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, p.81)

well	but	then	surely	Jean	wouldn't	the best idea	be to join in?
cont	stru	conj	modal	voc	finite		
Textual	Textual	Textual	Interpersonal	Interpersonal	Interpersonal	Topical	
Theme							Rheme

Cont=continuative THEME; Stru=structural THEME; Conj=conjunction THEME; Voc=vocative THEME

As shown in Table 7, this sentence contains three textual THEMES: the continuative THEME, *well,* indicates that the discourse is continuing; the structural THEME, *but* and *then,* function as a conjunction. There are two interpersonal THEMES: the modal Adjunct, *surely,* shows the speaker's judgement and the vocative though which the speaker calls for attention.

The Interpersonal THEME, according to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p.81), can be classified as: Vocative, Modal comment Adjunct and Finite verbal operator. Vocative refers to "any item, typically a personal name, being used to address"; Modal comment Adjuncts "express the speaker or writer's judgment on or attitude to the message" and Finite verbal operators "are the small set of auxiliary verbs construing primary tense or modality" (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, p.81), examples are presented in Table 7.

The Topical THEME, as Halliday and Mattheissen (2004, p.74) write, has two categories, marked and unmarked. They point out that when the role of the THEME and Subject overlap, it is called unmarked topical THEME. Thompson and Thompson (1999, p.55) explain that "the marked THEMES are associated with switches in the temporal framework, and Subjects are associated with continuity in the entities about which predications are being made" (see the example in Table 7).

Examining my student-writers choice of THEME can help to determine the clause arrangement and eventually the coherence of their text in their blogs. Furthermore, it should not be ignored that the choice of THEME can depend on certain factors including the purpose of the blog-writers and their audience's expectation, that which might affect the authors' choices.

2.7   Register in this study

Drawing on the topics discussed in this chapter, the notion of register can be extended to the range of lexico-grammatical patterns chosen by the blog-writers to express their meanings in relation to the context of blogs. According to Halliday (1987), context is dynamic and

shapes the lexico-grammatical choices and these choices, in turn, reshape the context simultaneously. To understand the system of language underlying the discourse and the meaning constructed and expressed in blog-texts and the whole blogs, I examined the elements of the context of situation, field, tenor and (Chapters 5, 6 and 7). This helped to find out 1) the subject matter, the participants and circumstances; 2) the role of language in creating a relation between the readers and the blog-writers and 3) the organisation of the information throughout the blog-texts. Examining the MOOD system also showed how blog-writers expressed themselves, took a stance against their readers, positioned their readers in their blog-texts and communicated with them, which will be explained in detail. The analytical framework for this study is summarised in Table 8:

Table 8: Map of the register analysis

Field	Ideational metafunction	TRANSITIVITY	Processes Circumstances
Tenor	Interpersonal metafunction	MOOD	Subject (I, you and we) Finite Polarity MOOD Adjuncts
Mode	Textual metafunction	THEME	Textual THEME Interpersonal THEME Topical THEME

Having provided an overview of the system of TRANSITIVITY, MOOD and THEME and the role of their elements in meaning making at the level of clause, now, I explain the key features of the analytical framework I used to examine the genres of my student-writers' blog-texts.

2.7.1 Components and types of genres

To explore the genre or genres of my student-writers' blog-texts, I used the model of genre proposed by Rose and Martin (2012, p.130). As explained Section 2.2, Rose and Martin categorised genres into three groups drawn from their studies of the writing of primary school children in Australia: Stories, Factual texts and Arguments. Their framework, showing the sub-categories of these genres with their purpose and stages, is shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Key genres of primary school (Rose and Martin, 2012, p.56)

	genre	Purpose	Stages
Stories	Recount	Recounting events	Orientation Record of events
	Narrative	Resolving a complication	Orientation Complication Evaluation Resolution
	Anecdote	Sharing an emotional Reaction	Orientation Remarkable event Reaction
	Exemplum	Judging character or Behaviour	Orientation Incident Interpretation
Factual texts	Description	Describing specific things	Orientation Description
	Report	Classifying and Describing general things	Classification Description
	Explanation	Explaining sequences of Event	Phenomenon Explanation
	Procedure	How to do an activity	Purpose Equipment Steps
	Protocol	What to do and not to do	Purpose Rules
Arguments	Exposition	Arguing for a point of View	Thesis Argument Reiteration
	Discussion	Discussing two or more points of view	Issue Side Resolution

As shown in Table 9, stories are comprised of four types of genre: Recount, Narrative, Anecdote and Exemplum.

Recount: In Recounts, "nothing goes significantly wrong" (Martin, 1992, p.562); they emphasise time (Plum, 1988, p.102), are structured through sequence of recurrent events (Piriyasilpa, 2009) and "reconstruct experience" (Martin, 2000b, p.14). According to Rose and Martin (2012, p.130) the stages of Recounts are, Orientation and Record of events.

Narrative: Narrative texts are "interpretive of the real world" (Plum, 1988, p.6); Martin (1992, p.562) explains that Narratives focus on a remarkable problem which should be resolved; and Labov and Waletzy (1997, p.32) point out that the importance of the Narrative is that it "reveals the attitude of the narrator towards the narrative". The four stages of this genre construct the flow of rising tension, sustaining it and easing it: Orientation ^ Complication ^ Evaluation ^ Resolution (Rose and Martin, 2012, p.56). Martin and Rose (2008, p.50) explain that Evaluation is the borderline which separates the stages of Complication and Resolution. Labov and Waletzy (1997, p.33) describe another stage of

Narrative, the Coda, which appears at the end of the typical genre. This stage "is a functional device for returning the verbal perspective to the present moment" (Labov and Waletzy, 1997, p.33).

Anecdote: Anecdotes have the stages of Orientation ^ Remarkable event ^ Reaction (Rose and Martin, 2012, p.130). They create a crisis by stating a remarkable event through which the writer shares their emotions and feelings. This crisis, according to Martin (1992, p.565), "is reacted to - with a surge of affect (discord, insecurity, frustration, satisfaction, security or fulfilment)" but is not resolved. Anecdotes establish the characters temporally and/or spatially in the Orientation stage followed by an Event, which, in Martin and Rose's framework (2008, p.51), is a "disruption to usuality" and is followed by positive or negative reactions to it.

Exemplum: An exemplum has three stages, Orientation ^ Incident ^ Interpretation (Rose and Martin, 2012, p.130). Martin (1992, p.565) points out "how the world should/shouldn't be"; the same notion is described in Plum's (1988, p.276) definition of Exemplum, a kind of narrative organised to advise "behaviour, making choices in a system of modality, something captured definitely by being referred to as 'illustrative', 'pointing a moral', 'giving an example', etc.". He states that the cultural importance of the event is highlighted explicitly in the Interpretation stage.

Factual texts: Factual texts are divided into four categories: Description, Report, Explanation, Procedure and Protocol.

Description: The description genre has two stages comprising Orientation ^ Description. It describes one thing but "from different points of view" (Rose and Martin, 2012, p.37).

Reports: "Reports classify and describe things" (Rose and Martin, 2012, p.129) and have two stages, Classification ^ Description (Rose and Martin, 2012, p.130). If one thing is described and classified, it is a "Descriptive report"; Martin and Rose (2003, p.85) refer to "qualities", "classes", "qualifiers" and "parts" as the common linguistic features of this genre that expand "the meaning of a person or thing". If various things are classified in the text, it is a "Classifying report" and if some parts of whole are described, it is "a Compositional report".

Explanations: Martin and Rose (2008, p.150) write that Explanations focus on explaining the way processes occur and involve "sequences of causes and effects". Explanations start with identifying the Phenomenon, which the text is concerned with and is followed by the Explanation stage, Phenomenon ^ Explanations (Rose and Martin, 2012, p.130).

Procedures: Procedures are "experientially-oriented texts" (Plum, 1988, p.5). Martin and Rose (2008, p.182) consider Procedures as "pedagogic texts", since such texts explain and demonstrate "how to perform a specialised sequence of activities in relation to certain objects and locations" (Martin and Rose, 2008). They comprise three stages, Purpose ^ Equipment ^ Steps.

Protocol: Protocol, according to Martin and Rose (2008, p.213), limits "rather than enables behaviour". It tells the reader "what to do" (Rose and Martin, 2012, p.129). This genre contains two stages, Purpose ^ Rules (Rose and Martin, 2012, p.130).

Argument: "Argument genres evaluate issues and points of views" (Rose and Martin, 2012, p.130) and are classified into two categories: Exposition and Discussion. Expositions are concerned with one opinion about an issue and have three stages: Thesis ^ Arguments ^ Reiteration. According to Coffin et al. (2005, p.469), Thesis is the stage through which "the writer puts forward their claim or standpoint and optionally, previews the arguments to be discussed". They also break the Arguments stage into two sub-stages: claim and evidence, through which writers provide their idea and support it by reasoning and giving evidence. Exposition genres can end with a recommendation or an exhortation, which according to Rose and Martin (2012, p.112) is called a hortatory type. The Discussion genre deals with more than one position about an issue and is constructed through Issue ^ Side ^ Resolution (Rose and Martin, 2012, p.130). Rose and Martin (2012, p.130) expand their genre typologies by explaining and distinguishing the sub-categories of the above defined genres, as shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Genres and stages (Rose and Martin, 2012, p.130)

	genre	purpose	stages
Stories	**Recount**	Recounting events	Orientation Record of events
	Narrative	Resolving a complication in a story	Orientation Complication Resolution
	Exemplum	Judging character or behaviour in a story	Orientation Incident Interpretation
	Anecdote	Sharing an emotional reaction in a story	Orientation Remarkable events Reaction
Histories	**Autobiographical recount**	Recounting life events	Orientation Record of stages
	Biographical recount	Recounting life stages	Orientation Record of stages
	Historical recount	Recounting historical events	Background Record of stages
	Historical account	Explaining historical events	Background Account of stages
Explanations	**Sequential explanation**	Explaining a sequence	Phenomenon Explanation
	Conditional explanation	Alternative causes and events	Phenomenon Explanation
	Factorial explanation	Explaining multiple causes	Phenomenon: outcome Explanation: factors
	Consequential explanation	Explaining multiple effects	Phenomenon: cause Explanation: conseq.
Procedures	**Procedure**	How to do experiments and observation	Purpose Equipment Steps
	Procedural recount	Recounting experiments and observations	Purpose Method Results
Reports	**Descriptive report**	Classifying and describing a phenomenon	Classification Description
	Classifying report	Classifying and describing types of phenomena	Classification Description: types
	Compositional report	Describing parts of wholes	Classification Description: parts
Arguments	**Exposition**	Arguing for a point of view	Thesis Arguments Reiteration
	Discussion	Discussing two or more point s of view	Issue Sides Resolution
Text responses	**Review**	Evaluating a literary, visual or musical text	Context Description of text Judgement Evaluation
	Interpretation	Interpreting the message of a text	Synopsis of text Reaffirmation
	Critical response	Challenging the message of a text	Evaluation Deconstruction Challenge

Table 10 provides an extended list of genres with their sub-categories that can be valuable in this study. These categories can help to determine the stages through which my students' blog-texts unfold and find out about the purpose they pursue. Piriyasilpa (2009) also refers to the 'Self-introduction' genre which has three stages: Self-identification, Biodata and

Impressions, by which writers provide some information about themselves (Piriyasilpa, 2009, p.176). The 'Self-introduction' stage contains "names and nicknames" (Piriyasilpa, 2009, p.176); 'Biodata' has information about the "date and place of birth, hometown, and study" (Piriyasilpa, 2009, p.177) and the 'Impressions' provides information about the "hobbies, life styles and impressive impressions" (Piriyasilpa, 2009, p.178). She points out that the Salutation stage can occur before the stage of Self-introduction and functions as "an opening bonding move" to show solidarity (Piriyasilpa, 2007, p.85).

2.7.2 Genre hybridity

There is some debate about whether genres are stable and have particular linguistic features constructing their particular schematic structures. Kamberelis (2001, p.92) believes that hybridity exists everywhere; comparing the formal language of a lawyer at court with her discourse at home and the possible clashes between them, she points out that individuals "mix or hybridize multiple social languages within given speech events or context" and create new ones. Considering text as an instance of language, hybridity can be seen at the level of genre and register. For example, Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999, p.143) define hybrid texts as, "texts which mix discourses, genres or registers". Eggins (2004, pp.81-82) refers to the blend of genres producing "hybrids" by addressing "J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter series*"; she explains how the four different genres "high fantasy", "low or domestic fantasy", "school story" and "detective/ mystery story", are mixed and attract various types of audience. She also addresses "new journalism or 'creative non-fiction'" as hybrid genres blending "literary realisation techniques" and "journalistic techniques such as interviews and factual reports" (Eggins, 2004, p.82). One possible reason for genre hybridity is highlighted by Bawarshi and Reiff (2010); they explain that students' genre knowledge can create genre hybridity in their academic texts; this means that students take their prior knowledge of genres from one situation to other and successful writers can capitalise on knowledge sufficiently to be able to fit into their new situation so as to participate efficiently in their new community. Bartlett (2013) goes so far as to assert that all genes are hybrid and that a genre emerges if the linguistic features, which realise a set of meanings, are conventionalised in a given situation,

> however, there are various degrees of conventionalisation and there is always room for novelty - which is generally a form of hybridity as the features introduced are not arbitrary but have been used previously in situations that are in some way connected. Moreover, for these reasons all genres are hybrids to start with and all hybrids have the potential to become standard genres to a greater or lesser extent.

By 'the various degrees of conventionalisation' of the linguistic elements, Bartlett means that a genre comprises different sets of linguistic features, those features which are already familiar within the situation and those which are new and unfamiliar within it. In other words, in any situation, some features may be selected by default and then mixed with new features to achieve a communicative purpose, which will result in a hybrid genre. Where the new features come from remains uncertain. The notion of similarities and differences among genres may also create a hypothesis that genres can be classified by examining the differences among their linguistic features. However, it seems rather hard to determine what features are new to the situation, to what extent they are conventionalised and if they play an important role in the schematic structures of the genre.

Kamberelis (2001, p.86) believes that coexistence of various genres, styles and registers "often produce heterogeneous and dynamic interactions", which can be related to the discourse in blogs. Seemingly, discourse in the dynamic and interactive environment of blogs is more likely to experience hybridisation as the following example by Zare (2012) suggests. Exploring the blogs of a group of Iranian bloggers, Zare (2012, p.82) reports that the language used in his blogs is a hybrid of "English and technical terms in Persian" written in writing and spoken mode of the Farsi language amalgamated with the Internet and the blog "jargon" along with "socio-cultural terms from the host society". This reinforces both the interactivity and the possibility of genre hybridity in blogs; however, in the dynamic environment of blogs, with a hybrid audience, from different socio-cultural class and professions, communicating in a hybridity of modes - through texts, photos, and music - the concept of genre seems fuzzy.

In brief, it seems that genre hybridity can be perceived as the construction of a new way of transferring meanings in response to a new situation; this affects the social activities of the discourse: activities such as communications and interpretations, which demand new knowledge about the conventions of this new discourse. I will look at this issue at the level of schematic structures through which my blog-texts unfold and discuss the potential reasons behind it in Chapter 8.

In this chapter, I have explained the notion of genre and approaches to genre analysis from the perspective of Systemic Functional Grammar. I have prepared the ground for proposing the analytical framework of my analysis of student-writers' blog-texts to understand their language variation in terms of genre and register. I discussed the key concepts of the framework of this study comprising the context of situation, the relation between context and language and the role of grammar in making meanings; I explained how Halliday's (1987) register analysis and Rose and Martin's (2012) categories of genres can help to

pursue the aims of this study. I have also given an overview of the key features in register analysis that I will implement to understand how meanings are constructed through my student-writers' lexico-grammatical choices in their blog-texts. I have also described the model of genre analysis to examine the social purpose of my blog-texts.

In the next chapter, I will move to the concept of the blog and explain its non-linguistic and linguistic characteristics. To give a better view of the linguistic features and mode of language used in blogs, the differences between the different modes of language, spoken and written, will also be described. After that, I will go through the concept of self-expression, voice and stance in blog-texts and give an overview of the pedagogical role of blogs in language classes.

Chapter 3 Blogs

In the previous chapter, I discussed genre, genre analysis approaches, and register. One of my research questions is whether my students' blog-texts can be conceptualised as belonging to a genre or an emergent genre. To find out about the genre of the language produced in my student-writers' texts, I need to know about the features and mode of the discourse constructed in the virtual environment of blogs. To this end, this section is devoted to the linguistic and non-linguistic elements of blogs in relation to the characteristics of the written and spoken modes of language. To eradicate any confusion, I used the term 'blog-text/s' to refer to the blog content in this document. The word 'blog-space' also refers to the website in which a blog is written.

There is a large body of research about the genres of computer-mediated communication and web tools in the virtual environment of the Internet such as the blog-space. Scholars such as Barton and Lee (2013, p.29) write that a blog being used for a specific purpose demands a specific genre but "a blog itself is not a genre: it is not a form of language-rather it is a space for language". Other scholars bring up the notion of genre when writing about the blog-space. For instance, Herring et al. (2004, p.2) write that blogs "are neither unique nor reproduced entirely from offline genres", however, they will turn to "constitute a hybrid genre that draws from multiple sources, including other Internet genres". Kjellberg (2009, p.12) also writes that a "blog can be viewed as a situated genre", where social actions are shaped, and suggests a framework for analysing the research blogs. I begin with a definition of the blog-space by Walker:

> A weblog or blog is a frequently updated website consisting of dated entries arranged in reverse chronological order so the most recent post appears first … typically, blogs are published by individuals and their style is personal and informal (Walker, 2007, p.45).

According to Herring et al. (2004), the word 'blog' came into existence in 1997 and has come into widespread use since then. They used a content analysis method to analyse 203 randomly selected text-based active blogs written in English and reported a number of genres and sub-genres between standard web pages and text-based online discourse. Referring to the popular types of communication through the Internet, they define a blog as a bridge between "relatively static, single author, multimedia HTML" and "a synchronous CMC" such as chatting (Herring et al., 2004, p.23).

Standard Web Pages	Weblogs		Asynchronous CMC
	Online Journals	*Community Blogs*	

← ——————————————————————————— →

rarely updated	frequently updated	constantly updated
asymmetrical broadcast	asymmetrical exchange	symmetrical exchange
multimedia	limited multimedia	text-based
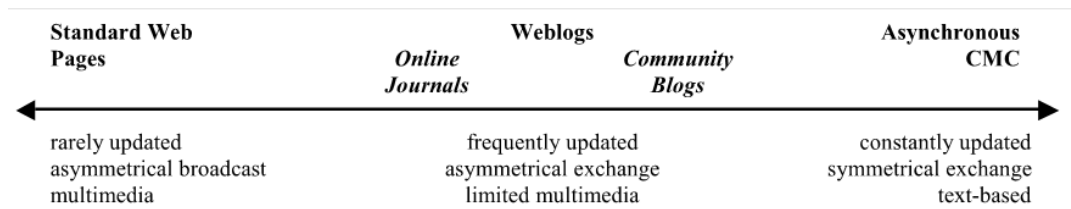
Figure 6: Blogs on continuum between standard Web pages and CMC (Herring et al., 2004, p.10)

Scholars such as Mazur and Kozarian (2010) and Myers (2010a) refer to the interactive mode of blogs that is textual and limited to exchanging comments. Richardson (2010, p.20) also points out that blogging is beyond recording the daily events or emotions; it is a "genre that engages students and adults in a process of thinking in words". Ewins (2005, p.369) writes that blogs are also defined as online journals containing chronological entries, through which hyperlinks, pictures, sounds and videos can be shared (Scheidt, 2009). These online journals can be personal with a single author or public with many authors - that is, the audience who visit them. However, the sense of audience in blogs differs from other virtual or electronic environments. While the audience of emails and online-conferences are limited to specific addressees, within specific intervals, blog-texts potentially have a wide ranging audience around the world. This will increase the social communicative aspect of the discourse produced in a blog (Blood, 2002, Rahimpour, 2014).

Taking the interactivity aspect of the blog-space into account, it can be said that blogs can reflect the interest of both writer and audience, which can contribute to creating and maintaining an online community. Ewins (2005) and Kjellberg (2009) also write that blogs have the ability to construct a community of individuals sharing similar beliefs and desires where they can interact easily. Nardi et al. (2004, p.225) refer to blogs as a "manifestation of diverse social motives in which the inscriptions in the blog communicate specific social purposes to others". Nardi et al. (2004, p.224) list the purposes behind blogging: "to update others on activities and whereabouts; express opinions to influence others; seek others' opinions and feedback; 'think by writing' and release emotional tension". Herring et al. (2004, p.28) support the same view stating, "the technical affordances of the blog format make it readily adaptable to multiple purposes of use".

Other scholars consider aspects of the blog-space such as content and style. Lomborg (2009, p.7) provides a classification of blogs offering "a typological space in three dimensions with the axes representing content, directionality and style, respectively":

1) "Content axis: Internal-topical". This refers to the use of blogs either as a collection of personal information and "experiences" or as "topic-oriented communication" (Lomborg,

2009, p.7). According to Lomborg, the internal topical continuum contains various types of genre such as: the "online diary", populated by the author's private matters, "notebook blogs", more concerned with the author's experiences; "hobby blog", which covers the author's hobbies; "opinion blog", which is a discussion site covering the author's view on a topic; and more topic- oriented blogs: "research blogs, corporate blogs" and "journalistic blogs".

2) "Directionality axis: Monological-dialogical". This refers to the use of the blog-space simply as a means of "self-expression" and possibly "highly conversational".

3) "Style axis: Intimate-objective". This refers to the tone used in the blog-texts: whether it is written in a personal and confessional tone or "in a rather objective tone", such as in "argumentative writing, factual description and expert statement".

Apart from content and style, the role of the audience of the blogs in shaping its features and the mode of the language produced has also been discussed in the literature. Puschmann (2013, p.94) brings up the importance of audience in blogging writing that "bloggers integrate their conceptualization of the readership into their style". De Moor and Efimova (2004) and Herring et al. (2004) refer to different modes of discourse in blog-texts stating that a blog can be a monologue (diary), dialogue (online happening) or both (mixed type); this can be for several reasons such as the blog-writers' gender, age, interest, audience (Puschmann, 2013, p.91) and the number of comments they receive. Mazur and Kozarian (2010, p.140), for instance, write, despite the interactive nature of blogs, "they function primarily as monologues especially for males who receive significantly fewer comments than females". All of this shows that blog-texts are not limited to a specific mode of language. However, taking into account the interactive mode of blogs, which the author and the reader exploit to exchange meanings, the language used in the blog-space can be close to the spoken form of language which demands a particular genre or genres. This leads to the next issue that is one of the concerns in this study: whether my student-writers' blogs-texts can be considered a genre. To examine this, I will now explain the characteristics of blogs in relation to the components of genre.

3.1   Blogs and genre description

Considering the concept and theoretical issues of genre, an ESP approach can be appropriate for examining blogs as a genre; within this approach the socio-cultural aspects of the context of language use have been highlighted as one of the focal points in this study. I now discuss the generic features of blogs in relation to the characteristics of genre defined by Swales. Swales (1990, p.58) writes

> A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members
> of which share some set of communicative purposes. These
> purposes are recognised by the expert members of the parent
> discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for
> genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of discourse
> and influences and constrains choice of content and style.

I consider three aspects in discussing my students' blog-journals: communicative purposes, discourse community and the rationale behind the genre.

3.1.1 Communicative purposes

Swales' definition of genre points out that genres are purposeful and can be realised through common communicative purposes. These communicative purposes establish a particular set of structures in the spoken or written discourse. He defines genre as "a class of communicative events" (Swales, 1990, p.45), consisting of the on-going discourse along with its members, the role that it possesses and the environment where it is constructed and received; thus to consider a set of communicative events as a genre, there should be shared purposes among the community, too.

The sense of shared purposes among the members of the blog communities has been raised in the literature. Herring et al. (2004, p.11) stress that "the flexible, hybrid nature of the blogs format means that it can express a wide range of genres in accordance with the communicative needs of its users". Through content analysis, they identified the structural and functional characteristics of 203 blogs. Herring et al. (2004, p.4) coded their blogs according to the blog-writers' "demographic characteristics", "the purpose of the blog" and the structural elements of their blogs; they also used a grounded theory approach to enable their coding to analyse other features of the blog-space such as "the type of blogging software used, the ability for readers to post comments to entries, and the presence of the calendar, archives, and badges" (Herring et al., 2004, p.5). Herring et al. (2004, p.5) classified blog-genres according to their purposes and found five types that are relevant to this study: the k-log, a knowledge-based blog common in the academic domain; the diary/personal blog (Herring et al., 2004, p.3), a journal including the authors' personal life experience and information; the filter log, which contains external "world events" and "online happening" and the "mixed blogs" as well as "other" blogs, which were beyond the pre-classification of the researcher, such as blogs of "the author's poetry" or a "song lyrics" (Herring et al., 2004, p.5).

Three other helpful characterisations of blogs mentioned in the literature and of relevance to this study are that they can be considered as a) a tool "for self-expression" (Herring et al., 2004, p.1), b) as "an extension of the self in textual terms" (Puschmann, 2010, p.169) and c) as the means of interacting with a wide audience and the writer's self (Wrede, 2003).

It seems that each blog has its own readership and purpose and it can be used as both an "interpersonal" and "mass communication" tool (Bortree, 2005, p.25). This could mean that the various purposes of blogs can lead towards generating various genres or subgenres; thus purpose and audience are important considerations in finding out if my student-writers' blog-texts illustrate a specific genre or if they produce hybrid genres.

3.1.2 Genre patterns and communicative purposes

Swales (1990) explains how the patterns of genres differ "in their prototypicality" (Swales, 1990, p.49) claiming that this is due to 'communicative purpose'; "Communicative purpose has been nominated as the *privileged* property of a genre. Other properties, such as form, structure and audience's expectations operate to identify the extent to which an exemplar is *prototypical* of a particular genre" (Swales, 1990, p.52)(emphasis as in the original).

This can imply that communicative purposes oblige the use of particular patterns which will eventually lead to generating different classes of genres or subgenres. The same point is made by Myers (2010a) in investigating discourse in blogs. Myers (2010a) explains how language patterns in blogs can be influenced by the communicative purpose of blogs. Myers (2010a, p.19) writes that in blog-texts, language is computer-mediated: for instance, a text can start with a question or finish with 'XO'; also, the comments can be in a conversational mode such as: 'oh my' or in "typographical imitation of para-linguistics features ('I'm sooo making this'); the ubiquitous exclamations marks ('look delicious!!')". Myers (2010a, p.19) further adds that these texts are HTML texts that "can be read of any browsers" and connect to others. He stresses that these characteristics of blog-texts do not suffice to determine the genre of the blog and that to recognise the particular features of genre in blogs and wikis, the style, "the technology and what people do with it should be closely investigated" (Myers, 2010a, p.19). This is an important consideration in this study because it can help to determine the student-writers' purposes in their blogs. This requires an investigation of genre and the context of the situation within which it is functioning.

Another feature of genre mentioned by Swales (1990, p.52) is that "the rationale behind a genre establishes constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their content, positioning and form". The rationale influences the content and imposes certain constraints on the genre that lead to the construction of a particular form or structure. Therefore, familiarity with the form and content of the genre is shared knowledge among the discourse

community members, which is shaped by the rationale underlying the genre. Thus, "the rationale gives rise to constraining conventions" when analysing genre (Swales, 1990, p.53). This can be true in blogs since the content and the way language is used can be determined by the purpose and rationale of the blog. Also, the purpose can be partially influenced by the audience's voice and their contribution to the discourse in blogs; in other words, the audience can restrict the forms and conventions of the genre used in blogs.

Referring to the relation between the purpose and audience of blogs, Miller and Shepherd (2004) point out that although blogs may seem private, they address the public too. Nardi et al. (2004, p.223) stress that the fact that blogs construct the audience and "the audience also creates the blog" should never be ignored. Davies and Merchant (2007, p.179) also claim that, when writing, blog-writers have a strong sense of their audience, with whom they share the same thoughts, and who can be far beyond the "known readers". This can mark the difference between the blog-genres, which is dynamic, and other genres which have a more static mode. Considering the sense of purpose and audience, and their contribution in determining the forms and patterns of the blog-texts, it can be suggested that the blog is an amalgamation of genres, the author and the audience's voice: the interwoven voices, which can hardly exist if separated. This will be expanded in Chapter 8.

3.1.3   Genre and discourse community

The last feature of genre which Swales (1990) describes is as follows: "A discourse community's nomenclature for genres is an important source of insight" (Swales, 1990, p.54). This means that the discourse community plays a great part in constructing genres and the members of the community share the same communicative purposes and linguistic features. Swales (1990, p.55) states that "an appropriate approach for the analyst would be to establish genres based on investigations into actual communicative behaviour, two aspects of which, among several, would be participants' naming procedures and elicited categorization". His point is supported by Myers (2010a, p.26), who explains that

> Communities have names for the genres they use, and having such names may be a part of what makes them a community; that's why the people who used blogs seized on *blog, blogger, blogosphere, warblog* and all the variants; recognizing these classifications was part of being in the community. (emphasis as in the original)

This means that online genres can be identified and classified according to the shared communicative purposes and knowledge among the members of the community; the

purposes, which, as Swales (1990, p.58) writes, "turns a collection of communicative events into a genre".

However, there is another helpful aspect in considering the blog as a genre. According to Miller and Shepherd (2004, p.10), blog-writers often give two reasons to explain their blog-writing: "self-expression and community development". They add that blog-writers think of "their linking and their commentary as a means of self-expression"- through which they construct an environment derived from their motives, voice and ideology (Miller and Shepherd, 2004, p.10). This environment not only reveals the writer's beliefs and self but it is also a means of linking with others building up a community where the blog-writer's self grows and is reinforced by their audience. Therefore, the purpose of online communities such as blogs is not mainly for exchanging information but, as Wellman and Guli (1999, p.173) claim, for "companionship, social support, and a sense of belonging". Similarly, Myers (2010a, p.22) regards blogs as a social life. He compares the virtual life on the blog with his "social life on the street where people verbally gossip, buy things, build up reputations", etcetera; yet, people in blogs are often anonymous, and their status and locations are not certain. It is interesting to investigate why blog-writers tend to be disguised in such a public environment, where the author and audience share the same purpose and live in the same community.

An online community is not restricted to particular members and can expand as new people join the community; each member may bring their ideology, beliefs, knowledge and experience to the community and these might affect the purpose, conventional rules and features of the shared language among the members. These are factors that can affect the ecology of the environment of blogs comprising both author and audience and can make the sense of an online discourse community rather fuzzy.

Considering the variability aspect of a blog discourse community, Barton's (2007) definition of a discourse community is valuable because his definition is not limited to a particular group but rather incorporates an emerging a blog discourse community; Barton (2007, pp.75-76) writes that discourse community can comprise the author as well as the intended and unintended audience of the text. It seems that some of the features of blogs can overlap with the features of genre discussed by Swales. Apart from issues such as purpose and discourse community, it is essential to look at the linguistic features and language patterns of the texts produced in blogs to find out if my blog-texts can be considered as a genre or subgenre. This opens another area of discussion in this thesis: language in blogs.

3.1.4   Language and context

The present study focuses, on the one hand, on the context of language use – blog-space - and, on the other, on the way language is used by the student-writers in their blog-texts, and genre analysis is the method for investigating these factors. Understanding the genre of a text becomes possible through understanding the characteristics of the language used in that text; in other words, "it is through language that genres are realized"(Eggins, 2004, p.65) - the language which is social, functions to make meanings and can be affected socially and culturally. Here, Halliday's (1987, p.28) view on language is valuable:

> Language comes to life only when functioning in some
> environment. We do not experience language in isolation-if we
> did we would not recognize it as language-but always in relation
> to a scenario, some background of persons and actions and events
> from the things which are said derive their meaning.

A blog creates a scenario where language is alive through the mutual interaction between the bloggers and readers. This interaction can affect the bloggers' lexical and syntactical choices when writing; however, this does not end here since each episode (published text) is a story of the writers' life manifesting their experiences, thoughts and ideology too, which can also be shaped or reshaped through interactions with the audience. Consequently, it can be said that not only the language in the blog but also the blogger's self is under on-going construction and modification.

Considering the fluidity of language use in blogs, to undertake a genre analysis for the purpose of this study, I am interested in Bhatia's (2004, p.25) view that in reality, discourse is "complex, dynamic, constantly developing and often less predictable". Scholars such as Swales (1990) and Bhatia (2002a) claim that genre analysis is not limited to examining texts; for instance, Bhatia (2002a, p.8) offers a comprehensive model of genre analysis, stressing that for a comprehensive analysis, researchers can use tools such as "textual analyses, ethnographic techniques, cognitive procedures, computational analysis and critical awareness". With the goals of genre theory in mind, and following a systemic functional approach to genre, I implement a computer-assisted textual analysis to investigate the genre and register of my student-writers' blog-texts. Through this, I examine the linguistic features of their language and the social purpose of their texts. This will be discussed in Chapter 4.

The importance of context is further emphasised by Eggins and Martin (1997, p.236) who state that a thorough analysis of register and genre should accommodate "textual prediction

and contextual deduction"; this means that knowing about the context makes it "possible to predict the meanings that will be at risk and the linguistic features likely to be used to encode them" (Eggins and Martin, 1997, p.236). I now discuss the modes of language and their features in blogs.

3.2   Speech, writing and blogs

Blogs have been considered as a virtual informal environment where bloggers can project their thoughts and world through texts (Blood, 2000). The texts are populated by the authors' lexico-grammatical choices and influenced by the blog context. Pauchman (2013, p.81) asserts that "the flexible communicative situation of blogs (Who is assumed to be among the readers? Who, if anyone, is addressed? Who might be eavesdropping?) also shapes the authors' style and influences their rhetorical choices". Scholars such as Wrede (2003), De Moor and Efimova (2004), Crystal (2006) and Elbow (2012) have reported that the nature of blogs provokes the emergence of features of the spoken mode of language. Wrede (2003) defines blogs as a type of writing for the public which always invites the audience to be involved in a continuous conversation. The word 'conversation' here implies that the language used in blogs is less restricted to formal grammatical conventions and vocabularies. De Moor and Efimova (2004, p.198) state that blogs promote "conversation structures and dynamics". Doostar (2004, p.655) also provides examples of "how speech genres are transformed by varying degrees when bloggers incorporate them into their writing". Likewise, Armstrong (2008, p.234) describes blogs as having a "conversational, informal format, and collaborative nature".

The influence of the nature of blogs on the features of the language can lead to the hypothesis that whatever the choices of the student-writers are is in response to the context of the situation, they are involved in; the context which, according to Halliday and Hasan (1989), is determined by the features of field, tenor and mode. To determine the characteristics of the language used in my student-writers' blog-texts, genre (the social purpose in culture) and register (the linguistic evidence manifesting the genre) analyses are used.

The way individuals use language (spoken or written) within the context and how features of language vary from one context to another has been highlighted in literature for several decades. Linguists differentiate between every day or casual conversational spoken language (Carter and McCarthy, 1995, Biber, 1988) and "the written language that's common in careful informational or expository prose - "essayist" writing" (Elbow, 2012, p.15). This is an important consideration when setting a framework for the data analysis of this study to determine if my blog-texts depict features of the spoken or written mode of the

language. Hence, in the next sub-section, I will review the literature that compares speech with writing, then consider this in relation to the blog language. This will provide a background for the reasons why and how blog-writers implement a certain mode of language.

3.2.1   Studies on speech and writing

Leech (2000) notes two approaches to the written and spoken modes of language; "the differentness of spoken grammar from traditional written models" and "the underlying sameness of spoken and written grammar" (Leech, 2000, pp.668-689). The first approach was a move from the traditional view of grammar, where grammar is the only key factor that standardises the language. While investigating ways of fostering speaking skill, Carter and McCarthy (1995) observed that the grammar of the spoken mode of language varies from the written mode. They argue against the traditional view of grammar whereby the spoken mode of language stems from the "descriptions of grammar of written English" (Carter and McCarthy, 1995, p.141). They stress that the traditional view of grammar ignores the particular features, which specifically belong to casual talk. This implies that conversation needs its own features and cannot follow what is written in textbooks, as it is the discourse which determines and controls the grammar and not vice versa (McCarthy, 1998, p.78).

In the second approach, scholars, such as Halliday (1989, p.93), believe in the same "grammatical framework for both spoken and written" modes of language. However, Leech (2000, p.692) argues that "although the two languages share the same descriptive grammar (a common repertoire), they are very different in terms of performance grammars (i.e., the probabilistic implementations of that repertoire)". He claims that "there are peculiarities of spoken grammar that can scarcely be paralleled in written grammar or vice versa" asserting that it is the grammar that drives the discourse (Leech, 2000, p.692).

However, it can be argued that the relation between grammar and discourse is mutual; if discourse, as an instance of language in practice, is considered as a combination of genre/s, comprising a social purpose and a discourse community, which demands particular linguistic features, it can be said that manipulating each of these components can affect other features. That is, changing the linguistic features can change the genre, which might be appropriate in a different context and for a different community.

It seems that spoken and written grammars vary because they are structured under different conditions in different contexts and in response to different demands. Měchura (2005) refers to spontaneity (that is, wether the author had the chance to revise their language) and interactivity between the participants during communication as two factors through which

the writing can be distinguished from speech, which can affect the way and amount of information presented in discourse. For instance, "in writing we have time to mould a succession of ideas into a more complex, coherent, integrated whole, making use of devices we seldom use in speaking" (Chafe, 1982, p.37). This is why, written language "tends to have an 'integrated' quality which contrasts with the fragmented quality of spoken language" (Chafe, 1982, p.38); that is, written language is packed with more information than speaking. Therefore, "speech is time bound, dynamic and transient" while "writing is space bound, static, and permanent" Crystal (2011, p.17).

McCarthy (1998) examined the grammar of spontaneous conversation and reports a low degree of integrity (that is, grammatical complexity) in sentences, which results in speech being more simply constructed than writing. In her investigation of the context of speech and its impact on the language produced, Cheshire (2005, p.53) describes the influence of the context in determining speakers' lexical and grammatical choices. She concluded that "interactional and social factors" affect the way individuals use spoken language and eventually influence their immediate decision over the forms and grammatical patterns needed in the spontaneous process of speech. Thus, it can be implied that the features of the environment that speech is adapting to, such as participants and the interaction between them as well as cultural and social issues, can shape the lexico-grammatical features of discourse. This point echoes Halliday and Hasan's (1989) view of the critical role of the context of situation - field, tenor and mode - in producing language. Identifying the linguistic features of my student-writers' language in their blogs, what function and purpose they serve in blog-texts and how they are used, whether in spoken or written mode, are the main concerns of this study. Addressing them may provide evidence of whether, how and to what extent the relaxed context of blogs can influence the blog-writers' language.

Halliday (1989, p.93) describes the distinct purposes of speech and writing, stressing that the spoken and written modes of language are used in various contexts, for various reasons and with different functions. He adds that these modes "create different realities"; writing creates the world of things; talking creates a world of happenings (Halliday, 1989, p.93). He claims that the written mode of language "represents phenomena as products"; in other words he sees writing "as an object" and what it represents is "an object" too, while speech "represents phenomena as a process" since it represents what is occurring or being done (Halliday, 1989, p.81). Consequently, writing and speech have different functions and serve different purposes, which demand different structures.

Overall, according to Carter and McCarthy (1995, p.145), casual conversation is a "bi-and multi-party informal talk with frequent turn changes, no pre-set topics, equally distributed

or shifting conversational roles". Biber and Vasquez (2008) believe that speech has a particular register which is rather informal. Carter and McCarthy (1995) suggest that speech comprises complex utterances and grammatical features which writing lacks; and Elbow (2012) proposes that, being unplanned and spontaneous, speech is actually the language of individuals' thoughts in their heads. However, the point about the importance of context is again noted by Biber (1988) who argues that differentiating speech from writing is impossible unless it is investigated in relation to social and cultural factors within the context in which they are functioning. The same issue is raised by Elbow (2012, p.18) who writes that "once we pay more attention to context - setting, purpose, audience, goal, genre - the more obvious differences emerge between speech and writing". Following this view, I explore my student-writers' language in relation to the context they are involved in.

3.3   Blogs in relation to the spoken and written modes of language

Considering the characteristics of spoken and written language, and exploring the features of language such as 1) interactivity and audience, 2) spontaneity, 3)formality and content, 4) shared background and cultural knowledge, and 5) sharing purpose, can be useful for understanding the nature of the language produced in my blogs; in other words, examining such issues can demonstrate whether the context of blogs provide the authors with a particular choice of language mode or gives them the freedom to switch from one mode to another - which will result in an amalgamation of spoken and written language in the discourse. These features will now be discussed in depth.

3.3.1   Interactivity and audience

Chafe (1982), Crystal (2011) and Elbow (2012) refer to the issues of interactivity and audience when differentiating between speech and writing. Chafe (1982) points out that there is a direct interaction between the audience and speaker during a face-to-face conversation, where the interactors are involved in both verbal and nonverbal interactions. Herring (2003, p.3) defines a face-to-face conversation as "a "rich" medium, in that information is available through multiple channels: visual, auditory, gestural, etc.". These "physical channels", in Biber's (1988, p.38) terms, will establish the cohesion of the discourse (Tannen, 1982, p.88) and can be continuously exploited to transmit information and receive feedback. The importance and frequent use of these paralinguistic channels indicate that speech is highly context dependent. However, the lack of feedback and involvement with the audience make writers produce "something that will be consistent and defensible" (Chafe, 1982, p.45).

Chafe (1982) highlights the issue of involvement through which the speaker can signal understanding or ask for clarification. Chafe (1982, pp.46-48) sees involvement with the audience as a dialogic feature of conversation, which can be recognised through using the "first person references, speaker's mental processes, monitoring of information flow" by using discourse markers such as "well, I mean, and you know" and "emphatic particles like: just, really; fuzziness and direct quotes". Chafe also notes that "detachment" from the audience by writers can be identified through using the passive voice and nominalization (1982, p.45).

Chafe (1982, p.45) further stresses that the audiences of written texts are "displaced in time and space" which makes writing more informative than interactive. This feature of writing can be because of the one-way transmission of information in writing which lacks immediate feedback and turn taking, which speech enjoys. The same characteristic can be traced in Internet situations where simultaneous feedback is absent. This, according to Crystal (2011, p.22), makes many online interactions "abrupt, distant or antagonistic". However, it is true to say that the lack of feedback and context do not restrain the participating role of the audience in writing but underlines the important point that ignoring the audience can turn writing into a piece of de-contextualised written language. For the same reason, writing is more carefully planned and organised than speech to be fully understood by the reader.

Examining the factors of involvement - 'Tenor' in Halliday's (1987) terms - and integration - syntactic complexity - in my students' blog-texts can help to identify if the blogs are close to the written or spoken mode of language; to achieve this, I will need to examine the student-writers' lexico-grammatical choices whereby they interact with readers and involve them in the discourse.

It seems that audience and interactivity are also two important issues in blog-writing. The interactivity of blogs is enhanced by the possibility of sending and receiving comments which is absent in writing. This is confirmed by Elbow (2012, p.69) who claims that "blogs are helping people make writing into a process with lots of almost immediate dialogue and response, not just absence or solitariness". This implies that the language produced in blogs may carry one or more characteristics of the spoken mode of language. However, in blogs, the writer and audience can share a great deal of information and refer back to it and reflect upon it whenever they desire; while in speech, once the information is exchanged, it can be forgotten. As a result, the blog as an asynchronous computer-mediated discourse system is not only interactive like speech but also has the capacity of archiving, which speech lacks.

However, exploring the notion of interactivity in blogs is not an easy task. As Puschmann (2013, p.90) observes, "blog readers can lurk without indicating that they have even received a message, and the blogger can likewise claim not to have addressed anyone in particular with her thoughts". Thus the concepts of interactivity and audience in the virtual context of blogs are more fluid than fixed.

3.3.2 Spontaneity

According to Chafe (1982), speech is quick and mostly unplanned compared to writing. Writers have more time to correct, remove and substitute their lexico-grammatical choices to express their ideas in a more coherent way and with more complex grammatical patterns. Likewise, Crystal (1995, p.7) points out the issue that the spontaneity of speech makes it time-bound which prevents the speaker from planning the syntactic patterns of sentences and using varied vocabulary while speaking; this "spatio-temporal limitation", according to Akinnaso (1982, p.115), makes the structures of the sentences rather loose and sentence boundaries blurred in speech. Biber (1988, p.5) notes that speech is more "concrete, context-dependent and structurally simple" than writing as individuals are involved in rapid conversation during face-to-face communication. Furthermore, Halliday (1987, p.77) argues that speech, by nature, is "low in content". However, this does not mean that speech does not provide enough information, but has a limited lexical density, which Leech (2000, p.696) defines as "a low number of word - nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs - as a proportion of all words". Chafe (1982, p.39) also points out that the rather fragmented nature of language in speech is one of the reasons for its simplicity: "in fragmented language, a typical idea unit consists of a single clause, containing one predictive element (a verb or predicated adjective) and the noun phrases which are directly associated with that element as subject, object and may consist of nothing more than a noun phrase or prepositional phrase". Referring to the nature of the language in speech, Crystal (2011, p.18) refers to "lengthy coordinate sentences" as a typical feature of speech. This includes particular lexis choices such as slangs, which writers strictly try to avoid. Elbow (2012, p.82) draws attention to the low amount of nominalisation used in the spoken mode of language emphasising that people "would tend to say something more lively and less noun-heavy".

3.3.3 Formality and content

Writing, compared with speech, has been defined as a formal and accurate mode of language. For instance, according to Biber (1988, p.40), writing is considered to be "the correct form of the language" in Western societies. Elbow (2012, p.4) states that although individuals are rather informal when diary, there is a general tendency to evaluate writing as

a formal mode of language. This means that the context and the audience of writing can influence the features of language and cause authors to switch from one mode of language to another.

Further, Elbow (2012, p.80) explains that as speaking is less formal, it promotes "flexible syntax" or inherently, such idiomatic phrases as "Yeah, right" which can be frequently heard in face-to-face conversation, and are what grammarians consider "Bad grammar" in writing. This may create a false conception that speech is less structured and organised. Halliday (1989) argues to the contrary advising against looking at the spoken mode of language through formal writing grammatical patterns. He claims that the traditional view of speech as an unstructured and formless product of language is nothing but a myth: speech also follows its own structures and forms. In other words, Halliday (1989, p.79) is interested in the grammatical features of speech; he studies speech through exploring the notion of the "CLAUSE COMPLEX" (emphasis as in the original), which underlies each sentence and has a critical role "in the process of oral communication". Halliday defines the clause complex "as a highly organised structure" (1989, p.86) and "the grammar's way of showing (1) **that** and (2) **how** the processes going to together in a sequence are all related to each other" (Halliday, 1989, p.82) (emphasis as in the original). Examining "lexical sparsity" - the low proportion of lexical words - he claims that spoken and written modes are not very different in vocabulary but are in grammatical patterns. Halliday (1989, p.80) also reports that the lexical density of the written mode is "twice as high as that for speech".

The low lexical density of speech, according to Leech (2000, p.695), can be the result of the shared context which "means that generally there is no need to specify in detail the reference of linguistic expressions"; that is why the frequency of personal pronouns and "elliptic genitive such as *hers, mine, yours, and theirs*" is high. Another reason for avoiding elaboration in speech can be "a low degree of specification or precision in meaning" through using "hedges such as *sort of, kind of, like* (as an adverb) and coordination tags such as and *stuff* and *that sort of thing*" (2000, p.695). Similarly, Měchura (2005, p.4) lists the features of spontaneity as a determinant of the mode of the texts: lexical density, degree of nominalisation, speed of topic changes, use of question tags and chain clauses. He also writes that checking the "formal or informal vocabulary, slang, etc." (Měchura, 2005, p.4) can show the social distance, indicating the relation between the participants in a text (tenor).

3.3.4   Shared background and cultural knowledge

Writing can also be distinguished from speech by the "relation of communicative participants to each other" (Biber, 1988, p.40). This means that in the amount of interaction

among the participants as well as how much shared knowledge they have about each other's backgrounds and culture can influence the characteristics of the spoken or written mode of language. According to Biber (1988, p.41), based on degree of this knowledge, speakers "can reduce the informational content of an utterance" which makes speech rather awkward lexically and grammatically. He claims that the amount of contact among the participants can influence the speakers' stance and how they address each other in a face-to-face communication setting. The same point can be true of writing when writers exploit the lexico-grammatical features of the language to position themselves and voice their opinions based on their prior socio-cultural knowledge of their audience and the context they address.

Leech (2000, p.694) agrees that "conversational grammar reflects a shared context"; face-to-face communication takes place on the basis of shared context which results in reducing both the sentence length and sentence complexity. Leech (2000, p.694) claims that this occurs through the "use of information retrievable from the linguistic or non-linguistic context". These features are:

> *Personal* pronouns (as contrasted with nouns, which are notably frequent in the written registers);
> *Substitutes and other "pro-forms"* such as so (as a substitute for a clause) *do* as a pro-verb, *do it* and *do that* as pro-predicates, etc.;
> *Various types of ellipsis*, such as front ellipses (as in *Doesn't matter* or *You want a double*? Where the subject and /or auxiliary is omitted), and ellipsis across independent syntactic units such as independent clauses […] (Leech, 2000, p.694);
> *Nonclausal material*: i.e., "stand-alone" elements that are not attached to any clause or sentence and reflect a general simplifactory tendency in conversational grammar […] (Leech, 2000, p.695).

Leech's understanding of shared context can be valuable in finding out why blog-texts show certain characteristics, that might be far removed from standard English. The language used in blogs, like other types of computer-mediated language such as messages exchanged in chat-rooms, do not follow the formal standard patterns of language strictly. As Nilsson (2003, p.28) observes, "blog posts are usually short, paratactic sentences. They employ informal, non-standard construction and slang". Such "grammatical informality", in Crystal's (1995, p.6) terms, can happen to any language when writing in blogs. Although it is hard to compare English with other languages, the same issue has been reported in Persian blogs. Doostar (2004) refers to frequent ellipses in Persian blogs and raises

intellectuals' concern regarding the emergence of a non-standard language in Persian writing. For example, Shokrolahy (2003), an Iranian journalist and a literary critic, comments,

> Blogging due to its mundane nature has the capacity to nurture the spirit of vulgarity. And what great pains intellectuals have to endure when consider blogging to be a serious matter, but at the same time fear this destructive plague...refusing to comply with the principles of proper writing in Persian spelling and orthography, is the simplest effect that blogging phenomenon, as a vulgar matter, can create in the cultural personality of a blogger (Doostar, 2004, p.651).

While Shokrolahy refers to blogging as a vulgar plague, it can be argued that what is happening in a blog is tightly connected with its purpose, audience and community: the three aspects that can affect the linguistic features and structures of the language produced in blogs. Linguistic features and patterns that are meaningful and constructive in one particular context can be destructive in another. However, it is worth investigating if and how blogs can influence the process of generating a new type of discourse, what the characteristics of this discourse are and how they can affect the personality of blog-writers. Mina (2007, p.31) also associates the language in Persian blogs with the "sociolect" popular of youth that "does not follow the traditional rhetorical rules of standard written Persian and floats between written and spoken registers". Zare (2012, p.88) reports "a conversational style" in a "diary-like fashion" in Persian blogs, containing long sentences which lack "paratactic sentences". This suggests that the features of blogs can persuade blog-writers to deviate from the standard language. Yet, one of the reasons for using a non-standard form of language in blogs can be the intimate relation among the members of the blog-writers' community, where members share large amount of (personal and cultural) information with one another. However, Herring (2003) questions whether such features should be treated as errors or as bad language. Herring (2003, p.5) believes that such "non-standard features" of CMD "are deliberate choices made by users to economize on typing effort, mimic spoken language features, or express themselves creatively". These deliberate choices of blog-writers may be due to the authors' purpose, as discussed in the following section.

3.3.5 Purpose

Purpose is another factor that separates speech from writing. According to Biber (1988, p.42), "writing is typically for ideational purposes, to convey propositional information, while speaking is more often for personal, interpersonal, and contextual purpose in addition

to, or instead of, ideational purposes". Similarly, Elbow (2012, p.72) points out that writing helps to make "what is inner to become outer"; that is writing can disclose the hidden side of people which may never be talked about in public. It can be argued that speaking can serve the same purpose, but Elbow (2012, p.72) stresses that this is only possible when "we have a genuinely trusted and supportive listener", which is rare. Undoubtedly, purpose can influence the lexical choice of the speaker/writer; thus, examining the lexis used in a spoken or written text can lead to identifying the purpose of the used language.

Doostar (2004, p.657) also draws attentions to blog-writers' intention, purpose and authority over the language in the process of writing. He believes that, in blog-writing, it is the author who sets the purpose and controls the language and not vice-a-versa. The purpose of online social networks such as blogs, he explains, is "the pragmatic consideration that a message be comprehensible for its receiver" (Doostar, 2004, p.657). If this purpose is served, the blog community will be maintained. Elsewhere, he refers to a critic blogger who switches from formal language to the language of blogging intentionally, when responding to "The vulgar spirit of blog", to indicate her sense of belonging to the community of blog writers. Consequently, purpose can determine the features of language in blogs.

Overall, the factors of audience and setting or context play a critical role in blog-writing. For instance, by virtue of co-texts/comments, the interaction between the audience and the writer is continuous and this capacity keeps blogs alive and dynamic. Furthermore, as with speech, texts, as the external product of bloggers, are positioned in the context of situation embraced by the author's and audiences' cultures. In addition, the blog context includes many sub-contexts, which can affect the way blog-texts are produced. To analyse the features of the language produced in the multimodal context of blogs, register analysis is of high importance. In such an analysis, examining the clauses can show what is happening in the text through processes and what is involved (that is the participants) and when, where and how it happened (Thompson, 2004).

Summary

While blogs are textual by nature, their features encourage the blog-writers to use the language projecting characteristics of the spoken mode of the language. However, there is a possibility of finding features of both speech and writing in blogs. This is in line with Herring's (2003, p.3) explanation of computer-mediated discourse, which states that "participants typically experience CMD as distinct from either writing or speaking, sometimes as a blend of the two".

The nature of the blog itself, the purpose and intention of blog-writers, their audience and the frequency of their interactions impose certain structures on the language, which is relaxed and informal lexically and grammatically. In such structures, as Doostar (2004, p.655) writes, "the contours of an outer orientation for blogging as a distinct speech genre, may be found". Nilsson (2003, p.2) also attributes blogs to both monologue and dialogue claiming that blogs "are simultaneously self-reflecting journals and open-ended invitations for conversation. Consequently they exhibit both written and spoken qualities". Thus, blogs can be monologic or dialogic; but although comments and hyperlinks can be evidence of interactivity with the outer world, it is rather hard to identify the real audience of blogs. Readers can lurk, leaving no comments and blog-writers can write for themselves or for no readers at all. Even those who may seem active participants in the blog community may leave it at any time forever or rarely visit it in the future. All of these issues make the setting of the communication of blogs, including the interactivity among the members, uncertain. Since, in blogs, the readership is not specifically fixed, this can affect blog activities.

As suggested earlier, blogging with its interactive features such as comments, hyperlinks, video/music bars and photos, is not limited to texts. These features function as resources which authors can use to create meanings in their texts. This raises the issue of how blog-writers can exploit the multimodal environment of blogs to make meanings, interact with their audience and use the channel of language they prefer to transmit their information. A detailed exploration of the multimodal elements of my students' blogs is beyond the scope of this study, but I will explore the hyperlinks in their blogs to gain a better insight into the discourse community.

While the focus of this study has been on the variation in students' language in their blogs, I will briefly explore the extent to which blogs can support the teaching methods applied in language classes from the tutors' point of view. Barton and Lee (2013, p.155), for instance, view web tools such as blogs as a platform for learning. They refer to the features and capacities that learners and practitioners can benefit from: "easy self publishing and continuous updating of multimodal content and turn them into an educational opportunity"(Barton and Lee, 2013, p.155). Therefore, the pedagogical aspect of web tools in general and blogs in particular is turned to in the following section, followed by a discussion of student-writers' textual voice, self-expression and stance.

3.4   The role and effectiveness of blogs in EFL English writing

The notion of blending online web tools such as chatrooms, blogs, wikis and forums with conventional language teaching and learning approaches has been the focus of much research. For example, Demirbilek and Mutlu (2010) studied the effect of using chatrooms

on adolescents' language learning. They argue that the synchronous computer-mediated communication afforded by chatrooms allows teachers to create "collaborative activities" to enhance language learning. Such activities in the class will engage learners in a meaningful and purposeful communication with their peers and help them be autonomous learners. Likewise, López-Pérez et al. (2011, p.820) report that implementing traditional "face-to-face learning activities with activities that students can complete by consulting a website" can enhance students' involvement in the course, elevate their motivations, help them understand the subject matter and create a positive perception of learning. However, they emphasise that "e-learning activities complement, rather than replace, traditional forms of learning" (López-Pérez et al., 2011, p.824). Blending blogs, as a web tool, with the teaching and learning method in classrooms has also been explored by scholars. Jiménez-Caicedo et al. (2014, p.91) explored the effect of "blog's literacy- based tasks" on learning Spanish. Barton and Lee (2013, p.155) also reported the positive impact of using blogs, as a web tool, in teaching and learning reading and writing skills. Zarei and Al-Shboul (2013) and Noytim (2010) worked on EFL students' English language learning through blogs, Chen (2012) examined students' receiving and giving feedback through blogs and whether this can enhance their writing skills, Arslan and Şahin-Kizil (2010)studied the integration of blogs into writing classes and Miyazoe and Anderson (2010) looked at implementing blogs, wikis and forums with teaching writing.

Jiménez-Caicedo et al. (2014) used blogs to present literacy-based tasks to learners studying Spanish at an elementary level at a university and investigated the views of 54 students about the course through their blog-posts and a survey to find out if they thought blogs could help them improve their academic literacy and cultural awareness. They categorised their students into three groups based on their findings: those who believe 1) blogs are very helpful to practice forms and patterns of language such as "grammar, vocabulary and new expressions", 2) blogs encourage "real language use with the support of more expert others", and 3) blogs are a platform to engage with the audience and practise a foreign language without being worried about academic lexico-grammatical rules (Jiménez-Caicedo et al., 2014, p.87).

Zarei and Al-Shboul (2013) investigated the Jordanian EFL learners' perceptions of role of blogs in language. They collected their data through interviewing 10 postgraduate students involved in a course with an integrated blog. They reported that learners found the blog a "helpful learning tool" and were comfortable with the class materials presented through the blog (Zarei and Al-Shboul, 2013, p.53); based on the learners' interviews, they claim that the blog increased interactions among learners outside the classroom and improved their language proficiency, through sharing "their experiences, information, knowledge and

thoughts with peers" (Zarei and Al-Shboul, 2013, p.53). This is in line with Barton and Lee's (2013, p.155) view that "not only does blogging provide ample opportunities for authentic writing, it also involves a great deal of reading"; this is due to the fact that students search the topic, read about it and arrange their information before embarking on their task on the blog; they also read and write comments critically which can have a positive impact on their language proficiency.

Chen (2012, p.282) also explored EFL learners' perception towards using the "web-based blog for peer-review activities", if such activities can enhance "their English writing skills" and "how they generally views their own writing abilities". His participants were 67 first year English major students who were required to "complete a survey", "write reflective essays regarding their class experiences" and answer "a questionnaire". He noted the positive role of writing and reading feedback in the blog in his writing classrooms and pointed out that exchanging comments in the blog increased communications among students and their peers, helped them grow "a more positive attitude towards writing" and improved their writing skills (Chen, 2012, p.285).

Shih (2012, p.204) reports the positive effects of a blended model of conventional face-to-face teaching method with blogs on an ESP course designed to teach "English for Hospitality and Tourism". His students used the capacity of uploading films within a blog and "benefited from the processes of self-autonomous, collaborative learning, reviews of their peers' and their own films, and the instructor's feedback through blogging" (2012, p.208).

Noytim (2010, p.131) examined twenty female Thai EFL students' "perceptions of and attitudes towards using weblogs" through students' interview questionnaires and their blogs. He observed that blogging enhanced "students' interest, motivation and confidence in writing". Miyazoe and Anderson (2012 , p.151) worked on blending "forums for discussions", "blogs for reflection" and "wikis for collaboration" in their writing curriculum; they stated that EFL learners appreciated the course and improved their academic writing skills. This approach, they claim, will lower the "students' cognitive load" and accelerate "language acquisition" (Miyazoe and Anderson, 2012 , p.151). This echoes Zhang's (2009, p.66) view that blogs shifts learners' focus from "surface learning" like passing a test to "deep learning"; that is "how learners stand back from experience, seek out connections between concepts, and contextualize meaning" (2009, p.66). Such studies may not provide any actual evidence in terms of learners' language proficiency improvement, but their findings are valuable as blending technology with the conventional way of teaching can affect language practitioners' perception of and affect their decision on

selecting and implementing a teaching method in classes. However, how and to what extent web tools should be blended with traditional teaching approaches to support and not eradicate each other deserves more investigation, since various contexts demand various solutions. Implementing blog-writing as an optional extra activity in writing classes in the context of this study, I will look at how and to what extent it can affect student-writers' attitude to writing and their writing skills through their tutors' lens. The findings will be explained in Chapter 7. The next area that this study is concerned with is the way in which student-writers construe their voice, self-expression and stance in relation to their audience in their blogs. An overview of these concepts is provided next.

3.5 Self-presentation in social media

There has been substantial attention to writers' self-presentation (Boyd, 2008), stance (Myers, 2010b) and identity (Lee, 2014, Sun and Chang, 2012) in online social media. Boyd (2008) looks at how American teens present themselves and construct their identity in relation to their social life in Myspace. He reports that teens' online profile along with their self-descriptive texts, their choice of friends, images, audios, videos and even "personalized answers to generic questions" can be a means of self-expression (Boyd, 2008, p.128). He refers to the profile as an important space where writers "express salient aspects of their identity for others to see and interpret" (Boyd, 2008, p.129). Profiles, according to Boyd (2008), differ from one another in terms of their genre and style. This can be for several reasons such as: the writers' previous linguistic practices online, their self-image, and how they want their imagined audience to see them. He stresses that being online, teens are exposed to a wide public and get vast publicity, which plays a crucial role in developing their identity in their social life. Therefore, writing online can be defined as "writing oneself 'into being'" as writers signal their identity through their online self-presentation (Boyd, 2008, p.120).

Similarly, Lee (2014, p.92) explored how people illustrate a different self of themselves through using "a different language and writing style" in different types of social media. He refers to his English major student who showed different identities in different types of online social media. As Lee (2014) noticed, this participant chose to write in English in his Facebook page, but wrote in his own language in a public forum, as he could be judged by his language errors. This can indicate the connection between individuals' lexico-grammatical choices and their roles in their life (Lee, 2014, p.101). It can also show that juggling between different languages can lead to some tension between different senses of the writer's self. This raises the notion of identity management when EFL writers are involved with diverse groups in an online context such as blogs.

Lee (2014, p.91) argues that individuals' language choice and their identity are not "predetermined" and are prone to change from one context to another. The term context here seems to be the "situational context" that according to Connolly (2007, p.196) contains the time, setting, "the participants involved in the communicative activity and their interrelationships as well as any other relevant activity that is going on in the same setting". Lee (2014, p.92) believes that the way people participate in social media, such as being anonymous and having a sense of audience in their mind are the key elements that can possibly change "the way people think of themselves", their online self-presentation and identity. Therefore, context and the way people prefer to function in the context have a crucial role in determining how discourse is constructed and negotiated; this also affects how "interlocutors interpret the identities being projected"(Lee, 2014, p.91).

Lee (2014, p.97) defines three kind of self-presentations in most social media: (1) the "online profile", that is the "entry point to social networking"; (2) "continuous status updating" that is updating life events and sharing experiences from the "first person" point of view and (3) "visual representation" that is "visual images" (Lee, 2014, p.98). Lee's characteristics of self-expression in social media can be easily extended to blogs where people use pseudonyms, have a profile, update the readers with their life experiences and can use visuals such as photos, emoticons, templates, YouTube, etcetera to express themselves (Jiménez-Caicedo et al., 2014, Bronstein, 2013, Herring et al., 2004). One way of investigating blog-writers' self-expression and voice can be looking at how they present themselves in their profile, why they chose a nickname for themselves and use visuals in their texts.

Another way of exploring voice and self-expression in social media can be examining writers' linguistic choices when constructing discourse in their texts. Investigating a similar issue, Myers (2010b, p.263) writes that the main objective of his blog-writers' were "self-expression, positioning themselves in a crowded terrain of other bloggers and commenters"; this, according to Rahimpour (2014, p.1504), is "writers' voice or stance taking" in text. Stance, according to Myers (2010b), is expressing a point of view and using it to agree or disagree with others' opinions in text. Myers (2010b, p.264) explores the notion of stance in five popular blogs by investigating the use of cognitive verbs, adverbs and "ironic quotation" in blogs comments. Comparing his corpus with the British National Corpus, he concludes that a) cognitive verbs signal the engagement between the blog-writer and her audience; b) the use of adverbs may indicate "a contrastive relation to previous comments" (Myers, 2010b, p.273); c) "conversational particles can be used to enact disagreement" and d) "irony dramatizes an opposing position to undermine it, and in doing so reinforces the sense that blogs are a field of stance-taking" (Myers, 2010b, p.274). Rahimpour (2014,

p.1505) also explored the notion of bloggers' voice through examining the frequency of stance markers "hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and self-mention" in a corpus comprising nine applied linguistics blogs with their comments, written by native speakers. She reported that stance markers have a great role "in mediating the relationship between what writers intend to argue and their discourse communities"(Rahimpour, 2014, p.1506).

This suggests that "word choice and sentence structure are an expression of the way we attend to the words of others, the way we position ourselves in relation to others"(Micciche, 2004, p.719). Therefore, lexico-grammatical and syntactical choices seem valuable resources to understand writers' stance and self-expression in texts. This falls into the interpersonal function of language in the domain of systemic functional linguistics, by which language users enter speech events, take a role and establish a relation with the immediate entity they are in contact with and implement a speech act. The interpersonal function of language can be described through Mood and Modality in systemic functional linguistics (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004), which is the framework of the present study. Mood is the role language users take in the discourse and the role they allocate to the recipient. Modality is both the "speaker's judgment towards the topic", and "the social role relationship, and scale of formality and power relationship" (Wang, 2010, p.256). Such roles and relationships can be signalled through lexico-grammatical choices such as the choice of modal verbs, adverbs, pronouns, active or passive voice, and sentence structure (Micciche, 2004, p.719), which can benefit this study.

Examining such features seems valuable for finding out how student-writers relate to their audience; this includes how they construct a stance for themselves, how they position their readers and benefit from it for their own self-expression and identification to achieve the purpose of the texts. This will lead to discussing the features that can define and signal the voice and self-expression of writers in text.

3.5.1 Self-expression and voice

In this section, I will discuss some of the features that manifest the writers' voice, self-expression and intention in academic and non-academic texts. These features are going to be explained based on the findings of some studies such as: analysing Obama and Bush's presidential speech (Ye, 2010, Wang, 2010, Feng and Liu, 2010), language of newspapers (Thompson, 2014) and the role of the writers in academic texts (Tang and John, 1999, Hyland, 2002c, Hyland, 2005, Myers, 2010b, Rahimpour, 2014). This may raise an issue that the language of academic discourse, speeches and newspapers are different from blog-texts by nature as they are written through a different medium, in a different context, for different audience and to achieve different purposes. In the context of this study, blog-

writing was merely to encourage student-writers to write more and beyond the boundaries of the lexico-grammatical rules prescribed in writing classes. This was to help them practice their self-expression, find their voice and boost their confidence in a relaxed environment, with no fear of being corrected or judged for their language errors by their tutors. While involved with blog-writing, my student-writers were also studying in foundation course to prepare for their academic courses. In other words, they were in a transitional phase between a non-academic environment to an academic one. Therefore, it is not unlikely that their blog-texts will show both academic and non-academic characteristics of written texts. On the other hand, being exposed and connected to unlimited websites with various purposes through their blogs, my student-writers had the chance to use the available voices (academic or non-academic) or a combination of them to express themselves. For this reason, the features of self-expression and voice in both academic and non-academic texts can be helpful when analysing my student-writers' voice in their blog-texts. These features will now be discussed through Halliday's systemic functional linguistics within the MOOD system.

In terms of grammar, self-expression and voice can be signalled through the choice of lexico-grammatical patterns in text; the patterns which indicate how writers relate with their readership, position themselves against their readers or negotiate ideas with them. Such issues can be investigated through looking at: 1) the speech functions writers implement in their texts; 2) the Subject types they use in clauses, for instance if they choose to express themselves through their own voice as the architecture of the text (Tang and John, 1999), via self-referencing; if they prefer addressing readers directly (Thompson, 2014) or they would rather bring the audience's voice to the text to construct a collective voice to strengthen their self-expression or show solidarity (Ye, 2010, Thompson & Muntigl, 2008); or if their clauses are agentless as in passive sentences; 3) modality and 4) polarity in clauses.

Among the Subject types indicating the writers' voice and self-expression are the first person pronoun and its derivations, I and my. Tang and John (1999) investigated the role behind the first person pronoun in 27 undergraduate students' essays. They came up with a continuum that starts with the least powerful authorial presence in texts and ends with the most powerful with a range of other possible roles in between; 'I' as representative: this type of 'I' can be found in its plural form 'we' or 'us' and refers to a large population. This decreases the writers' authorial presence in the essay and "reduces the writer to a non-entity" (Tang and John, 1999, p.27). 'I' as guide: with the help of this type of 'I', writers guide readers during their journey into the text, pull them into the text, locate them in the text and so on. This role is often indicated through the use of "mental processes of

perception" (Tang and John, 1999, p.27). 'I' as architect: this role of 'I' portrays the writer as the one "who writes, organises, structures and outlines the material in the essay" (Tang and John, 1999, p.28). 'I' as recounter of research process: 'I' takes the role of the one who explicates and reports the process and steps of the research; it often occurs with material processes. 'I' as opinion-holder: this type of 'I' is very much involved in the text, agreeing with an opinion, arguing, showing their interests in something based on evidences and facts in "mental processes of cognition" (Tang and John, 1999, p.28). 'I' as originator: this type of 'I' signals the authority of the writers and projects their "conception of the ideas or knowledge claims which are advanced in the essay" (Tang and John, 1999, p.29). Using this type of 'I', writers insert their own new ideas into the essay and strengthen their ownership and stance as the author of the text.

Considering the purpose of this study, Tang and John's (1999) categories of the first person pronoun can be a useful guide to understand what role/s student-writers take when creating a stance in their blog-texts. Using a systemic functional framework, Wang (2010, p.261) shows how Obama encouraged Americans to "accept and support his policies" through the use of the single and plural first person pronoun. Using this pronoun, he believes, reduced the gap and built trust between Obama, as the president, and the public. Other pronouns can also contribute to the construction of the voice and self-expression of writers in texts. For instance, the use of *we* can be an indicator of both the writers' and their audience's voice in text; this gives a collective role to the Subject by which writers can express and support their point of view on behalf of their audience. Feng and Liu (2010, p.528) analysed how different levels of interpersonal meanings are achieved in Obama's speech through mood, modals, tense and personal pronouns, *I*, *my*, *you*, *your*, *we* and *our*. Of the pronouns used in the speech, they conclude that frequent use of first person plural pronoun, inclusive *we,* subdued the role of Obama and shared his authority with the public. This enabled him to voice his solidarity with the public and gained their support. It should be noted that the use of such pronouns in Obama's speech is deliberate choices designed to achieve a specific social purpose; therefore, my student-writers' blog-texts can vary from such genres as might not use them consciously.

According to Thompson (2014, p.88), addressing readers explicitly by the second person pronoun *you* in texts indicates "the writer's awareness of the addressee" and can create the readers' voice in text. This contributes to the writer's self-expression and the dialogic aspect of the texts. In addition, muting the first and second person pronouns in text, writers can construct their own voice through using the third person singular or plural pronoun. Exploring if and how my student blog-writers prefer to present the world from their own angle, through using the first person pronoun, or would rather tell their stories through the

readers' eyes by involving other grammatical subjects may provide evidence about their self-presentation and voice in their blog-texts.

As Halliday (2009, p.166) writes, "in order to explain the structure of language we need to consider its use: language is as it is because of the functions it is required to serve". Therefore, the chosen speech functions in text can signal writers and readers' voice and assign roles to them. Looking at two sets of editorials, the Sun and the Guardian, Thompson (2014, p.87) writes about how writers project readers in their texts through "the choice of speech functions which inherently construct a responding role for the addressee (questions, commands and offers as opposed to statement)". In other words, speech functions create a dialogue between the writers and their audience in texts. Including a question, for instance, creates two simultaneous roles in the text, one for the writer as the one who demands for information and one for the imaginary reader as the one who provides the information. Such questions are sometimes reacted to instantly on behalf of the reader, which construct the reader's voice (Thompson, 2014, p.93), and are sometimes left to challenge the readers. The choice of imperative clauses over indicative ones also suggests the speaker's or writer's authority in discourse.

Apart from the speech functions, polarity, positive or negative statements, can signal the writers' voice in texts. For instance, positive declarative clauses, according to (Coffin, 2002, p.516) persuades "a reader to assume that the proposition is unproblematic and that it enjoys broad consensus". This grammatical pattern indirectly urges "alignment rather than directly opening up the proposition for negotiation" (Coffin, 2002, p.516). It should be noted that polarity is not always explicitly signalled in statements and analysis requires a careful observation of all lexico-grammatical choices. Looking at polarity can be valuable to find out if my student blog-writers express their opinion in positive clauses as facts or give room for readers' opinions. Halliday (1970) refers to modality as another element an independent clauses that has interpersonal function, through which the writer's voice can be traced in text. By the virtue of modality, Halliday (1970, p.335) explains, "the speaker associates with the thesis an indication of its status and validity in his own judgment; he introduces and takes up a position". In other words, it indicates that "meaning is contingent and subject to negotiation" (Coffin, 2002, p.14). As explained in Section 2.6.2, modality is realised through two systems: modalisation (probability and usuality) and modulation (obligation and inclination). Modalisation contains the indicative type of clause and is considered an interactional resource through which writers interact and negotiate with their readers. Modulation, on the other hand, contains imperative clauses and "is ideational in function, and expresses factual conditions on the process expressed in the clause" (Halliday, 1970,

p.343). They are realised through "finite verbal auxiliaries" carrying "the full range of options in tense and polarity" (Halliday, 1970, p.343).

It should be noted that knowing these elements in isolation or within a particular clause can provide little evidence for understanding my student-writers' self-expression and voice in their blog-texts. As Sanderson (2008) writes, presentation of self is related to the purpose of the discourse. Therefore, I will explore the linguistic features of their textual voice and self-expression in relation to the social purpose, genre, of their blog-texts. To this end, I will use the results of my register and genre analysis to find out how my student-writers positioned themselves throughout the text, expressed their opinions in relation to their audience and became involved with them dialogically. In the next chapter, I discuss how I gathered the present data, I provide a sample of my analysis and I explain the issues around it.

Chapter 4 Research Methodology

4.1   Introduction

The investigation of my student-writers' language variation in their blogs is based on Halliday's (1987) model of register analysis and Rose and Martin's (2012) model of genre analysis. In this chapter, I explain the methodology and the research tools I implemented, the issues raised during the process of my data analysis and samples of my analysis. I begin by presenting my research questions.

4.2   Research questions

The issues that have been discussed lead into the research questions concerning the language variation in my student-writers' blog-texts. My research questions are as follows:

1. To what extent can my students' blog-texts be conceptualised as belonging to a register?
a. How do the student-writers construct their experiences of the world through their blog-texts?
b. How do the student-writers relate to their audience?

c. What is the mode of the language produced in the blog-texts?

2. To what extent can my students' blog-texts be conceptualised as belonging to a genre or as an emergent genre?
a. To what extent can the purpose of this genre be identified?
b. Is any discourse community constructed among the student-writers?
c. What are the stages of this genre?

3. How do the student-writers construct their voice and express themselves in their blog-texts?

4. What is the role of blogs in EFL writing classes in the context of this study?

In order to address these questions, I begin with the steps and concerns in the analysis of this study.

4.3   Steps and concerns of the analysis of this study

To code my texts, I used UAM (Universidad Autonoma de Madrid) corpus tool software, version 2.8.7. This software is prepared by Michael O'Donnell and is available online. According to O'Donnell (2012), UAM "has been under development since 2007 […] based on earlier software, Systemic Coder" developed in 1992 (personal correspondence with Dr O'Donnell). The UAM site describes this corpus tool software as a "state-of-art

environment for annotation of text corpora" and it is useful for "annotating a corpus as a part of linguistic study, or building a training set for use in statistical language processing"(O'Donnell, 2013).

To analyse how my student-writers portray their world (inside and outside) through constructing experiential meaning in their blogs, a TRANSITIVITY analysis was carried out, where I examined the elements of the TRANSITIVITY system in their blog-texts: the processes, participants and circumstances. Some issues arose during the data analysis such as the frequent ellipsis of participants, which is an important element in the TRANSITIVITY system. In several cases, it was impossible to retrieve the participant from the co-text, as there was not enough linguistic evidence in the texts. This can be interpreted as the students' choices in organising their clauses and making meanings. In addition, the nature of blog-space, as discussed in Chapter 3, can encourage authors to use the language informally. This may be due to the fact that this environment does not impose formal and grammatical constraints on blog-writers.

To examine the interpersonal metafunction of my student-writers' texts, I carried out a MOOD analysis, checking the elements of Subject, Finite operators and MOOD Adjuncts. To analyse the Subject, I also checked the instantiation and function of the first person pronoun, *I*, referring to the writer; the second person plural pronoun, *you* referring to the audience, and the first person plural pronoun, *we*, referring to the author and the audience. The instantiation of any of these pronouns in the place of Subject can be considered as linguistic evidence for finding out to what extent to which the blog-texts, and ultimately the blog itself, are interactive. In addition, I checked the grammatical category responsible for exchanging information in declarative, interrogative (yes/no interrogative and WH-interrogative) and imperative clauses because these can illustrate if my student-writers' blog-texts tend to be monologic or dialogic. The findings of the MOOD analysis were also used to discuss how student-writers construed their self-expression, stance and voice in their blog-texts.

To investigate the textual metafunction, I checked the three types of THEME. It should be noted that in the case of ellipsis, I ignored the removed THEMES that were non-recoverable from the text. Following Halliday, it is true to say that the produced clauses select components from the ideational, interpersonal and textual systems simultaneously; this analysis can illustrate how the constructed language in my student-writers' blog-texts is organised functionally on one hand and what choices were made to make meaning on the other. To provide a thick description of my student-writers' use of language in their blogs, in terms of their linguistic choices and the social purpose of their texts, a qualitative

approach was required. A quantitative method was also used to give a complementary insight into the register/s of the student-writers' blog-texts.

To investigate the role of blogs in the writing classes in the context of this study, I used the data gathered from the interviews with the tutors involved at the foundation course, the writing tutor and student-writers.

4.4   The role of the researcher

I was involved in teaching different subjects in the foundation course at CBFS such as: grammar, listening, speaking, reading, writing and EAP. Therefore, I sometimes was in direct contact with the student-writers, who volunteered to participate in this research, in different classes. To begin this research, I instructed these students to create their blogs and helped them overcome technical problems; throughout the research, I encouraged them verbally to do some activities in their blogs, use them as a platform for free writing and write about whatever they desire. Therefore, the templates, font, size, colour, organisation, topic and content of the texts were all my student-writers' own choice. As the researcher, I never intervened in when, how and what my student-writers wrote in their blogs but I followed their blogs anonymously to understand what was happening there.

4.5   The framework and research tools of the study

To address my first research question regarding the register of my student-writers' blog-texts, I used Halliday's (1987) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). This is because this study is concerned with the lexico-grammatical choices of the student-writers' in their texts and SFL offers an explanation, for what choices are possible in language in terms of meaning and form, and also for describing how these choices can be connected to create discourse (Halliday, 1987). Halliday's view of language is valuable in this study. According to this view, individuals use language to construe their experience and their perception of the world, to communicate and relate with others and "relate what is said (written) to the real world and to other linguistic events" (Bloor and Bloor, 1995, p. 9). This makes it a suitable model for investigating my student-writers' lexico-grammatical choices in their blog-texts, for identifying their functions in meaning-making and for explaining what types of meanings are constructed within their clauses.

To find out about the language used in my student-writers' texts and how meanings are communicated through their texts, it is necessary to go beyond the clause and its linguistic features; in SFL, the relation between the lexico-grammatical features and social context within which they occur is clearly emphasised but understanding of how meanings are negotiated and communicated through texts cannot be established by examining clauses

separately. On the contrary, what need to be examined are the purpose, stages and process of the production of my student-writers' blog-texts. To this end, I adopted Rose and Martin's (2012) model of genre analysis and Swales' (1990) notion of discourse community. Rose and Martin's model helped me to determine the stages and purpose through which the blog-texts are produced and organised, as shown in Tables 11 and 12. Then, three modified semi-structured interviews were carried out in an attempt to understand the participants' language background, their experiences of using online social media, their reasons behind their linguistic choices in their texts and their attitudes towards blog-writing. The interview questions, their allocated codes and the student-writers' responses are provided in Appendix A.

To gain an insight into the purpose of the genres of the texts, their discourse community and the whole blogs, the hyperlinks and comments received form audience were examined. The comments can indicate if and to what extent the blog-writers' discourse is influenced by the audience. As a complementary method, a quantitative way of analysis, Chi-squared test, was also carried out to find out if my students' blogs are coming from one register or not (Table 38). To find out about the tutors' perception of using technology, online platforms and activities in language classes as well as the role of blogs in writing classes, two modified semi-structured interviews were designed and carried out with the tutors. These interviews and their themes are shown in Tables 14 and 15 and are presented in details in Appendix B. In the next section, I will explain the data collection process and what data were obtained.

4.6   Data collection

To obtain my research data in a systematic way, I divided my research process into phases of training, first interview, blog-writing, second interview, third interview and follow-up. To familiarise the students with blog-space and blog-writing, I trained them for four weeks at computer clusters in the college. I prepared easy instructions and helped the students to construct their blogs throughout this period. This took longer than I expected for various reasons; for example, most students had forgotten their password or username and had to start from the beginning, computer clusters were sometimes engaged in other activities, the Internet was not working; or some computers were not functioning properly.

Prior to the next phase, the student-writer participants were informed that they would be free to write about what they liked apart from the issues that would not be socially or culturally acceptable. I also assured them that their writing was not going to be corrected. They were engaged with blog-writing from September 2010 to July 2011. The final number of texts in their blogs varied from eight to 14. The length of the texts varies depending on

the topic and purpose of the text. Towards the end of the foundation course, I ran one interview with the tutors to elicit their perception of using technology and online learning platforms such as blog-space in language classes. I conducted another interview with one of the writing tutors to find out about her views of the role of blogs in writing classes in particular.

4.7 The participants and language used in the data collection

Twenty-four Omani EFL college students participated in this study. Two participants were chosen at random from the pre-intermediate level students on the foundation course; students following the beginner and elementary levels were not selected because they were not equipped with enough English vocabulary and grammatical patterns to be able to write. The selected students had been studying English at the college for at least four months to get to the pre-intermediate level. The participants were 18 years old and had no prior knowledge about blogs and blog-writing. Since the participants were EFL learners on a foundation course, it was felt that their English language was not well developed enough to enable them to discuss the rationale underlying the language used in their written texts explicitly and comprehensively. Therefore, I provided them with the option of writing in English or Arabic. The next section deals with the data: the blog-texts and interviews.

Fifteen tutors were involved in teaching language classes in the foundation course; nine out of fifteen participated in an interview about using technology and online platforms and activities in language classes at the end of the foundation curse. One of the writing tutors, who was involved in preparing and assessing the in-house writing material, took part in a separate interview about the use of blogs in writing classes. This tutor followed the student-writers' activities in their blogs throughout the foundation course anonymously.

4.8 Data sources and analysis

4.8.1 Texts

This section provides a description of how I analysed my data. To illustrate, I provide a sample of one of the student-writers' blog-texts in Figure 7. The same text is used to explain the process of the register and genre analyses in Tables 11 and 12. The interviews with the same participant are discussed in detail in Table 13.
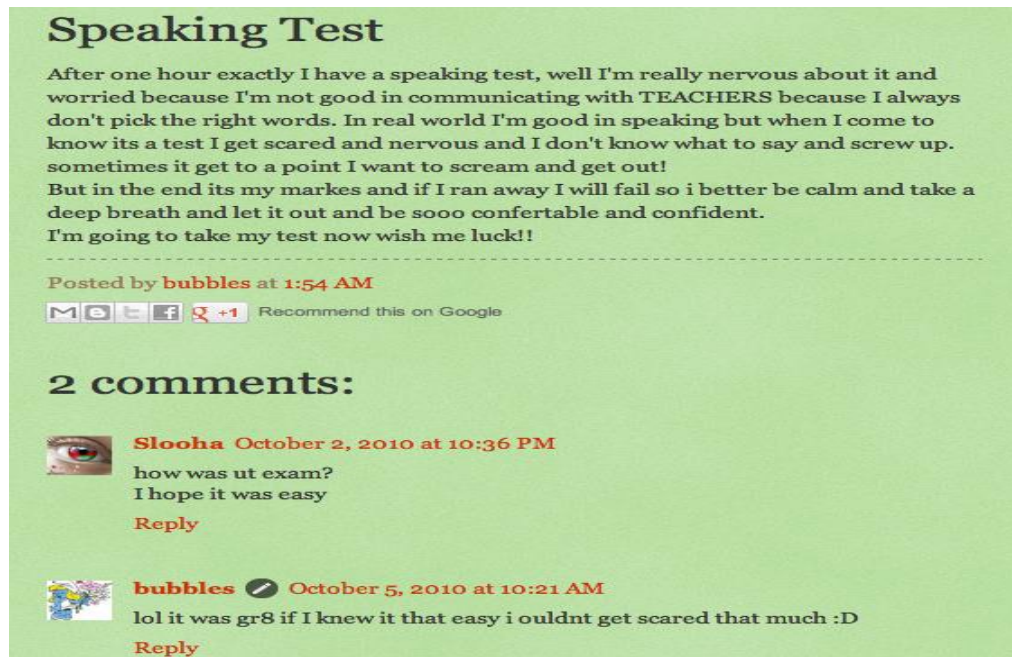
Figure 7: An extract from a blog-text in Blog 1

Some features embedded in blog-texts are not considered in my text-analysis, such as punctuation '!' as in '*wish me luck!!'*; the advert bars, such as *Recommend this on Google*, the time the entry was published in the blogs; the comments received; and the original writer's reactions. As explained in Chapter 3, I am not concerned with minor clauses in this study; for this reason, the titles of the texts, which are generally minor clauses, are not considered in my text analysis of the blog-texts. In the next sub-section, I explain how I implemented my register analysis.

- **Register analysis of the blog-texts**

To examine the student-writers' language variation in their blogs, I used the UAM (Universidad Autonoma de Madrid) corpus tool software, version 2.8.10, developed by Michael O'Donnell and available online. The UAM site describes this corpus tool software as a "state-of-art environment for annotation of text corpora" and it is useful for "annotating a corpus as a part of linguistic study, or building a training set for use in statistical language processing"(O'Donnell, 2013). An example of the tool is given in Figure 8.

Figure 8: UAM version 2.8.10

The UAM corpus tool is based on SFL and provides a description of what language features are used in the corpus and how they are organised. This tool gives the users the opportunity to organise their system of coding based on a suitable format for their investigation. According to the UAM homepage, this software is useful for

- "Annotation of multiple texts using the same annotation schemes, of your design.

- Annotation of each text at multiple levels (e.g., NP, Clause, Sentence, whole document).

- Searching for instances across levels, e.g., *finite-clause containing company-np,* or *future-clause in introduction.*

- Comparative statistics across subsets, e.g., contrasting conversational patterns used by male and female speakers.

- All annotation is in sorted in XML files, meaning that your annotations can more easily be shared with other applications.

- We use "stand-off" XML: the annotation files do not contain the text, just pointers to the text. This allows for multiple overlapping analyses of the same text, not so easy in standard XML" (UAM, 2.8.10).

My coded schemes to analyse elements of register are shown below, Figure 9 TRANSITIVITY, Figure 12 MOOD and Figure 15 THEME.

TRANSITIVITY

In the TRANSITIVITY analysis, the texts were coded according to the patterns of processes and circumstances through which the system of TRANSITIVITY is realised. The system of coding, with the help of the UAM corpus tool, is illustrated in Figure 9.
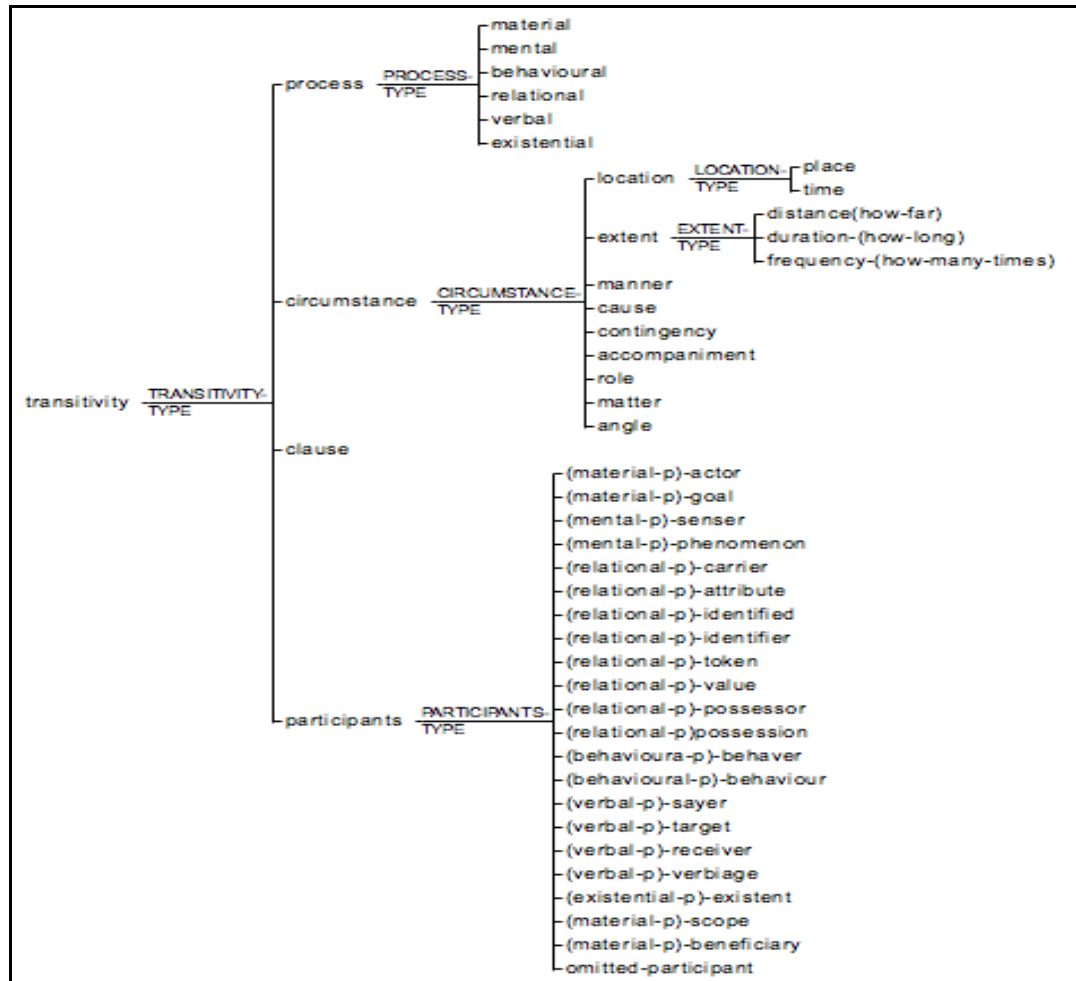
Figure 9: The coding scheme of TRANSITIVITY

As Figure 9 shows, the possible process type used in my students' blogs are coded according to Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004) model containing the material, mental, behavioural, relational, verbal and existential process types. The circumstance types in my students' blog-texts are also coded according to the same model, comprising location, extent, manner, cause, contingency, accompaniment, role, matter and angle. An extract showing the TRANSITIVITY analysis of the example given in Figure 10 is presented below.
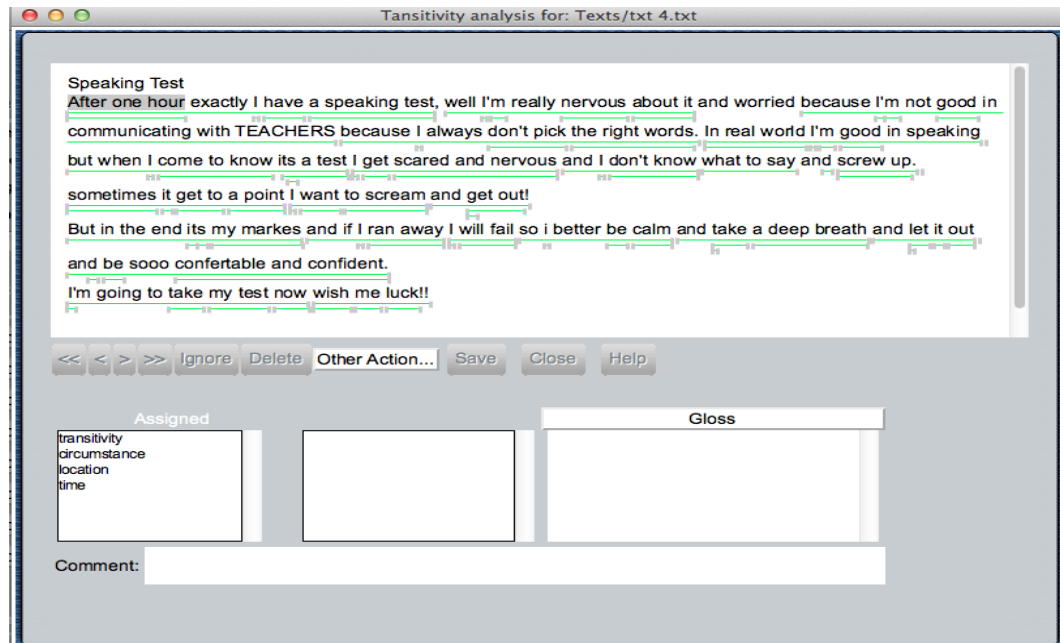
Figure 10: The descriptive system of TRANSITIVITY

As can be seen in Figure 10, the linguistic features of Text 4 in Blog 1 are identified and labelled. For instance, the highlighted linguistic feature in the above text, '*after one hour'*, is a circumstantial Adjunct of location type and belongs to the sub-category of 'Time'. This analysis is shown in detail in Figure 11 below. The process types are in bold, participants are italicised and the circumstances are underlined.
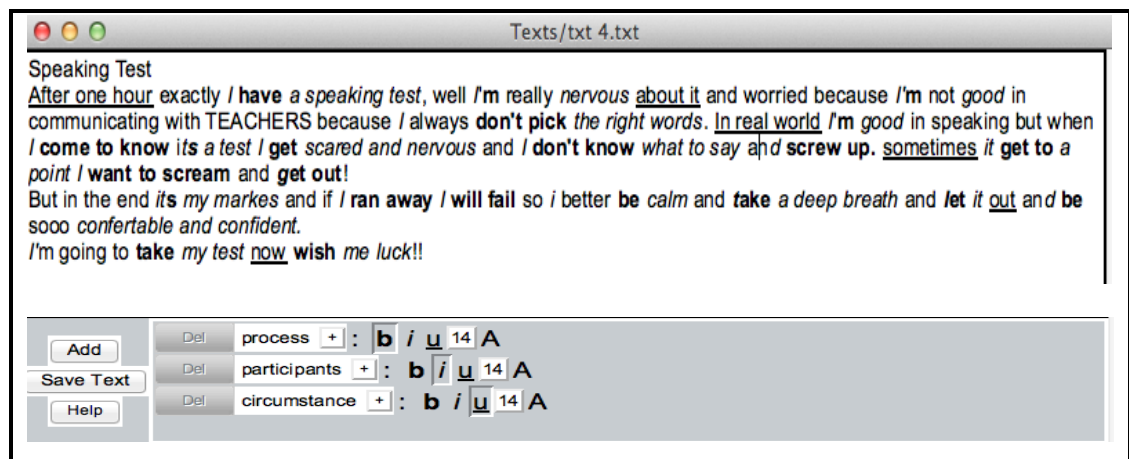
Figure 11: The process and circumstance types of Text 4 in Blog 1

As Figure 11 shows, there are 37 participants, 23 processes and six circumstances in Text 4. Out of the total number of processes used in this text, eight of them are material, five mental, nine relational and one behavioural. Eleven of the participants involved in relational processes have the role of carrier and attribute, two of them are identified and identifier and the other two participants are possessor and possession. The choice of these participants shows that this text is focused on describing and identifying entities. Nine of the participants

have the role of actor and goal and are involved in material processes through which the blog-writer stated who was involved in what. Seven of the participants are senser and phenomenon, one of them is a behaver and five participants are omitted. The six circumstances in Text 4 comprise five circumstances of location (Place) type and one circumstance of matter. The high frequency of material processes in this text construe the blog-writer's perception of her world, filled with actions and happenings as well as where and when things were done or happened.

MOOD

The analysis of Text 4 according to the MOOD system, with its elements, Subject and FINITE types, is shown in Figure 12. The Subjects have been coded in four categories: *I*, *you*, *we* (inclusive), and others, including *we* (exclusive), with their derivations. FINITE types have three categories: tense, modal and omitted ones. MOOD Adjuncts are coded according to three classifications: temporality, usuality and modal readiness, inclination and ability. Independent clauses are also coded according to two classifications: indicative (declarative and interrogative) and imperative clauses.
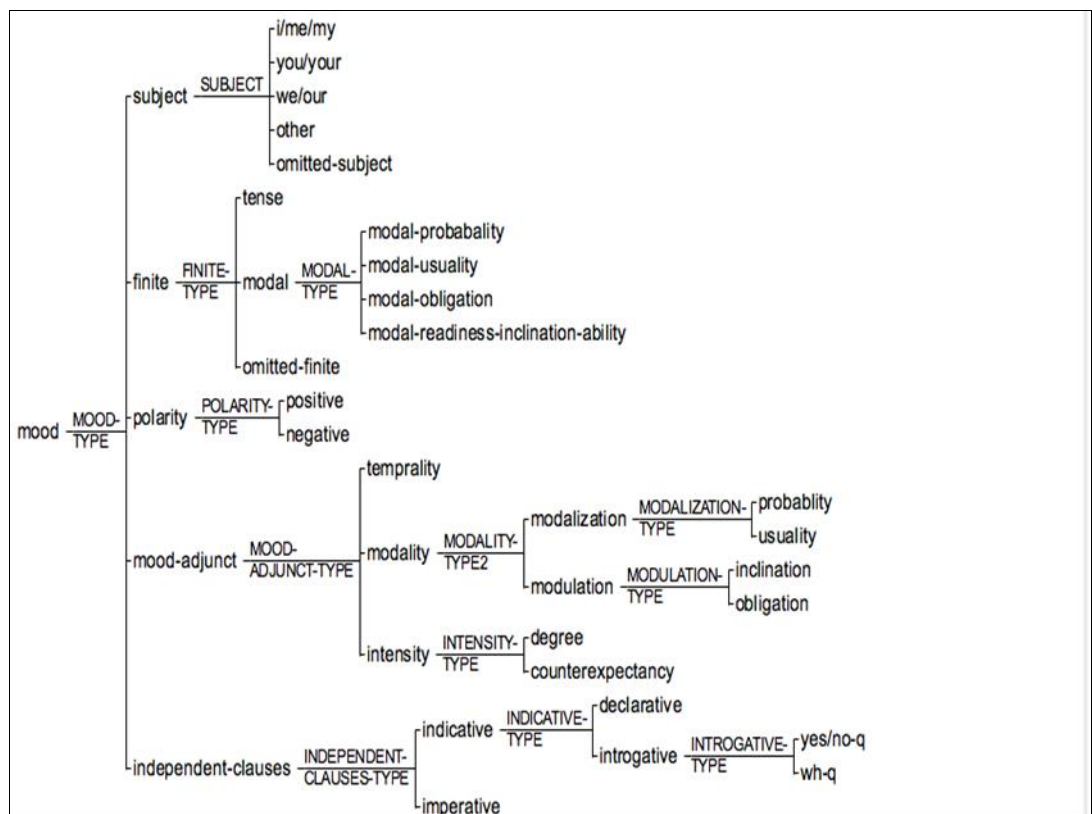
Figure 12: The coding scheme of the MOOD analysis

As I am concerned with the constructed textual interactions between the blog-writers and their audience, I coded the first person pronoun, *I*, the second person pronoun, *you*, and the first person plural pronoun inclusive, *we*, separately. The use of these pronouns helps me to understand if the blog-writers address themselves to create an authoritative stance in their texts; if they address the audience to demand goods and services or offer them something; or if they show solidarity with the audience and strengthen their propositions. Examining modal types can also help to find out if the blog-writers give space to the audience's opinions when proposing something or if they express their own ideas with authority and encourage the audience to comply with them. The different types of clauses can suggest the blog-writer's intention: whether it is to give information or demand goods and services. The coded features are shown in Figure 13.
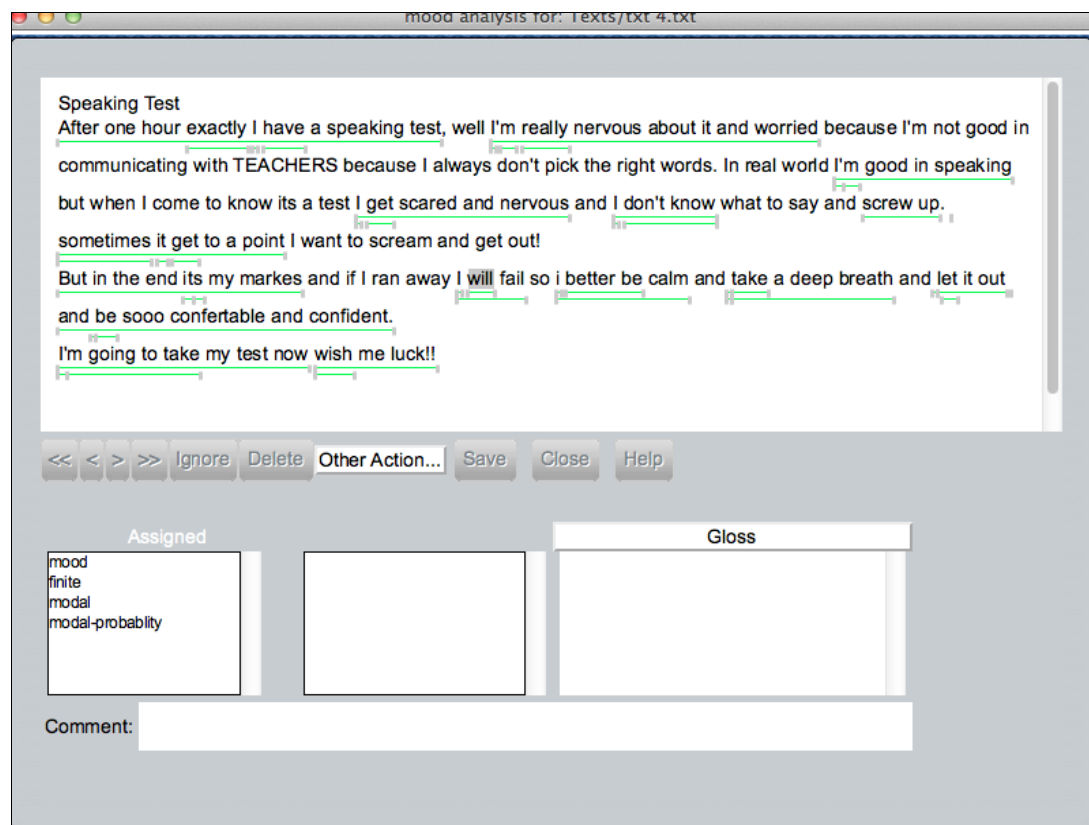
Figure 13: The descriptive system of MOOD

As can be seen, 'will' is described as Finite modal type and belongs to the modal probability category. The analysis of the MOOD elements in Text 4, through the UAM corpus tool, is given in Figure 14. In this figure, the Subject is in bold, the Finite operators are italicised, the MOOD Adjuncts are underlined and the clauses are coloured blue.
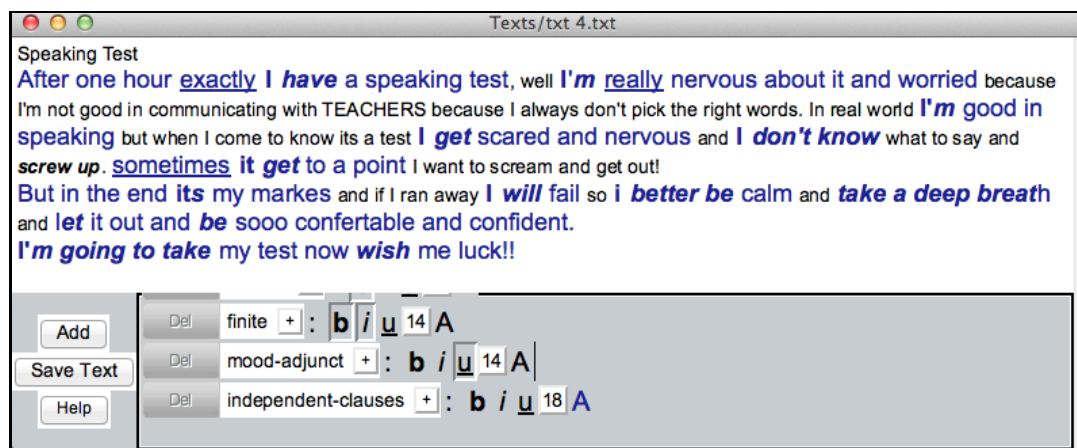
Figure 14: The MOOD elements in Text 4 in Blog 1

Figure 14 shows there are fourteen independent clauses, nineteen Finite operators, ten Subjects and three MOOD Adjuncts. As the UAM tool calculates, 80% of the total number of Subjects is the first person pronoun and its derivations. The Finite type (tense) has the highest frequency among the total number of Finite operators, accounting for 78.95%. A Modal probability was used in the whole text, accounting for 5.26% of the total number of Finite operators. There is only one imperative clause and no interrogative clause in this text. The high frequency of indicative clauses shows that this text is informative and the lack of imperative and second person pronouns show the lack of interactivity in this text. Consequently, I concluded that the tenor is weakly signalled in Text 4.

THEME

To examine the THEME types in Text 4, the THEME types are coded according to the SFL categories of textual, interpersonal and topical THEME. The topical THEME has been coded into three classifications, marked, unmarked and omitted THEME. The coding scheme is shown in Figure 15 below.
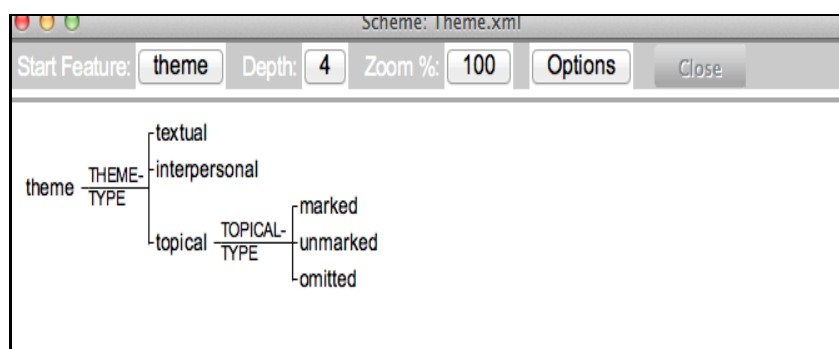
Figure 15: The coding scheme of the THEME analysis

In some cases, I could not retrieve the linguistic feature omitted in the thematic position in the texts and I needed the blog-writers' confirmation to be certain of my guess; as it was almost impossible to get back to the participants after they finished their foundation course,

I decided to treat them as omitted ones. The coded features happening in the THEME position in Text 4 are illustrated in Figure 16 and the analysis is shown in Figure 17.
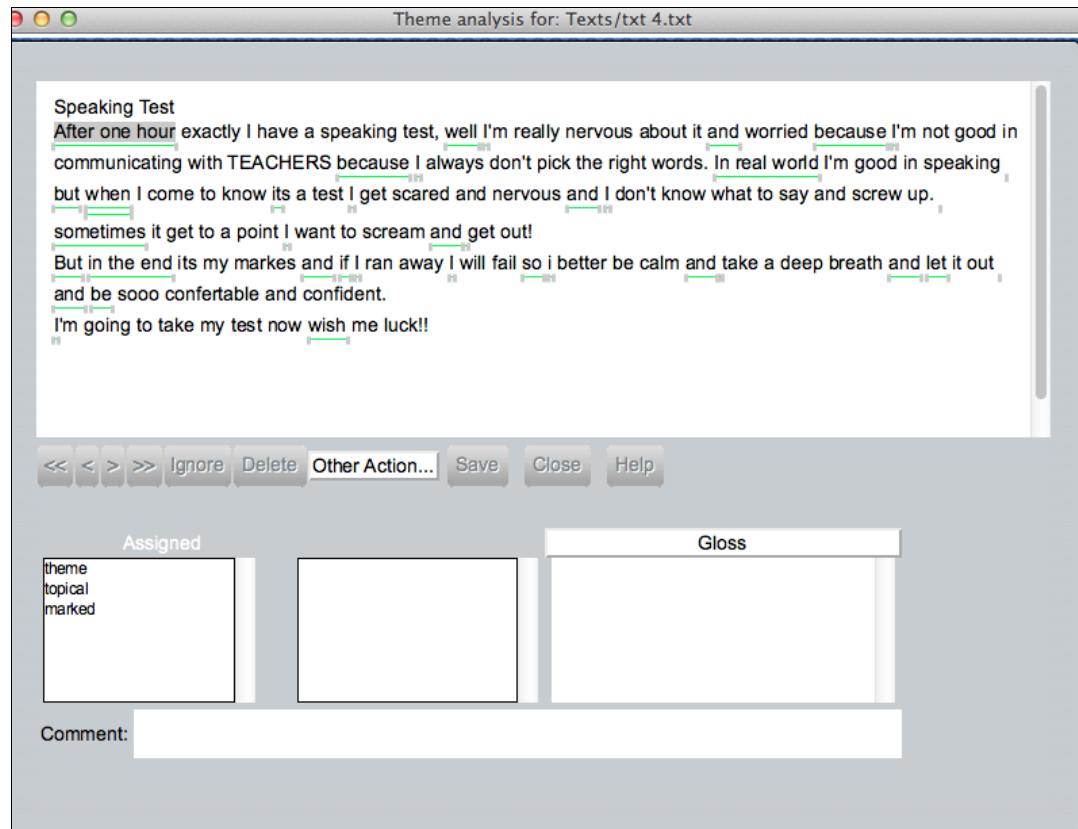
Figure 16: The descriptive system of THEME

During the analysis, I noticed that taking the first choice in the clause as topical THEME (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004) is not always sufficient to determine the point of departure. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) claim that a clause has only one topical THEME and whatever happens after that is RHEME; however, applying this view to my analysis, I sometimes lost a linguistic feature that apparently had a role in developing the message in the clause. For instance, in the first sentence of this text - *After one hour exactly I have a speaking test* - the phrase '*After one hour*' is a circumstance in the thematic position and was coded as a topical marked THEME; however, the choice of 'I' after that seems to be a part of the topical THEME and responsible for creating the context and helping the message develop in the clause. This is the point I was struggling with throughout the whole process of analysing the topical THEME in blog-texts. To be consistent and follow Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004) model, I did not code *I* as a topical THEME but I think that there might be a possibility to have more than one topical THEME in a clause.

The analysis of the THEME types is shown in Figure 17. The topical THEME is underlined, the textual THEME is in bold and there is no interpersonal THEME in this text.
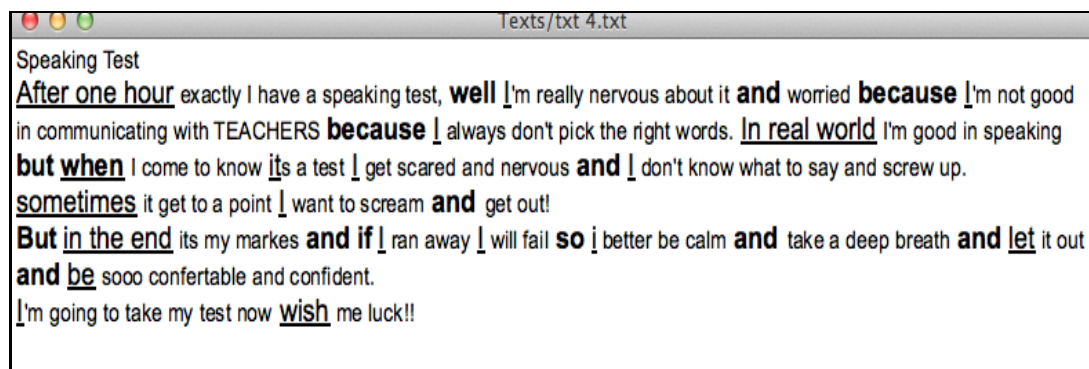
Figure 17: The THEME elements in Text 4 in Blog 1

As Figure 17 shows and according to the UAM analysis, the topical THEME has the highest frequency in Text 4, accounting for 58.33% of the total number of THEMES. Textual THEME, comprising 41.67% of the total THEME, is the second highest THEME in this text. There is no interpersonal THEME in this text. High frequencies of topical and textual THEME are features that, according to Taboada (2004) and Wattles and Radić-Bojanić (2007), can be related to the spoken mode of language. On the other hand, the scarcity of the interpersonal THEME in this text shows that this text can be characterised as a monologue.

Having identified my student-writers' language variation in their blog-texts through register analysis, I then carried out a genre analysis to understand the social purpose of the blog-texts. In the sub-section below, I will explain how I analysed the genres of the texts.

- **Genre analysis of the blog-texts**

To give a better view of the process of the genre analysis of my blog-texts, the analysis of Text 4 is presented below. To this end, before going through the sentences in the text, I posed three questions: 'What is the sentence telling the reader?', 'What are the linguistic features of this sentence?' and 'Which stage does this sentence resemble?'. This involved comparing the stages through which my blog-texts unfold with the schematic structures of the institutionalised genres defined by Martin (1992), Rose and Martin (2012, p.130), Coffin et al. (2005) and Piriyasilpa (2007, 2009). The process of determining the genre of Text 4 in Blog 1 is as follows. This is the original text of the blog-writer and may contain misspelled words and unconventional grammatical patterns.

Table 11: An extract of genre analysis, Text 4 Blog 1

Text	What is the purpose of this sentence?	What are the linguistic features of this sentence?	Which stage does this sentence resemble?	Which genre can it be associated with?	What is the purpose of this genre?
Speaking Test			Title	Narrative	Resolving a complication
After one hour exactly I have a speaking test.	This phase is concerned with the setting of the story through telling the time and the participants	Temporal circumstance: *After one hour* Participant 1 (carrier): *the first person pronoun "I"* Participant 2 (attribute): a speaking test	Orientation		
well I'm really nervous about it and worried because I'm not good in communicating with TEACHERS because I always don't pick the right words. In real world I'm good in speaking *but* when I come to know its a test I get scared and nervous and I don't know what to say and screw up. sometimes it get to a point I want to scream and get out!	A problem is signalled, *really nervous about it and worried*. She highlights her states when taking the speaking test and what may go wrong and provides the reasons behind it.	Using attributes: nervous, *worried, not good in communicating, Good in speaking, scares*, Relational processes *am, is,* material process *don't pick up, get out,* mental process *know, get to a point, want* Intensifiers *really, always* Projecting tension through using 'Not': *not good in communicating;* don't pick the right words; I don't know what to say	Complication/ Crisis		
But in the end its my markes and if I ran away I will fail *so* i better be calm and take a deep breath and let it out and be sooo confertable and confident.	She evaluates the situation, *in the end its my markes,* explains the consequences, *if I ran away I will fail* and provides a solution, *so i better be calm and take a deep breath and let it out and be sooo confertable and confident..*	Internal conjunctions (Conditional) *if.* External conjunction *because* to state the reason. *So* signals the resolution Thornbury and Slade (2006, p.166)	Resolution		

As Table 11 shows, this text places the story, explains a crisis, provides a resolution and expresses what the situation is now, which follows the stages of the Narrative genre defined by Martin (1992). Throughout the process of genre analysis, I noted some disruption in the schematic

structures of the genre of some texts. In other words, the stages of the dominant genre in the texts showed the characteristics of the stages of other genres. An extract showing genre hybridity is given below.

Table 12: An extract of genre hybridity

Genre	Purpose	Stages	Embedded genre	Fragmented stages	Text
Descriptive report	Classifying/ describing a phenomenon				My Favourite Kinds Of Desserts,Sweets"
		Classification			1- Cinnabon:
		Description			Its one of the yummiest sugery sweets ever, with its melted sauce that is on the top of it makes it more delicious to eat it.
			Exposition	Claim	Its a perfect dessert to have specially when a person is depressed,makes you feel better.
				Evidence	Atleast that works for me
		Classification			2: Dunkin Donuts:
		Description	Exposition	Claim	It is the most famous donuts shop in the world and the most sugery, delicious sweets anyone can try!
				Evidence	The interesting thing that makes people want to try is that they have so many different types of donuts with colours and nice shaped flavoure on top of the donut,it makes it more special than other normal donutsdelicious sweets anyone can try!
	Classification				3-Molten Chocolate from Chili's:
			Anecdote	Remarkable event Reaction	When i tried it for the first time it was unbelievable! I cant describe it in words because it was amazing, Believe it or not but it felt like heaven.
				Recommendation	It is so yummy and i recommend every creature in this world to try it!

This extract shows how the blog-writer switches from one genre to another; this is in line with Martin and Rose's (2008, p.241) definition of "mixed **texts**, which happen to instantiate more than one genre" (emphasis as in the original). In the final row and column, the text follows a pattern that is associated with Anecdote, so I suggest that the Anecdote genre is embedded in this Descriptive report. Unpacking such mixed texts raised the question of whether these embedded stages can be called an instance of a separate genre or a segment/fragment of a genre. However, I was reluctant to call them an instance of a genre since such deviations were sometimes limited to one or two sentences and did not meet the requisites of being a genre - comprising stages, a purpose and a discourse community.

The word 'fragment' seems a better choice, as it can individuate these stages from other stages in the text: the stages that have their own particular features and belong to other genres. This raised another issue: 'What is the genre of a text with various genre-fragments?'. Drawing on Martin's (1992) view of 'Macro-genre' to refer to a text with embedded genres and considering the purpose of the whole texts along with their linguistic features dominating the texts, I decided to classify hybrid texts in terms of their closest genre or genres.

It seems that blogs as a "new medium" (Kress, 2013) can motivate blog-writers to resort to the schematic structures of other genres in order to achieve their purpose; to understand the blog-writers' reasons behind their linguistic choices in their blog-texts and the reason why they write in their blogs, I carried out three interviews. A sample of each interview is presented in the following sub-section.

4.8.2   Interviews

To unpack and add depth to my findings in register and genre analysis, I decided to conduct semi-structured interviews. This type of interview allows interviewees to discuss their feelings through open-ended questions and describe the issues in detail. I should note that the cultural context made this impossible in the way I had planned and I had to modify the procedure. This was because the participants felt uncomfortable about recording their voices. Therefore, the interview-questions were printed and participants were asked to write their answers. I read and explained all of the questions to the participants and sometimes asked an Omani teacher to provide a translation when necessary. I read the answers they provided, checked my understanding with them and asked for more clarification when needed. Following this procedure, I carried out three modified semi-structured interviews with the student-writers (See Appendix A: Student-writers' interview questions); the first was conducted at the beginning of the semester to find out about my student-writers' previous experiences of using the Internet, Facebook page and blog-space, their attitudes towards such social networks, what they usually write in their blogs if they have one and their level of language proficiency. The second interview was conducted towards the end of the foundation course. It was a 'talk around texts' (Lilis and McKinney, 2003) to understand the blog-writers' rationale behind their lexico-grammatical choices in their blog-texts and the purpose of the whole blog. The third interview was done at the end of the semester, focusing on the participants' perceptions and attitudes to blog-writing and its impact on their writing skills. My student-writers were all aware that I was not concerned with their spelling and grammatical errors. The participants had the option to write in Arabic or English; the duration of each interview was between 45 minutes to 1 hour.

In addition, to understand the tutors' perception of the use of technology and online activities in language classes and the role of blogs in writing classes, I designed and carried out two semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions (Appendix B contains the list of interview questions with the tutors). The first interview was conducted with nine out of 15 tutors at the foundation level to know about the purpose of the writing classes, activities implemented, expected assignments, tutors' perception of using ICT and online activities in classes and their views of language learning and using technology. The second interview was conducted with one of the writing tutors involved in preparing in-house writing material and assessing final exam papers. This was to elicit her perception of using blogs, its role in writing classes and towards her students' attitudes towards blog-writing and their views of cooperative learning and online interactions. The tutors provided their answers in 45 minutes. These interviews were carried out towards the end of the foundation course; this was because some of the tutors were unfamiliar with blogs and using them for the first time, so needed some time to gain a better insight into what a blog is, what happens in blogs, and what student-writers do with their blogs. Due to the tutors' concerns and tight schedules, the interview questions were printed and they were asked to write their answers. I informed them that they did not have to return the interview papers but if they did, they would be considered as giving their consent. I also explained that they would remain anonymous and their responses would be used for the purpose of this research only. The interview questions were drawn from the studies on teachers and students' perceptions of and attitudes towards language and technology as well as using web tools in writing classes explained in Chapter 3, such as Jiménez-Caicedo et al. (2014, p.91), Barton and Lee (2013, p.155), Zarei and Al-Shboul (2013), Chen (2012) and Noytim (2010).

- **Talk-around-text interviews**

To find out about the purpose of the texts and blogs as a whole, I wrote and organised the questions in my modified interviews around issues concerning whether the blogs were intended to encourage interaction with the audience or to inform the audience; if the blog-writers constructed an identity and a stance through their linguistic choices in their texts and what purpose blog-writers pursue through blog-writing. The interview questions were concerned with the following linguistic features of blog-texts:

- First person pronoun, *I*, which can signify the author's self-expression, voice in the text, a means of creating stance and "authorial identity" (Hyland, 2002a, Vladimirou, 2007) and an autobiographical type of genre (Lomborg, 2009);
- Second person pronoun, *you*, which refers to communication between the reader and audience (Ye, 2010, p.146); First person plural pronoun, *we*, which is defined as a means of showing solidarity (Ye, 2010, p.146), and "readers' view" (Thompson, 2001, p.58);

- Interrogative clauses, which can be used to bring the reader's thought to the text;

- Imperative clauses, which address readers explicitly;

- Modality, which refers to how the writers negotiate with readers (Martin and Rose, 2003, p.50) or create a stance in their text;

- Active and passive voice.

During the modified talk-around text interview, the non-linguistic elements of the blogs were also brought up in order to find out why my student-writers used them in their blogs. These elements are:

- Templates

- Visuals including photos and emoticons

- Slideshows and video-bars

- Font size as well as highlighted, bold or italic words or sentences.

An extract of the talk-around-text interview with the writer of Blog 1 is given below. I should note that the interview session concerned three texts from the student-writer' blogs: two texts were chosen by her and one text was chosen by the researcher randomly. The coded themes of the modified talk-around-text interviews of the blog-writer of Blog 1 are summarised in Table 13.

Table 13: Talk-around-text interviews

Texts	Title	Genre	Linguistic elements of the blog-texts	Non-linguistic features within the blog
Text 5	Stop fighting	Exemplum	• 1st person pronoun and its derivations (INW2I) • 1st person plural pronoun (inclusive) (INW2W) • 2nd person pronoun (INW2Y) • Modality (INW2M) • Active and passive voice (INW2AV/PV) • Interrogative or imperative clauses (INW2I/I)	• Writing in blog (INW3W) • Purpose of blog (INW3p) • Audience and comments (INW3au/co) • Visuals (INW3v) • Emoticons (INW3e) • Video/music-bars (INW3v) • Slideshows (INW3s) • Template (INW3temp) • Highlighted and bold words (INW3h/b) • Colour and font of the texts (INW3c/f) • Title of the blog (INW3t)
Text 7	The best family I could get!	Exposition		
Text 8	My life	Exposition		

INW2: Interview 2; INW3: Interview 3

Extracts from interviews with student-writers

In this section, I provide an extract of the interviews with the blog-writer of Blog 1 comprising the themes shown in Table 13 above. I retained the misspelled words and ungrammatical sentences as in the original. This includes a brief interpretation of her statements, too.

First person pronoun, I (INW2I)

Interviewer: Why have you used the first person pronoun 'I' in this text? (Text 7, The best family could get!)

Interviewee: "Because it is about me and my family"[...]"it's not likely for Arabs to use *I* a lot because they find it rude"[...] "I sometimes use 'I' in blog".

The interviewee's concern about using the first person pronoun can imply that she is under pressure from the conventions of the community in which she is situated. This may be one of the reasons that hinders her from using the first person pronoun. However, her preference for using it in her blog indicates that blogs can create a different context or in Kress's (2013) terms 'a different medium' where blog-writers can use language differently and are free from the boundaries imposed by socio-cultural conventions.

Second person pronoun, you 2ⁿᵈ person pronoun (INW2Y)

> Text 7: Im not exaggerating I'm only saying the truth and that what I've been raised for and what I wrote is nothing comparing to what <u>you'll</u> see.

Interviewer: Why have you used the second person pronoun, you, in this sentence?

Interviewee: "to attract people or the readers".

This shows the blog-writer's attempt to draw the readers into her texts and involve them in the discourse.

First plural person pronoun (inclusive), we (INW2W)

> Text 5: If anyone saw a fight should stop it not sit and watch as if there's something funny to watch because if one of them past away <u>we</u>'ll feel bad about it and <u>we</u> wont forgive <u>our selves</u>.

Interviewer: Why have you used 'we' and 'ourselves' in this sentence?

Interviewee: "Because I mean everybody, all the people"[…] "I used 'anyone' because I wanted to attract people and because it's for everybody not one person".

The blog-writer's reply is that she used the first person plural pronoun *we* and the pronoun *anyone* to include the audience and bring their voice to her discourse when giving her opinion. Through this, she strengthens her proposition and shows her solidarity with the readers.

Modality (INW2M)

> Text 5: I think they <u>should put</u> him in jail because the other person <u>could</u> of died because of him! And everybody <u>should solve</u> their problems without a fight!If anyone saw a fight <u>should stop</u> it not sit and watch as if there's something funny to watch because if one of them past away we'll feel bad about it and we wont forgive our selves.

Interviewer: Why have you used modal 'should' and 'could' in these sentences?

Interviewee: "I used 'should' because I don't know who's going to read what I wrote; so as an advice I used 'should' not 'must' here".

The interviewee's said that she was making a careful choice of modal types in her texts through which she tried to give space to readers' opinions. This may suggest that she had a low authorial stance in her texts. This issue can also be related to the sense of audience in blogs and how it can shape the blog-writers' minds that affect their instance of their language, which is text.

Interrogative or imperative clauses (INW2I/I)

> **Text 7**: Then here I come, and after me, my two young brothers.
>
> <u>Why do I think we are the best?</u>
>
> Because we are raised as Muslims and my parents taught us to respect other religions and different cultures.

Interviewer: Why have you used a question in the middle of this text?

Interviewee: "Because I want to attract people and make my writing interesting".

This indicates how the blog-writer organised her text to bring the audience into her discourse; this suggests that although this blog may sound monologic, the blog-writer may be thinking about the audience constantly while writing.

Active and passive sentences (INW2AV/PV)

Interviewer: Why have you used active sentences (and not passive ones) in your texts?

Interviewee: "Because it is easier to describe my feeling and it's better for others to understand". Referring to Text 5: 'stop fighting', she stated, "I wrote active because I myself saw the huge fight".

According to the interviewee's reply, she prefers to use active rather than passive sentences when describing her emotions. She also refers to the important role of the doer *I* in active sentences in Text 5. This shows how blog-writing encouraged this student-writer to shape her 'I' identity in her texts through self-referencing and expressing her voice.

Writing in blog (INW3W)

Interviewer: Which one do you prefer, writing in your blog or for your assignments? Why?

Interviewee: "In blog"[…] "in my assignments I can't express my feelings because it must be formal"[…] " I think blog is more comfortable to write in"[…].and "I will write in my blog; I love writing and I love my blog".

Her reply suggests that the relaxed environment of her blog may have had a positive impact on her activities and identity work when writing.

Interviewer: Do you think blog-writing has improved your writing skills? How?

Interviewee: "It improved my writing skills and I learned more vocab"[...] "it helps the students to improve their writing"[…] "I think blog is better in learning because the whole world can correct my grammar but in the paper only certain people can and it might get lost. I think blog is amazing for learning writing and I wish if all teachers use this method in teaching".

According to the interviewee, she enhanced her writing skills through blog-writing and interacting with the audience. This indicates how much audience can contribute to improving the blog-writers' language skills, through visiting and commenting on blogs.

Audience and comments (INW3au/co)

Interviewer: Have you written or received any comments?

Interviewee: "Yes".

The interviewee referred to Text 7 (the best family I could get!) stating, "People like what I wrote and gave good comments". However, she brought up an issue which prevents her from writing comments; she said, "The only thing I think about is my spelling because it's embarrassing". She expressed her opinion of and fears of writing comments too; "I wrote some comments but not a lot. I love writing comments but I'm scared to hurt others feelings". This shows that the audience can play a key role in what is happening in blog-writers' cognition which, in turn, affects what is happening in the blog.

The title (INW3t), template (INW3temp), visuals (INW3v) as well as colour and font of the texts (INW3c/f)

Interviewer: Why have you chosen this title and template for your blog?

Interviewee: "because I love bubbles. I feel it makes people happy and it has a lot of colours" […]"My blog background is so colourful and it makes me feel like I want to write more and more and I like to write in different colour because colours attract people to read it".

An extract of Text 7 with visuals and the same colour and font is provided below:
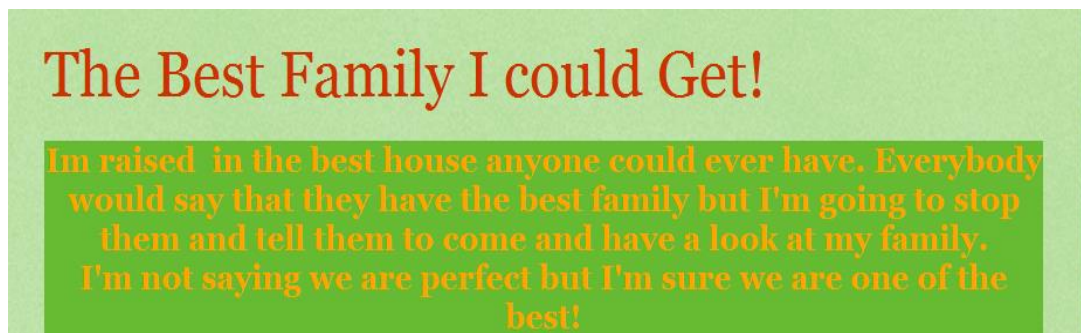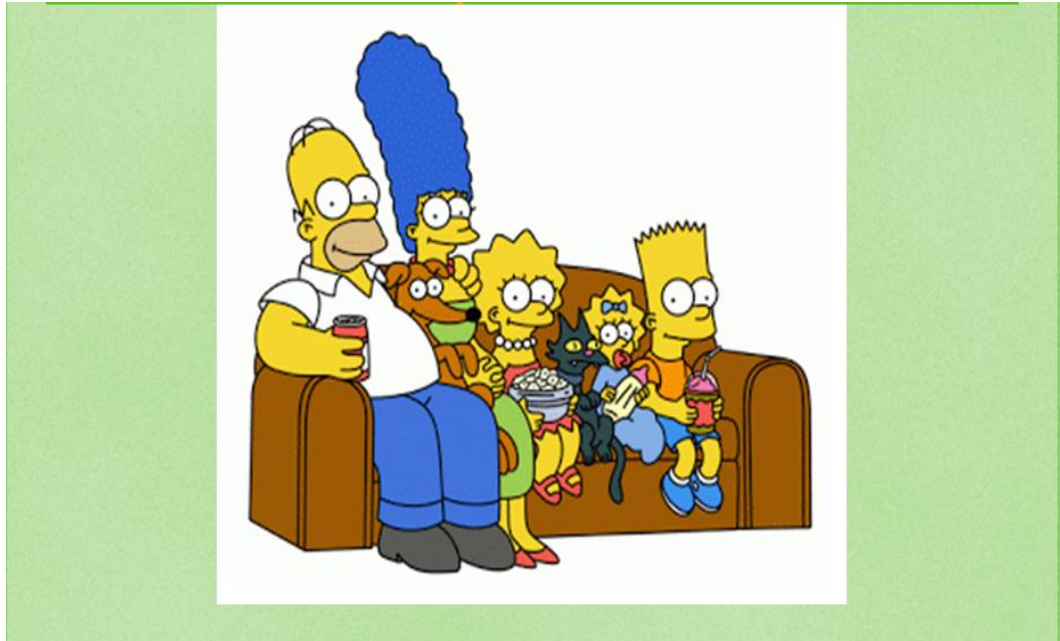
Interviewer: Why have you written in bold and added visuals to this text?

Interviewee: "I write in bold to make what I'm writing more beautiful and attractive" […] "I put pictures to attract the readers". This indicates how a blog-writer can use the non-linguistic elements embedded in a blog to interact with the audience and engage them in the discourse.

Purpose of the blog (INW3p)

Interviewer: What is your blog about? Explain.

Interviewee: "This blog is about me; because it is easy to talk about myself because I know everything about myself". For instance, for Text 5 she said, "I was talking about myself and my family" […] "I wrote to tell people how great my family is and how much I love my

family". This can suggest that she used her blog as a diary to write about her personal issues, feelings and experiences.

- **Interviews with tutors**

In an attempt to understand what was happening in the actual writing classes, what was expected from the student-writers in writing classes, the tutors' attitudes towards using online social media and the Internet in classes and if they thought technology could improve students' language learning, I carried out an interview with the tutors involved in the foundation course. Interviews with the tutors are provided in Appendix B. The themes that were brought up with their sub-categories and their codes are shown below in Table 14; it should be noted that the codes begin with (INW4) that is 'Interview 4' followed by the abbreviation of what is assigned as a theme.

Table 14: Interview with the tutors

Themes	Codes
1. Tutors' perception of writing classes	• Aims of writing classes (INW4AWC) • Writing tasks presented in the class (INW4WT) • Student-writers' achievement (INW4SA)
2. Tutors and students' computer literacy	• Computer skills (INW4CSK)
3. Tutors' perception of using technology in classes	• Computer assisted learning (INW4CAL) • Online environments and activities (INW4OEA) • Reasons for avoiding using technology in classes (INW4AVR) • The Internet and web tools in teaching writing skills (INW4IW)

The interview questions are provided in Appendix B, but, as a sample, I will give an overview of what one of the tutors said and will add some commentary in the following section. I use the tutor's actual words in speech marks. The findings of the interview with the tutors are provided in Chapter 7 and are discussed in Chapter 8. The findings of one of the interviews are provided as a sample below. This is based on the interview with tutor 1 and is organised according to the themes in Table 13. For more detail see Appendix B.

Tutors' perception of writing classes

As the tutor stated, writing classes are exam-oriented and students; therefore they are asked to follow the samples designed based on what will appear in the test. This encourages them to try to practice what to write in the final exam rather than how to write. As she said, this

helps them get high score in the exams but "become confident and an effective writer is hypothetical". This suggests that students' knowledge does not go beyond what is presented in the in-house prepared course book.

Tutors and students' computer literacy

The tutor stated that she received no computer training in the college; as she is interested in language learning and technology, she attended some workshops on "the significance and usage of computers in classes". She noted that her students' computer literacy is good but they are more comfortable with Arabic sites and "their proficiency in English does hamper their understanding". As it seems, students' lack of English language proficiency can discourages them from using English medium environments to practice and improve their language.

The tutors' perception of using technology in classes

The tutor had positive attitudes towards using CALL and has been using it for four to five years; she refers to the benefit of using CALL in language classes saying that "CALL brings students from passive to active state". Seemingly, CALL can change classes from being teacher-centred to student-centred and give a chance to shy students to express themselves. She refers to other modes of writing such as email, as another way of self-expression, which can be motivating and involves students in various activities like researching and gathering information about what they are going to write. This can help students to elevate their language proficiency and writing skills both. She also addressed her students' enthusiasm in using computers; however, she stressed that "they need guidance to get the appropriate learning sites". She lists her criteria when choosing an online material for her class: being matched with students' level, being interesting such as games, quizzes and what can "promote logical thinking. The tutor refers to the reasons why using online websites and web tools is not desirable in classes: tutors' own personal perceptions of learning or syllabus, not being emphasised in the curriculum, limited time of the classes, lack of technical support, insufficient number of computer labs, rigid syllabus, low speed of the Internet and not being relevant to the final exam.

Interview with a writing tutor

The second interview was carried out with the writing teacher who was involved in preparing and teaching the in-house writing material at all levels for years in the foundation course. It should be noted that this tutor was very much interested in implementing technology in language teaching and followed my students' blogs anomalously since the beginning of this research. Considering her experience in teaching writing courses in the college, her views of blog-writing were valuable to find out about the role of blogs in

improving writing skills. The brought up themes through this interview and their allocated codes are shown in Table 15 below. This interview is given in detail in Appendix B and an overview of the gathered information in this interview is provided afterwards. The findings of this interview are explained in Chapter 7 and then discussed in Chapter 8.

Table 15: Interview with the writing tutor

Themes	Codes
1. Current attitudes towards using blog in the college	• (INW5CAC)
2. Students' view of and attitude towards blog-writing from the tutor's point of view	• (INW5SV)
3. Tutor's view of blog-writing	• (INW5TV)
4. Interactions in blog	• (INW5INT)

As the writing tutor stated in the interviews, some of the Eastern Countries are still reluctant to blend and use blogs in their curriculum due to, 1) lack of facilities to support it; 2) the formal setting of the academic courses. This shows that blogs will create an informal learning setting which hinders actual academic learning. This might be because of their unfamiliarity with blogs and its flexibility that can be blended and used with formal methods of teaching and learning settings. She states that blogs can "an important tool in enhancing basic language skills and confidence of students" that can promote self-study skills. As she said, students found blog-writing interesting and an brilliant learning tool but consider it to be "a personal communicative tool where they get to make more friends, share their emotions etc.". This refers to two different aspects that blogs enjoys: it can be private as a means of self-expression and public as means socialising and finding friends. The tutor said that students were very comfortable when using their blogs as they were under the impression that their teachers had no access to it. This shows the critical role of audience in blog-writing that teachers should be aware of when planning to blend it with their teaching method. At one point, the tutor stated that blog-writing "will equip students with confidence, better expression and correct grammar". This, she believed, would lessen her teaching load as she would be able to put more time on teaching academic writing than teaching basic grammatical patterns. As she said she followed her students' writing anonymously "to avoid any kind of hesitation, which students may encounter if they get to know that they were monitored by a teacher or may feel their privacy being encroached". She also pointed out that she wrote some "comments, though it was less intended on correcting their grammatical errors" and "motivated them to venture better vocabulary to express their thoughts". It seems that being frequently corrected in a public setting, with visible and invisible audience, may be discourage student-writers and weaken their confidence in writing.

According to Berg (2001) choosing any method or data collection technique requires its own ethical concerns which I will discuss in the next subsection.

4.9 Ethical issues

Ethics is a particularly important issue when collecting data collection by observation and interviews because, as Cohen et al. (2007) emphasise, human beings are the source of such data collection. Therefore, four key points should be observed in adopting such methods and were addressed in my study as follows:

1) The participants should be made fully aware of the topic of the research. As Fontana and Frey (1994) stress, researchers should make the participants aware of why and how the research is going to be done truthfully, thoroughly and carefully. Trust and openness are needed to establish a good relation between the researcher and the participants, thus providing a solid basis for beginning a study. However, this is a complex issue in doing any research because of the risk of discouraging some participants from taking part in research. In this study, I informed the participants about the aims of my research partially for this reason and because I was aware that my approach might influence their activities in their blogs or their responses in their interviews. I also informed them that their blogs could be accessed publicly and even globally.

2) The identities of the participants should not be disclosed. According to Berg (2001), this refers to eliminating any signs or elements from the documents which might reveal the identities of the participants. Similarly, Fontana and Frey (1994) use the term 'right to privacy' to refer to protect the participants' from being identified. Accordingly, I rigorously adopted this approach in my research report for cultural and social reasons.

3) Informed consent should be given by the participants. I informed the participants and their tutors that I intend to use some of the blog-texts in my study and obtained permission through a consent form signed by the participants. This is what Fontana and Frey (1994) call informed consent. Furthermore, following Berg (2001), I informed the participants that they would have the right to withdraw from my study at any stage.

4) The participants should be emotionally and physically safe. Berg (2007) refers to this as protection from harm, which means that the participants should be protected from any physical or emotional harm. As my participants are under pseudonyms in their blogs, this issue is not the matter of concern in this study.

The wide access to the various sites and information through the Internet can be encouraging for EFL learners and stimulate their creativity, motivation and self-learning.

However, it might be considered a threat to the socio-cultural conventions among conservative Muslim families. Therefore, the ethical issues in this study are not limited to the instruments and procedure of the data collection; online teaching and learning in a Muslim country can have its own ethical concerns and need a set of codes to support and control the community involved in it.

In the context of this study, as I observed, my students and their families were concerned with issues such as:

- being respectful to the religion
- engaging female students with the opposite sex
- disclosing true identity
- using their own photos in their profile
- treating the community with courtesy
- respecting the privacy of the community members

To tackle these issues, I engaged my student participants in a discussion and explained how to approach matters such as religion, culture and society in their blogs. I advised them not to release their identity or publish their photos. I explained how misuse of their photos could damage their reputation in the community. I asked them to use genderless pseudonyms so as not to be identified. I informed them about how to behave with mutual respect when writing comments in other blogs or responding to a comment. I explained that they should take people's criticisms about their texts as an opportunity to learn. To monitor my student-writers' activities, I read their posts every day so as to detect and deal with any misconduct promptly. In addition, I informed them that some of their college tutors might be interested in visiting their blogs and might write comments anonymously. I should note that I did not find any single incidence of any inappropriate activity in the student-writers' blogs. Considering my own experience in Oman, I believe that ethical issues in Muslim countries need a deep investigation. The procedures of doing this study were reviewed by AREA Faculty Research Ethics Committee of University of Leeds; the ethical approval letter (Ethics reference: AREA 14-15) is enclosed in Appendix A.

4.10   Validity

Validity is a crucial issue in both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. According to Golafshani (2003), validity in quantitative research refers to whether the measurement instruments are precise and accurate and if they are measuring what they are supposed to measure; this definition implies that the validity in quantitative research methods is objective and can guarantee the replicability of the study. Whereas in qualitative studies, validity is not only subjective and interpretive but is also time and context-bound. In

contrast with quantitative studies, the validity of qualitative research is more focused on ensuring that the procedure of the research is systematic enough to enable the researcher to demonstrate the trustworthiness of the findings (Dornyei, 2007). The discourse analysis in this study is carried out based on Halliday's systemic functional linguistics through which every linguistic element in language is defined and labelled systematically and carefully; which contributes to the validity of the findings (Hunston, 2013). I also used UAM corpus tool software and Chi-squared test which reduces the threat of being subjective in this analysis. These methodological considerations can elevate the trustworthiness of the findings of this study and make the procedure of the analysis easily replicable. To understand the genre/s of my blog-texts, I used Rose and Martin's (2012, p.130) classifications of genres; however, I sometimes used other categories, such as Piriyasilpa's (2009) self-introduction genre and Coffin et al.'s (2005) Argument genre. To maintain the validity of my semi-structured interviews, I defined the themes prior to the interviews but I kept the questions open-ended to in case other themes emerged. However, the data obtained through my interviews is considerably context-bound and may vary in a different context.

4.11   Summary of the research procedure

In this chapter, I have explained the process of my data collection, discussed the data obtained through texts and interviews, and provided a sample of my genre and register analyses. I have also indicated the problems arising with in my analysis, the trustworthiness of my findings and the ethical issues that this study is concerned with.

The research procedure of this study is as follows:

- The student-writers were taught to construct their personal blogs and publish their entries a few times a week for nearly twelve months.
- The student-writers' blog-texts were analysed according to Halliday's (1987) conception of register, Rose and Martin's (2012) view of genre and Swales' (1990) notion of discourse community and purpose. A quantitative method of analysis, the Chi-squared test, was conducted to find out if my students' blogs are independent in terms of their register.
- The student-writers were interviewed to find out about the reasons underlying their language used in their written blog-texts. The interview questions were printed and given to the participants. To establish complete clarification, the participants' responses were followed up and translated when necessary. Then, further interviews were held so that the participants could confirm the researcher's interpretation and overall findings.

- Tutors were interviewed to elicit their perception of using technology, web tools and the Internet in classes at the end of the foundation course. A writing tutor was also interviewed to find out about her perception of the role of blogs and her students' attitude towards them in writing classes.

As discussed above, this research is designed to examine Omani EFL student-writers' language variation in their blog-texts. This involves examining the register and genre of their texts at both the level of clause and beyond. To this end, in the next chapter, I will provide a detailed analysis of the register and genre of my student-writers' texts, including analyses of the blog-writers' interviews and the hyperlinks and comments in their blogs.

Chapter 5 Data analysis of Blog 1

The aim of this analysis is to investigate Omani EFL student-writers' language use in their blogs. This investigation is based on Halliday's (1987) and Martin's (1992) view of genre and register theory within the systemic functional approach which encompasses examining language at the level of clause, register, and beyond the clause, genre. To answer my research questions, a genre and register analysis was carried out to find out if the texts in Blog 1 could be associated with a particular genre or register. The analysis is divided into two phases, Phase I: Register analysis and Phase II: Genre analysis.

My first research question is about the register of blog-texts: To what extent can my students' blog-texts be conceptualised as belonging to a register? To tackle this, a register analysis was conducted in two stages; the first stage was to examine student-writer's linguistic choices in the blog as a whole using the same analysis to find out about the register of the whole blog. The results are presented in Tables 16 to 23. The second stage was to find the language patterns used in each text individually in Blog 1. This comprises a TRANSITIVITY, MOOD and THEME analysis and the results are shown in Tables 47 to Table 53 in Appendix C.

My second research question is about the genre of blog-texts. It is: To what extent can my students' blog-texts be conceptualised as belonging to a genre or as an emergent genre? To address this, a genre analysis was carried out in Phase II. The blog-texts were examined to find out if they can be considered as an exemplar of an established genre and whether these texts collectively can be seen as being part of the genre of the whole blog. To this end, the genre or genres of each text is investigated in terms of its purpose, its discourse community and the stages through which the text unfolds. The results of the analysis are shown in Tables 54 to 61 in Appendix D.

To gain a deeper insight into the purpose behind the blog-writer's choices of linguistic features in her texts and the whole blog, I used the data obtained through the interviews. The first interview explored the language background of the blog-writer and her attitude to and experience of using the Internet; this was intended to clarify what she herself might bring to the texts. The second interview was a talk-around-text interview (Lilis and McKinney, 2003), to find out the purpose of the linguistic features used in the blog-texts. The intention was to gain an understanding of the links between the linguistic features of the constructed stages and the blog-writer's intention (see Table 26). To investigate the discourse

community of Blog 1, the received comments and hyperlinks in the blog were investigated and the findings are shown in Table 24 Hyperlinks and Table 25 Interactions.

5.1 Phase I: Register analysis of the whole of Blog 1

Based on Halliday's (1987) view of register, an analysis was carried out to examine if Blog 1 shares characteristics with an identified register. To this end, the elements of the context of situation - field, tenor and mode - were investigated. The analysis of these elements is presented in three different sections: experiential, interpersonal and textual analysis. Field has been defined as what the text is about and who or what have been involved in the text and is associated with experiential metafunction (Halliday, 1987, Halliday and Mattheissen, 2004) (See Chapter 2, Section 2.6.1). Examining field can show how the blog-writer constructs the world through lexico-grammatical choices in text.

5.1.1 TRANSITIVITY analysis of the whole Blog

The ideational meaning of the whole Blog 1 can be realised through analysing its TRANSITIVITY system; this comprises the analysis of the process, participant and circumstance types used in this blog.

Process types

Table 16 shows the frequency of the different types of processes used in the blog-texts in Blog 1. These processes are material, mental, behavioural, relational, verbal and existential.

Table 16: Process types in Blog 1

PROCESS-TYPE	%	N=226
Material	34.96%	79
Mental	15.93%	36
Behavioural	2.7%	6
Relational	34.51%	78
Verbal	8.9%	20
Existential	2.11%	7

To determine the field of the texts in Blog 1, the processes used in the blog-texts were analysed first. As the Table 16 shows, there are 226 processes in this blog. Among these processes, material processes, such as *go*, *plan*, *pick, get out, ran away, fall, take a deep breath, take my test, hitting, reading* and relational ones, such as *be*, *have*, *get,* are most frequently used, at around 35% each. The third most frequently used process types are mental processes, 15.6%, *feel, think, overlook, hope, know, love, come to know, want, wish.* Then, verbal, behavioural and existential processes are in the minority, with 8.9%, 2.7% and 2.11% of the total processes respectively. The high frequency of material and relational processes in Blog 1 can show the blog-writer's lexico-grammatical choices when construing meanings; they show that the blog-writer tried to conceptualise a world of being, having and

doing physical actions by discussing what is happening and what has been done (see Chapter 3).

Participant types

Table 17 shows the frequency of participants used in Blog 1. The participants involved in the processes had the roles of: Actor, goal; senser, phenomenon; carrier, attribute; identified, identifier; token, value; possessor possession; behaver; sayer, target; and existent.

Table 17: Participant types in Blog 1

Participants-type	%	N=371
Actor	16.71%	62
Goal	10.24%	38
Senser	8.89%	33
Phenomenon	7.28%	27
Carrier	9.7%	36
Attribute	9.7%	36
Identified	6.47%	24
Identifier	6.47%	24
Token	0.81%	3
Value	0.81%	3
Possessor	2.7%	10
Possession	2.7%	10
Behaver	1.08%	4
Sayer	4.58%	17
Target	1.62%	6
Existent	2.16%	8
Omitted participant	5.66%	21

Blog 1 uses 371 participants, of which 126 are directly involved in relational processes having the roles of: carrier 9.7%, attribute 9.7%, identified 24%, identifier 24%, token 3% and value 3% of the total participants in Blog 1. This indicates that most relational processes are used either to describe or identify human or non-human beings in blog-texts. For instance: it *(carrier)* was (relational process) so scary *(attribute),* the blood *(identified)* was *(relational process)* everywhere *(identifier)*; my name *(identified)* is *(relational process)* Asma *(identifier).* One hundred participants are involved in the material processes; 62 of them have the role of actor and 38 are goal, accounting for 16.6% and 10.16% of the total participants respectively. Most of the participants involved in material clauses refer to people other than the blog-writer in this blog. In 27 incidences, the blog-writer has the role of doer, through which she explained the happenings and doings she was involved in; 60 of the participants are involved in mental process types and 33 of them have a role of 'senser';

20 of the sensers refer to the blog-writer showing that she is a thinker in most mental clauses. Other participants have minor roles in construing the blog-writer's experience of the world in her blog-texts. Therefore, the blog-writer constructed a descriptive world that was linguistically shaped and filtered by her frequent choice of the participants to describe and identify things and humans.

Circumstances

Table 18 demonstrates the frequency of circumstances used in Blog 1. The circumstance types are location, extent, manner, cause, contingency, accompaniment, role, matter and angle Following Dreyfus and Jones (2011), the element of place in the locational circumstances, captured in this analysis, contains both actual place and non-physical place.

Table 18: Circumstance types in Blog 1

Circumstance-type	%	N=100
Extent	1%	1
Manner	8%	8
Cause	7%	7
Contingency	0%	0
Accompaniment	9%	9
Role	7%	7
Matter	9%	9
Angle	0%	0
Place	27%	27
Time	32%	32

As shown in table 18, circumstances were used 100 times in this blog. The most frequent circumstance type is location types: Time and Place, accounting for 27% and 32% of all circumstances used in Blog 1. The circumstances of Place in this blog include: *Al-Qurum Natural Park, Oman, there, in real world, around my neighbourhood, between two guys, everywhere, police station*, among the circumstances of Time Blog 1 are: *at the weekends, everyday, at 6:30, then, early, at this time, the next day, after one hour, now*. The second highest frequency of circumstances in this blog is accompaniment and matter 9%. The frequency of manner and cause types of circumstances is 8% and 7% respectively. Other types of circumstances are used even less frequently: extent, 1% and role, 7% of the total number of circumstances. The large number of locational circumstances used signifies the blog-writer's attempt to construct the field, or in Banks (2002, p.2) terms "external reality" by giving information about when and where things happened or were done.

5.1.2 MOOD analysis of the whole Blog 1

An Interpersonal analysis can help to investigate the tenor of the texts, which is realised through MOOD. In this analysis, examining MOOD, is valuable in determining how the blog-writer creates a relation with the audience (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). The

presentation of the results of MOOD analysis of the texts in Blog 1 is as follows: Clause types, Table 19, Finite types, Table 20, MOOD Adjunct types, Table 21 and Subject types, Table 22 used in Blog 1.

Clause types

Table 19 shows the number of independent, indicative and imperative, clauses used in Blog 1. It also illustrates the frequency of the different types of indicative clauses, declarative and interrogative; and the frequency of the interrogative types, yes/no questions and WH-questions used in this blog.

Table 19: Clause types in Blog 1

Independent clause types	%	N=161
Indicative	98.15%	158
Imperative	1.86%	3
Indicative-type	%	N=158
Declarative	99.37%	157
Interrogative	0.63%	1
Interrogative-type	%	N=1
yes/no-q	0.0%	0
WH-q	100.0%	1

Table 19 shows that 161 independent clauses were used in this blog, with 98.15% indicative and 1.86% imperative clause types. Of the indicative types, 99.37% were declarative and only 0.63% were interrogative, with the frequency of 1. This was a WH-question: *Why do I think we are the best?*

Finite operators

Table 20 displays the frequency of different types of Finite operators, tense and modal, as well as omitted Finites in Blog 1 and the frequency of four different types of modals comprising modals expressing probability, usuality, obligation and readiness (inclination/ability).

Table 20: Finite operators in Blog 1

FINITE-type	%	N=164
Tense	83.54%	137
Modal	12.20%	20
Omitted Finite operators	4.27%	7
MODAL-TYPE	%	N=20
modal-probability	45%	9
modal-usuality	0.0%	0
modal-obligation	35.6%	7
modal-readiness: inclination/ability	20%	4

Table 20 illustrates that 167 Finite operators are used in the blog as a whole; the majority of the Finites 83.54% are tense types, 12.20% are modals and 4.27% are omitted Finite operators. Among the modals used in this blog, the highest proportion is of modal probability, such as *would, will, can*, with 45%; the next highest is of modal obligation, such as *has to,* with 35.6% and by far the least frequent is the category of modal readiness (inclination and ability), which accounts for 20%.

MOOD Adjuncts

Table 21 presents the frequency of the three types of MOOD Adjuncts used in this blog: temporality, modality and intensity.

Table 21: MOOD Adjuncts in Blog 1

MOOD-Adjunct-type	%	N=17
Temporality	5.9%	1
Modality	35.3%	6
Intensity	58.8%	10

As Table 21 shows, the highest proportion of MOOD Adjuncts used in Blog 1 are those of intensity with 58.8%; these include: *even, really, only, sometimes, exactly, usually*. After that the proportions of modality and temporality MOOD Adjuncts are 35.3% and 5.6% respectively.

Subject types

Table 22 shows the types of Subjects and their frequency used in Blog 1. The types which this study is concerned with are singular or plural of the first and second person pronouns. In addition, the frequency of other types of Subject and the omitted ones are also included.

Table 22: Subject types in Blog 1

Subject-type	%	N=161
I/me/my	38.51%	62
you/your	0.62%	1
we/our	1.24%	2
Other	47.83%	77
Omitted Subjects	11.80%	19

Table 22 shows that 157 subjects were used in this Blog 1. Most of the Subjects refer to participants other than the first person singular and plural pronoun and the second person pronoun. Following that 38.51% of the subjects used in the blog were first person pronoun,

1.24% first person plural pronoun and 0.62% second person plural with their derivations. Also, 11.80 % of the subjects were omitted.

5.1.3 THEME types in the whole Blog 1

According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), the mode of a discourse can be determined through the examining of textual metafunction comprising THEME and RHEME (see Chapter 3). The analysis of the three types of THEME, textual, interpersonal and topical in Blog 1 is presented in Table 23. This analysis can help to understand how the texts developed in Blog 1.

Table 23: THEME types in Blog 1

THEME-type	%	N=337
Textual	36.2%	122
Interpersonal	1.5%	5
Topical	62.3%	210
TOPICAL-type	%	N=210
Marked	9.0%	19
Unmarked	83.3%	175
Omitted THEMES	7.6%	16

Topical THEME is the most popular THEME in this blog, accounting for 62.3% of the total THEMES. Following that, the textual THEME has the second highest frequency, 36.2%; this includes: *and, till, because, if, moreover, so, but.* Interpersonal THEME has the lowest frequency, with only 1.5%. Of the types of topical THEME, the unmarked type, with 83.3% all topical THEMES, is by far the most frequent in this blog. The frequencies of marked and omitted THEMES are 9.0% and 7.6% respectively.

5.1.4 Summary and results

As the TRANSITIVITY analysis indicates, material and relational processes, with having a frequency of 34.96% and 34.51% of the total number of processes respectively, are the most common processes in this blog (see Table 16). Material processes are related to happenings and actions with two types of participants: actor and goal (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). This illustrates how the blog-writer construes what is happening and being done. The relational processes with the same highest frequency show the attributive and identifying relations among the participants and processes in the texts. It can be implied that this blog tends to be descriptive, describing the participants, people as well as objects involved in the process. The prevalence of mental processes with 15.93% of the total number of processes used in this blog also shows that the blog-writer writes about her inner experience, and is

concerned with how she feels, thinks and perceives the world. Investigating the types of participants showed that in Blog 1, the blog-writer constructed her life experiences and world through assigning various roles to participants. Participants are frequently involved in material and relational clauses processes where participants have the role of: actor, goal; identifier, identified, carrier and attribute. Examining the roles of the participants in relational clauses showed that the blog-writer focus more on identifying than describing things and human beings. She assigns a role to the first person pronoun and referred to herself in 73 incidences as the actor, senser, identified or identifier, thinker or sayer in different types of clauses.

The high number of locational circumstances (see Table 18), shows that this blog is heavily invested in the spatial and temporal types of circumstances, illustrating where and when actions occurred or were experienced. The second most frequent circumstances in this blog are the matter and accompaniment, which express what the discourse is about and if the doer of the activity was accompanied by another participant.

The interpersonal analysis showed that the majority of the sentences are non-elliptical declarative (see Table 19). The blog-writer uses one interrogative sentence through which she draws the readers into the blog-texts (Text 7: *why do I think we are the best?*). There are three imperative clauses in the blog-texts; (Text 6: *hope everybody write a lot*; Text 2: *hope u all get the chance to visit it*; Text 4: *Wish me luck*. These imperative clauses signal a change from proposition to proposal: that is a change from giving information to giving goods and services. This contributes to constructing a relation between the reader and the blog-writer. The shift from declarative to interrogative or imperative also adds to the chattiness of the written text, which implies an explicit addressee with the potential to respond as in the speech mode of the language.

The blog-writer used the second person pronoun twice as a Subject and twice as the second participant involved in the process or its derivation showing possession in this blog; (For example: Text 3: *i have the same routine everyday or in a different way you can say I'm a boring person*; Text 6: *Moreover, its atrative because you can uplod music and pictures and other things* [...] *it can isolate you and reduse the commnication with your family members what can be really bad*).

The blog-writer also used the first person plural inclusive (we) with its derivations three times in this blog. This shows not only how the blog-writer tries to draw the reader into the text but also how she seeks the readers' support and solidarity; (For example: Text 6: *if one of them past away we'll feel bad about it and we wont forgive our selves*; Text 8: *all human being make mistakes thats our nature*).

Of the modals used in this blog, the highest proportion is probability modals: that is, of high, median and low possibility. The second most frequent modals are obligation (see Table 20). The blog-writer's choice in using such modals signifies her position and her personal evaluation; for instance, the instances of the modal '*will*' shows her certainty in Text 1: *i will be glad to have a lot of friends*, a high level of probability in Text 4: *and if I ran away I will fail* and Text 5: *we'll feel bad about it and we wont forgive our selves*. She shows her low level of commitment to what she is stating through the use of the modal '*would*' in Text 7: *Everybody would say that they have the best family; my parents wouldn't do anything without asking our opinion first before doing anything*.

The use of the modal '*should*' as a low level of obligation to show necessity and make suggestions in this blog indicates how the blog-writer tries to create a sense of blog-authorial position when pointing out her opinions and assessment of the proposed issue; for example, in Text 2: *everybody who's coming to Oman for a tour or who's already in Oman should go to Al-Qurum Natural Park [...] Qurum National Park should not be overlooked on any tourist trip to Muscat.)*. What is striking is that the highest number of modals is in Text 5 (*They should talk in logically [...] they should put him in jail because the other person could of died because of him [...] And everybody should solve their problems without a fight [...] If anyone saw a fight should stop it*. Also, the blog-writer expresses possibilities of activities and consequences through using the modal '*can/could*' (Text 3: *i have the same routine everyday or in a different way you can say I'm a boring person*, Text 5: […] *because you can uplod music and pictures and other things* […] *so it can isolate you and reduse the commnication with your family members what can be really bad*; and in Text 8: *I tried to live my life without problems But I simply couldn't And no one can*. There are four modals indicating readiness and inclination in this blog (Text 6: *In this essay i would love to write about the pros and cons of blog*. […] *I would love to start with the adventeges;* Text 8: *For sure I would love to be myself*.).

The high frequency of topical THEME (see Table 23), signified that the given information is placed in the first section of the clauses and new information in the second part. This is a characteristic of the speech mode of the language. It leads the reader to search for the unexpected information in the second part of the sentence. The prevalence of the textual THEME indicates how the blog-writer tries to relate her produced clauses to the context. It helps the blog-writer to make the texts coherent and easy to interpret. The frequency of the interpersonal THEME in this blog is very low which suggests that the level of interactivity is low. To gain an overall view of the linguistic features in each text in Blog 1, a register analysis was conducted on Blog 1 as a whole, and is presented in the next section.

5.2 Register analysis of the texts in Blog 1

This involves a TRANSITIVITY analysis of the process types and circumstances in the texts in Blog 1. The findings are shown in Tables 47 to 49 Circumstance types Blog 1 in Appendix C.

5.2.1 TRANSITIVITY analysis of the texts in Blog 1

The texts in Blog 1 differ from one another in terms of the blog-writer's choice of process, participant and circumstance types. For instance, Text 3 (My daily routine) and Text 5 (stop fighting!) have the highest frequency of material processes, 51% and 48.2% respectively. This type of process in Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004, p.184) terms covers "events, activities and actions involving both animate actors and in animate ones". It should be noted that out of the 18 participants involved in material processes in Text 3, 15 are the first person pronoun and have the role of actor in the clauses. The number of relational processes in each text is noticeable. This type of processes is used differently across texts in Blog 1. Only relational processes are used in Text 1. 47.4% of 19 processes in Text 2, 45.8% of the 24 processes in Text 8 and 39% of 23 processes in Text 4 are relational. All relational processes in Text 1(Hi) and most of the relational processes in Text 4 (Speaking test) are relational processes of 'being' and have the two participants of carrier and attribute. It should be noted that the first person pronoun has the role of carrier in the clauses in these two texts. In Text 8, participants have the roles of 'carrier and attribute' or 'identified and identifier' that refer to entities other than the blog-writer. This process type with its participants, whether identifying or attributive, helped the blog-writer describe or identify humans or entities. Behavioural processes, which according to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p.107), are "the manifestations of inner workings, the acting out of processes of consciousness […] and physiological states", are relatively uncommon in these texts. The frequency of verbal and existential processes is low in all the texts.

One hundred circumstances were used in the texts in this blog. All nine types of circumstance role occurred across the corpus of Blog 1. These circumstances are: manner, cause, contingency, accompaniment, role, matter, angle, location (Time) and location (Place) and extent. Text 3 has the highest number of circumstances among the texts: 32. Texts 7 and 5 have the second and third largest number of circumstances: 27 and 13 respectively. Text 1 stands out as it contains one causal circumstance. The causal type of circumstance, according to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, pp.261-262), indicates the purpose or, put in other way, addresses the questions such as "why?", "what for" and "who for?". Text 6 has the largest number of circumstances of matter, accounting for 50%. This type of circumstance "is related to verbal processes" (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, p.276). There is a high proportion of circumstances of location in almost all of the texts in

this blog. This type of circumstance has two sub-types: Place and Time. The highest frequency of this circumstance is noticed in Text 2 with 71.40% of location (Place) and 28.60% of location (Time). As Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p.256) claim, "**Location** construes the location of the unfolding of the process in space-time: the place where it unfolds or the time when it unfolds" (emphasis as in the original). Text 8 contains two circumstances, both of which are the accompaniment type; this "is a form of joint participation in the process and represents the meanings 'and', 'or', 'not' as a circumstance" (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, p.272). Other types of circumstances are less frequent.

5.2.2   MOOD analysis of the texts in Blog 1

The analysis of interpersonal meanings is related to the tenor of blog-texts in Blog 1; this aims at finding out if and how textual relationships and interactions are constructed in Blog 1 and involves analysing the elements of MOOD. The results are shown in Tables 50 to 53 in Appendix C.

Clause types

This analysis shows the frequency of the MOOD types of clauses used in each text in Blog 1. There are two primary types: indicative (further subdivided into declarative and interrogative) and imperative. As the analysis indicated, there is a large proportion of indicative clauses in the texts; except in Texts 2, 4 and 7, all of the indicative clauses are of the declarative type. The number of declarative clauses shows that the texts in Blog 1 are primarily informative. In other words, in Blog 1, it appears the information is the commodity exchanged and the predominant use of the indicative mood supports it. The lack of other mood types such as interrogative and imperative suggests a low amount of interactivity (Thompson and Muntigl, 2008, p.109) in this blog because the blog-writer takes a role of giver rather than demander. This is illustrated in the fact that there is only one interrogative type, a WH-question, in Text 7 and one imperative mood clause in each of Texts 2, 4 and 7. This may suggest that there is a low amount of interactivity in this blog. Table 50 in Appendix C provides more information about this analysis.

Subject types

To understand what Subjects are involved in construing a relation between the blog-writer and her audience, the frequency of the used Subjects was checked. This comprises the first person pronoun and its derivations: *I/me/my,* the *s*econd person pronoun *you/your,* the first person plural *we/our,* and other subjects including omitted Subjects. The first person pronoun and its derivations are widely used in the texts in Blog 1. This accounts for 100% of the Subjects in Text 1, 61.50% in Text 4, 60% in Text 8 and 58.30% in Text 3. This suggests that this blog is focusing on the blog-writer's inner and outer experiences in the

world. The frequency of the second person pronoun in the blog-texts is very low, only occurring once in Texts 2 and 3. In Text 5, the blog-writer used the first person plural pronoun (inclusive *we*) to refer to both the blog-writer and the readers—*we'll feel bad about it and we won't forgive ourselves*. This reflects the blog-writer's desire to create a relation with the audience. The frequency of 'other Subjects' than *I, you* and *we* is high in Text 6, 66.70%, Text 2, 62.5%, Text 5, 58.82% and Text 7, 55.3% of the Subjects used in these texts. The frequency of omitted Subjects is rather low in these texts. This is shown in Table 51 in Appendix C.

Finite operators

To gain a better view of the textual interactions between the blog-writer and her blog visitors, the types of Finite operators used in the blog-texts were investigated, in terms of tense, modality and omitted Finite operators. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p.116) tense refers to "past, present or future at the moment of speaking" and modality "means likely or unlikely (if a proposition), desirable or undesirable (if a proposal)".

The use of Finites expressing tense is high in all the texts. The highest ratio of expressing tense is used in Text 7 and Text 8, 91.9% and 80% respectively. This shows that proposition were made arguable in terms of time in these two texts. Text 1 contains a large majority of modal Finite operators, accounting for 50%. Text 5 has the highest frequency of modals, 40% modal probability and 60% modal obligation. Through the use of modals expressing probability, the blog-writer expressed her uncertainty and through using modal obligation, she suggests that people do or not do certain activities. The frequency of this type of Finite in other texts is relatively low. 28.60% of the Finite types in Text 4 and 13.30% of the Finite operators in Text 2 have been omitted. Further detail is shown in Table 52 in Blog 1 in Appendix C.

5.2.3   THEME types in the texts in Blog 1

The organisation of information in the blog-texts was checked by analysing THEME types used in each clause in Blog 1. This contains the analysis of textual, interpersonal and topical THEME. As the analysis indicated, Text 1 is notable with 100% frequency of topical THEME. Text 2 has the second highest frequency of topical THEME, accounting for 85.70%. In the rest of the texts, the proportion of topical THEME is slightly above 50%. The highest ratio of interpersonal THEME can be seen in Text 8 with 5.70%; the ratio of the same THEME in other texts is very low. Texts 4, 6 and 8 have a high ratio of textual THEME compared with other texts: 41.70%, 41.30% and 40% respectively. This kind of THEME is required for organising the information in discourse (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). Text 2 has the largest number of marked THEMES 16.70% of all topical THEMES.

All of the topical THEMES in Text 1 are unmarked. The second largest proportions of unmarked topical THEME occur in Text 5 with 96.20%, Text 8 with 94.70% and Text 6 with 92.60% of all topical THEMES. The frequency of omitted THEMES in the texts is relatively low. Further information can be found in Appendix C, Table 53.

This section has presented the register analysis of each text in Blog 1; whereby I examined the experiential, interpersonal and textual meanings in the texts. This analysis comprised TRANSITIVITY, MOOD and THEME analyses. Overall, the register analysis showed the blog-writer produced a blog that gives information about happenings and doings firstly and then conceptualises a world of being and having. There is little sign of reflective language. In the next section, I provide the genre analysis of texts in Blog 1. This involved analysing the purpose and the stages through which they were constructed.

5.3   Phase II: Genre analysis

To examine if Blog 1 can be associated with a particular genre/s, a genre analysis was carried out. The analysis is based on Martin and Rose's (2008, p.6) view of genre as "a staged, goal-oriented, purposeful activity in which speakers engage as member of our culture". To this end, this analysis involves investigating the purpose, the distinctive stages or the schematic structures (Eggins, 2004, p.59) through which the texts unfold and the discourse community in this blog. This is complementary to register analysis. I am drawing here on the genres identified in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.6). When I analysed the genre of each text, I divided it into stages on the basis of the purpose of each stage and then tried to categorise each stage. A sample of the analysis is provided in Chapter 4. The genre analysis of the texts is presented in Appendix D in detail (See Tables 54 to Table 61). After that, I investigate the notion of discourse community in Blog 1 through examining comments and hyperlinks and present it in Tables 24 and 25.

The stages of Text 1 are consistent with what Piriyasilpa (2007, 2009) refers to as self-introduction to some extent. Piriyasilpa (2007) identifies three stages for this genre, Self-identification ^ Biodata ^ Impressions. This text starts with a Salutation followed by a Self-identification. Salutation is an opening through which the writer creates a relation with the readers and shows solidarity (Piriyasilpa, 2007, p. 85).The second stage, self-identification, gives personal information about the blog-writer to the reader. In this case, she gave her name. This blog-writer preferred not to give any information about her date of birth or hometown. In the last stage, she expresses her happiness when she has a lot of friends. Therefore, the stages through which this text unfolds are Salutation ^ Self-identification ^ Impressions and are not precisely consistent with Piriyasilpa's (2007) Self-introduction genre.

Text 2 has the stages of Arguments with the Exposition genre as described by Martin (2009, p.14) and Rose and Martin (2012, p.130). This genre discusses one point of view and has three generic stages, Thesis ^Argument ^ Reiteration. In the first sentence, the Thesis stage, the blog-writer takes the position that Al-Qurum Natural Park is the best place to enjoy oneself. In the second stage, Argument, she claims that it is the most beautiful place in Oman and supports it through examples and expressing her observations, *the best place to walk in; the most beautiful place in Oman.* Then, she claims that it is an amazing place and that looking at its waterfalls makes people feel good. At the end, referring to the Thesis stage, she finishes her text with an exhortation, *hope u all get a chance to visit it*. This type of Exposition , in Rose and Martin's framework (2012, p.112), is called the hortatory type. The stages through which this text unfolds are: Thesis ^Argument (Claim ^ evidence ^ claim) ^ Reiteration.

Text 3, illustrates that the genre of the language produced in this text is Recount with the purpose of recounting the blog-writer's daily activities. As outlined in Chapter 3, Table 10, the stages of this genre are: Orientation ^ Record of events ^ Reorientation (Rose and Martin, 2012). In the first stage, the blog-writer describes herself as an ordinary person and orients the reader to the topic that is her daily routine. In the next stage, she recounts her daily activities and provides reasons for doing them. In the last stage, Reorientation, she provides her personal comment: *i think its nothing interesting*. This genre is written in the first person and the events are sequenced according to time through using links such as *first, then, after that*. Such linguistic features, according to Martin (2002, p.90) are the signals through which texts can be identified as personal recounts.

Text 4 has been analysed as a Narrative that, which in Rose and Martin's (2012, p.42) terms, is a "story in which something goes wrong"; this genre has the stages of Orientation ^ Complication ^ Evaluation ^ Resolution ^ Coda. Through this genre, the blog-writer narrates what may happen during her speaking test, explains the problem and states a resolution for it. In this Narrative, the first sentence identifies the situation as being one hour before a speaking test. The blog-writer establishes the setting by writing about the time, *after an hour*, about the event, *speaking test* and about herself as the principle character involved in the story. The second stage indicates that this is problematic because she is nervous about the test. She develops the complication in two phases - *I'm not good in communicating with TEACHERS because I always don't pick the right words* - and - […] *when I come to know its a test I get scared and nervous and I don't know what to say and screw up*. In the last sentence of this stage, she intensifies the created tension by her choice of lexis - *sometimes it get to a point I want to scream and get out!* In the same sentence, 'get out' is the first solution but this is negatively evaluated with: *if I ran away I will fail.* In the

next stage, she gives the next solution - *so i better be calm and take a deep breath and let it out and be sooo confertable and confident*. This is not evaluated as the speaking test has not happened but there is a Coda through which the blog-writer addresses her audience: *I'm going to take my test now wish me luck!!* Therefore, the stages of this text are: Orientation ^ Complication ^ Resolution ^ Evaluation ^ Resolution ^ Coda.

Text 5 appears to be an Exemplum. Rose and Martin (2000b, p.58) write, "The purpose of an exemplum is to relate a sequence of events in order to make a moral point". This genre comprises the stages of Orientation ^ Incident ^ Interpretation. Through this genre, the blog-writer judges the behaviour of two people fighting each other and supports her judgement through giving her interpretation and predicting the consequence of such behaviours. Through the Orientation stage, the blog-writer sets the scene including the time, *yesterday*, the people involved, *two guys and the people who were watching,* and the issue, *fighting*. Then, she moves to the second stage, which is Incident 1 and 2 and then provides the reader with an interpretation for each incident to signal the issue. The blog-writer finishes her text with an evaluation. This stage is a deviation from the generic stages of Exemplum to Narrative genre described by Martin (1992, p.565).

Text 6 belongs mostly to the Argument genre; texts in this genre, in Rose and Martin's (2012, p.129) terms, "evaluate issues and points of view". According to Coffin et al. (2005, p.469), this genre comprises the three stages of Thesis ^Arguments ^ Re-inforcement. They explain that in the Thesis stage, "the writer puts forward their claim or standpoint and optionally, previews the arguments to be discussed"; the next stage contains "well supported and reasoned arguments relevant to the overall thesis" and the last stage, Re-inforcement of Thesis, is the stage through which "the writer restates their position" (Coffin et al., 2005, p.469). In this text, the blog-writer discusses different opinions on blogging in mostly a Discussion type of Argument genre. In the first stage, the blog-writer takes the position that blogging is a helpful tool in education and explicitly refers to what she is going to write about: *In this essay i would love to write about the pros and cons of blog*. In the next stage, she argues that blog-writing is the best way to improve writing skills and supports this with *because I write continualy and I receive comments that i learn from so I dont need any tutore in writing!* This is followed by her second argument that reading about people's problems in their blogs is interesting and she reasons that she loves helping them. Then, she argues that blog-space is attractive as it has affordances such as uploading pictures and music. In the next stage, she signals the shift of discourse to the negative aspects of blogs with *In every plus there is a minuse,* and argues that it can be addictive. In the next stage, she claims that some people may write things that can hurt blog-writers. In the last stage, she restates her position with *I dont find blog is a bad thing*, and ends the text with a

recommendation: *Hope everybody write a lot because its useful*. To summarise, the stages through which this text unfolds are: Thesis ^Argument (for) 1 ^Argument (for) 2 ^ Argument (for) 3 ^ Argument (against) 1 ^ Argument (against) 2 ^ Re-inforcement ^ Recommendation. Each Argument stage has some sub-stages, Claim and Evidence. This is consistent with the stages identified by Coffin et al. (2005) in their investigation of text-based conferencing. The last stage of Text 6, Re-inforcement of Thesis, is fused with a recommendation. The recommendation stage according to Piriyasilpa (2009, p.205) is a typical stage in hortatory Exposition

Text 7 is analysed as an instance of the Exposition genre; the purpose of this genre is to give logical arguments for a point of view. This genre according to Martin (2009, p.14) and Rose and Martin (2012, p.130) has Thesis ^Argument ^ Reiteration stages; There is also a shift to the self-introduction genre which, according to Piriyasilpa (2009, p.217), "functions to discuss the writer's personal information, and provide some short description". In the first stage, the blog-writer orients the reader to what she is going to write about her family. In the next stage, she claims that they are the best family. But she does not support it with evidence; instead, she moves from an Exposition genre to a Self-introduction genre through which she introduces the members of her family. This genre has three stages: Self-identification Biodata and Impression. However, of the stages of this genre, only the Biodata stage is present. In the next stage, she addresses the reader through a question that functions as an argument prompt. An argument prompt, in Coffin et al.'s (2005, p.469) terms, is "a question designed to stimulate and prompt participants' views on an issue". Then, she provides her reason that being a Muslim, she has been taught to respect, love and care about people. Then, she provides evidence by describing how her parents behave and treat one another. This is followed by an expansion of her argument of belonging to the best family by giving some examples as evidence: 'having a family meal every day', 'talking to her brother living abroad every Sunday' and 'their housemaid's affection towards the family'. In the next stage, she evaluates the situation with: *That is how my parents raised us; to help each other and take care of each other and I pray to god to never separate us*. In the last stage, she refers back to the Thesis stage and restates her position. Therefore, the stages of this text are: Thesis ^ Argument ^ Biodata ^ Argument prompt ^ Reasoning ^ Reasoning ^ Evidence ^ Evidence ^ Expansion of the argument ^ Evidence ^ Evidence ^ Evidence ^ Evaluation ^ Evidence ^ Reiteration.

Text 8 belongs mostly to the Exposition genre defined by Rose and Martin (2012, p.130), (see Chapter 3, Table 10). This genre has three stages, Thesis, Argument and Reiteration. The blog-writer discusses why she is happy with her life in this text; however, the stages through which this text unfolds are not consistent with the generic stages of this genre at

some point. In the first stage, the blog-writer orients the reader to what she is going to talk about: herself. In the next stage, Argument, she claims that she is happy with her life but refers to the issue that everybody makes mistakes and she is no exception. Then, she claims that problems make life interesting and gives evidence through describing one of her experiences. In this stage, there is a shift to the Exemplum genre making the point that she tried to live her life with no problems but she could not. In the last sentence, she gives her interpretation, *well this is my opinion but I'm sure that everyone have they're opinion:).* Therefore, the stages through which this text is constructed are: Thesis^ Argument^ Incident and interpretation. Overall, the findings of genre and register analyses of the blog-texts suggest that there is a relation between the lexico-grammatical choices and the genre of the texts and the texts are largely descriptive.

5.3.1   The discourse community in Blog 1: Comments and hyperlinks

The hyperlinks, through which a blog is connected with the outer world, and the comments provide evidence of the assumed and actual community. There are 11 hyperlinks in Blog 1. Three of the members in this community visited the blog and left comments for the blog-writer (see Table 24). These links connect this blog with the blogs of other blog-writers and the comments show the interactions between the blog-writer and her audience.

Table 24: Hyperlinks and comments in Blog 1

	Comments	Reaction
1. http://omanimalak.blogspot.com	0	0
2. http://omanicleverman.blogspot.com	0	0
3. http://al-joory.blogspot.com/	0	0
4. http://muznadiva101.blogspot.com	0	0
5. http://redocean01.blogspot.com	0	0
6. http://oman-brown.blogspot.com	3	1
7. http://kikaa-pwincess.blogspot.com	1	1
8. http://omanimaster.blogspot.com	0	0
9. http://omanieflstudents.blogspot.com	3	3
10. http://omanirose.blogspot.com	0	0
11. http://www.sloohasweet.blogspot.com/	1	1

Table 24 shows that, of all the hyperlinks, only some of the blog-writers communicated with the blog-writer by leaving comments. This might imply that the level of interactivity in this blog is rather low. However some comments were received from those audience members who were not among the hyperlinks. Table 25 presents the interactions in Blog 1, containing who the commenter/s were, what their comments were about, whether their comments were relevant to the written text and if the blog-writer reacted.

Table 25: Interactions in Blog 1

Text 1	Commenter/s	Comment	Relevance to the text	Reaction
	Ahmed Brown	Introducing himself	Relevant	1
	LiLiAn	Introducing herself	Relevant	0
Text 2	Khamis	Confirming her opinion in the text	Relevant	0
Text 3	Ahmed Brown	Reflecting on her daily habits	Relevant	1
Text 4	Slooha	Asking about her speaking test result	Relevant	1
Text 5	Ali_matata	Reflecting on the content of the text about fighting	Relevant	1
	Kika	Reflecting on her comment to Slooha	Relevant	1
Text 6	Shams	Reflecting on her writing style positively	Irrelevant	1
	LiLiAn	Reflecting on her writing style positively	Irrelevant	0
Text 7	Shams	Reflecting on the content and the blog-writer's opinion about her family	Relevant	1
Text 8	Shams	Reflecting on the content of text and the blog-writer's personality	Relevant	1
	Ahmed Brown	Informing his coming back to blog	Irrelevant	0

The table of interactions in Blog 1 indicates that seven people visited this blog and left comments. Three of the visitors are included in the blog-writer's lists and four are not. This supports Myers' (2010a, p.23) view writing that "we could think of each blog as one point, with a number of arrows going out to other blogs and to the various readers who comment back". As can be seen the comments are relevant to the topic and content of the blog-texts, except for three. These three comments provided information about things such as the blog-writer's writing style. Although such comments are irrelevant to what is written, they show how a blog can turn to an interactive environment. Such interactions may play a role in constructing a community, which is not the scope of this study and needs further investigations. As shown in the table, the blog-writer was selective when reacting to the comments since she did not reply to all of the audience. This might be why those who did not get a reply either did not visit the blog again or if they did, they never left a comment. Therefore, it can be said that examining the hyperlinks and comments reveals that the concept of community is more fluid than fixed in the analysed blog and does not indicate a specific community.

The next section discusses the interviews used to find out about the purpose of the written texts and the reasons behind the blog-writer's choices in the blog-texts as well as the audience of the blog.

5.4   Interviews

Interviews were used to elicit more information about the purpose of the language used in this blog; to this end, the blog-writer participated in two interviews: a semi-structured interview and a talk-around-text interview (Lilis and McKinney, 2003). The first interview

was a general one to gather information about the background of the participant and her on-line experience and is described below.

5.4.1   Interview 1

The blog-writer was an 18-year-old female student studying an English foundation course at the College of Banking and Financial Studies. She studied English in the first year of primary school and then stopped until Class 6 since teaching English was not part of governmental schools' curriculum at that time. However, her father helped her learn English by speaking English with her at home. She preferred writing to the other English language skills: of listening, speaking, and reading. She said, "I'll choose writing because I can describe my feeling well" through writing. She knew how to use computers and had access to the Internet at home and college. She used the Internet to read Arabic and English sites. She had a Face-book page and email account but was not familiar with blog-space and blog-writing at all. The second interview was devoted to her blog-texts to find out her reasons behind her lexico-grammatical choices in her text. This is explained in the following section.

5.4.2   Talk-around- text interview

For talk around text interview, three texts were chosen from the participant's blog-texts: two by the blog-writer herself and one by the researcher. The Table 26 shows the texts, their titles and genres and the issues the blog-writer brought up during the interview. The interview was carried out around three blog-texts, Texts 5, 7 and 8. The student-writer was allowed to respond in Arabic or English.

Table 26: Talk-around text interviews

Texts	Title	Genre	Linguistic themes	Non-linguistic themes
Text 5	Stop fighting	Exemplum	• 1st person pronoun and its derivations • 1st person plural pronoun (inclusive) • 2nd person pronoun • Modality • Active and passive voice	• Comments • Pictures • Emoticons
Text 7	The best family I could get!	Exposition		
Text 8	My life	Exposition		

As the Table 26 shows the blog-writer was asked about the reasons behind her linguistic choices to explain the purpose of the produced genres in Blog 1. She referred to some specific features through which she construed meanings in her texts.

5.4.3   Summary of the interviews

In the interview, she indicated that her blog is like a personal diary about her life. She said, "This blog is about me; because it is easy to talk about myself because I know everything

about myself". She explained that she wrote Text 5 to tell everybody about the fight she witnessed and how much she hated the act. She stated, "Text 7 is about me and my family; I want to tell people how great my family is and how much I love them".

She raised a very important point when talking about using the first person pronoun in her texts. She said that although the use of 'I' is not appropriate in the Arab culture and it might even be considered rude, she used 'I' when it was needed: more specifically, when the topic of the text is about she herself and her feelings. This could be one source of encouragement for her to write in her blog. Her responses confirmed that she feels no restrictions when writing in her blog. She said, "I can say about my feeling better […] and I can write about whatever pops on my head".

She expressed her reasons for using the second person pronoun in her texts; she said, "I never use 'you' and if I did that probably be to attract people or the reader"- Text 7: *what I wrote is nothing comparing to what you'll see*. She also mentioned that she used the indefinite pronoun 'anyone' for the same purpose; "I used 'anyone' because I wanted to attract people and because it's for everybody not one person". An instance of this is also in Text 7: *If anyone saw a fight should stop it not sit and watch*. She added, "if I used 'we' I wanted to say everybody is like me and thinks like me". Instance of this are in Text 5: *if one of them past away we'll feel bad about it and we won't forgive ourselves*; and Text 8: *all human being makes mistakes that's our nature*.

She indicates that she is comfortable with using the active voice when expressing her feelings and thinks people understand the active voice better than the passive. She highlights the notion of audience when talking about her choice of modals in her texts: "I used 'should' because I don't know who's going to read what I wrote, so as an advice, I used 'should', I can't use 'must'".

In this section, I have explained the genre analysis conducted to find out if the blog-texts in Blog 1 can be regarded as instances of established genres. Seemingly, the student-writer was not very self-aware of the text purposes and her blog is largely descriptive. This involved examining the comments and hyperlinks in this blog too. In the next section, I bring the findings of the register and genre analysis of Blog 1 together to be able to examine how the student-writer constructed her self-expression, voice and stance in her blog-texts. To address these issues, the blog-writer's choice of speech functions, Subject types, modal Finite operators, types of clauses, polarity and active/passive sentence patterns in each text have been examined in relation to their genre. I will give a brief overview of the frequency these features in Blog 1 as a whole at first and then move to discuss how the blog-writer construed her self –expression, voice and stance in her blog-texts.

5.5 The student-writer's textual voice, stance and self-expression in Blog 1

In Blog 1, 42.68% of the total Subjects belongs to the category of others which refer to entities and things other than the blog-writer, the audience or both. This is noticeable in Text 2 with 62.50%, Text 5 with 52.63%, Text 6 with 66.67% and Text 7 with 55.26% of the total Subject types used in this blog. However, it should be noted that in the rest of the texts the first person pronoun was the most frequent entity in the Subject position. This indicates that the blog-writer has the central role in these texts, where she constructs a stance for herself and asserts her opinions, creates a status for her readers, pulls them into the texts and negotiates with them. The use of modal Finite operators is low in this blog, 18 instances out of 155. The most frequent modal Finite operator is modal probability, accounting for 44.44% of the total modals. The categories of modal obligation and modal inclination and readiness are 27.78% of the total modals each. Only 5 of the clauses in this blog are passive and negation occurs 15 times in the whole blog. There are 6 imperative and 6 interrogative clauses through which the blog-writer relates to the audience and communicated with them explicitly. Below, I will explain how the blog-writer of Blog 1 used the above devices to construct her voice and self-expression in each text.

5.5.1 Construing self-expression and voice in each text in Blog 1

Text 1 has a self-introduction genre where the blog-writer is in a dialogic relation with the readers. The use of the first person pronoun and its derivations indicates the central role of the blog-writer in this text. She introduces herself through providing her name in a positive declarative clause and a derivation of the first person pronoun, *my.* Then, she construes a friendly self by impressing the readers through the use of a modal probability *will*, *i will be glad to have a lot of friends.*

Text 2 is close to the Exposition genre where the blog-writer argues a point of view about AL-Qurum National Park. The blog-writer takes a stance and expresses her opinion through using the first person pronoun, impersonal Subjects, declarative clauses, negation and low value of modal obligation. This text is amplified with impersonal subjects, 62.5% of the total Subjects. These Subject types refer back to AL-Qurum National Park and whatever it contains by which she reports some facts about it as in: *Al-Qurum Natural Park* is the largest park in Oman with more than 1,715,000 square meters of greenery and beauty. She also resorts to a quasi-modal obligation, *has to*, to assert her opinion, *Speaking of beauty, this has to be the most beautiful place in Oman and the desire of my eyes!* Such clauses leave no room for the readers' opinion about the park. Through the use of the first person pronoun in a mental clause, *I think*, functioning as a subjective interpersonal metaphor of modality, she communicates with the reader; then she takes the role of an advisor suggesting things to the audience through the use of a negation and a lower value of modal

obligation in a passive form, *should*, as in: *I think Qurum National Park should not be overlooked on any tourist trip to Muscat.* In this text, she constructs an explicit dialogue and shortens her distance from the audience through the wishing sentence when closing the text, *hope u all get a chance to visit it.*

Text 3 is a Recount genre containing the blog-writers' activities and then thoughts. As the architecture of the text (Tang and John, 1999), she used the first person pronoun as the Subject in most independent clauses, 58.3% of the total; she also voices herself through the use of active and declarative material clauses to recount facts about her daily activities. In one clause, the blog-writer pulls the audience into the text through using the second person pronoun, *you,* and gives them the ability to hold their own opinion through using the modal, *can,* and a projecting clause afterward**,** *you can say I'm a boring person;* this is the point where the blog-writer has a dialogue with her audience, but then she takes a stance and challenges their opinion about the self and identity she projects throughout her text through a contradictory argument, *but its OK with me because in the weekend i change my routine.* There is one incidence of negation in this text through which the blog-writer expresses a fact, *I have only 1 hour break I don't really do a lot in it because its short.* Through the use of the first person pronoun in a mental clause, she tries not to be assertive and gives the audience the chance to hold their opinion, as in: *that's my usual routine i think its nothing interesting.* All of this shows the blog-writer has a recounter role when expressing facts and her propositions in this text.

Text 4 is a Narrative genre through which the blog-writer tries to resolve a complication when taking her speaking test. The majority of the Subject types, in this text, belongs to the first person pronoun, eight out of thirteen incidences, suggesting that the blog-writer has invested herself in the text. All clauses are declarative and active; there is only one incidence of negation in the text. Through the first person pronoun in relational clauses, she describes what went wrong and expresses her feelings ascribing some quality to herself as in: *I'm really nervous about it and worried because I'm not good in communicating with TEACHERS because I always don't pick the right words. In real world I'm good in speaking but when I come to know its a test I get scared and nervous.* There is one negative mental clause in the text, and it is not to challenge the readers' opinion, but to state a fact about the blog-writer's mental state in an oral exam, *I don't know what to say and screw up.* Then, she takes the role of advisor through reflecting on the consequences of her reactions and tries to calm herself through using the first person pronoun and modal probability, *will*, as in: *if I ran away I will fail so i better be calm and take a deep breath and let it out and be sooo confertable and confident.* In one instance, she pulls the readers in the text through the use of an imperative clause; this shifts the focus of the discourse from the blog-writer to the

readers, *wish me luck!!* This clause addresses the readers explicitly and signals the communication between the readers and blog-writer.

Text 5 is an Exemplum genre where the blog-writer judges men's behaviour when they get angry. The majority of the Subjects in this text are those other than the first person pronoun, first person plural pronoun (inclusive, *we)* or the second person pronoun. Through the use of this Subject type, she focuses on describing a fight, what happened and how people reacted. Using negation and the first person pronoun in a few mental indicative clauses, the blog-writer expresses her uncertainty to the readers about the issue, as in: *i don't know why guys like fighting*. This mental clause functions as a subjective metaphor of modality (Martin and Rose, 2008, p.40) indicating how the blog-writer creates a relation with the reader. In another first person pronoun mental clause, she takes the position of an opinion holder and expresses her judgment with a low value of modal obligation: *I think they should put him in jail*. Such clauses lessen the blog-writer's authoritative stance and leaves room for the readers' opinion. In one incident, the blog-writer takes the role of an advisor by offering some suggestions by using modal *should* and the third person plural pronoun *they*: *They should talk in logically and solve it without any fight;* along with the use of modal *should,* she also pulls the readers into the text through the use of an indefinite pronoun, *anyone* in the Subject position; she also shows her solidarity with the help of the first person plural pronoun inclusive *we* and its derivations*,* as in: *If anyone saw a fight should stop it not sit and watch as if there's something funny to watch; if one of them past away we'll feel bad about it and we wont forgive our selves*. This shows how the blog-writer shares her stance with the readers and brings their potential thoughts into the text.

Text 6 is an Argument genre discussing different views around blogs and blog-writing. This text is amplified with the Subject types other than the first or the second person pronoun and their derivations, 66.7% of the total subjects. All clauses are declarative except for one, which is imperative. These are positive active clauses and there are only two incidences of negation. There are two instances of modal inclination type in this text. The author expresses her opinions about blogs as if they are facts; she does this through the use of impersonal Subjects in positive present tense declarative clauses, as in: *Weblog is a very useful in education and as a diary; weblog is one of the best ways of improving my writing skills; its atrative; some pople get addected; [...]and reduse the commnication with your family members.* Such statements leave no room for the readers' opinion showing the authority of the blog-writer in the text. In some instances, she tries to relate to the audience; for instance, by the use of *every student* in the Subject position, in a positive declarative clause, she drags the voice of all students among the audience into the text when expressing her point of view: *every student in the world knows about weblog and it is an easy way to*

connect with writing teachers. This shows how the blog-writer switches between voices to strengthen her argument. In an incidence of negation, the blog-writer takes a position when pushing forward her opinion about how badly some people can behave online and supports it by a negative declarative clause when giving evidence, *Some people <u>dont have</u> manures, they put bad comments.* Elsewhere, she voices her opinion again in a negative declarative clause with the first person pronoun as a Subject to close the text, *To sum up, <u>I</u> <u>dont find</u> weblog is a bad thing,* but she allows the readers to hold their own idea by switching the focus of the clause from the blog-writer to others: *<u>but</u> <u>some people</u> do*. At the end, she communicates with the readers through an imperative clause to make a recommendation, *Hope everybody write a lot because its useful*. This reduces the distance between the blog-writer and her audience.

Text 7 is an Exposition genre where the blog-writer argues that she has the best family. The blog-writer constructs her voice and self-expression thorough her choice of Subject types, indicative, imperative and interrogative clauses, negation and modal probability. The majority of the Subject types belong to the category others containing Subjects other than the first person singular or plural pronoun (inclusive *we*) or the second person pronoun and its derivations. This accounts for 55.3% of the total subjects. There is no passive clause in the text and all the clauses are declarative except for one, which is a WH interrogative clause. Out of 41 independent clauses, there is only one imperative clause and five clauses are in negative form. In one instance, the blog-writer inserts the voice of her audience to the text through her choice of an indefinite Subject and expresses their probable thoughts in a projecting clause, *<u>Everybody</u> would say that they have the best family*, then she challenges her audience through asserting her point of view by using the first person pronoun in a positive declarative clause, *but <u>I'm going to stop them</u>,* and gets engaged with the readers dialogically by a verbal clause afterward, *and <u>tell</u> them to come and have a look at my family*. However, she does not ignore the readers' potential thoughts and tries not to impose her view onto them; this is done by the use of the first person pronoun in a negative active clause, *<u>I'm not saying</u> we are perfect*; in the same sentence, with the same Subject in a declarative relational positive present tense clause, which attributes the quality of being certain to the blog-writer, she maintains her stance, *but <u>I'm sure</u> we are one of the best!* The same quality can be seen in another clause, where the blog-writer tries to convince her readers through using a first person pronoun in a negative clause, *<u>Im not</u> exaggerating,* and intensifies her point and challenges the readers in the proceeding projecting clause, *<u>I'm only saying</u> the truth and that what I've been raised for and what I wrote is nothing comparing to what you'll see*. This shows how the blog-writer supports her authoritative stance when putting forward her arguments and expresses her judgements in respect to the readers' status. She expresses probability through using the modal *would* in several instances, as in:

My parents wouldn't do anything without asking our opinion […] *they would ask us for the reason* […]. In one case, the blog-writer takes out her personal judgement by her choice of Subject in a mental clause to strengthen her claim: <u>*Our housemaid even loves*</u> *staying in my house.* Although this text is a monologue, the blog-writer uses an imperative clause to relate to the readers as in: *let me introduce my family.* She also uses an argument prompt to stimulate the readers' opinions on her point: *Why do I think we are the best?* Through this clause, she pulls the voice of the audience into the text and expresses the potential question in their mind to support her arguments. Such interrogative clauses increase the authority of the blog-writer in the text and turn the text into a dialogue, a dialogue which is controlled by the blog-writer but reduces the gap between the blog-writer and her audience.

Text 8 is an Exposition genre arguing why she is satisfied with her life. The blog-writer expressed herself through the frequent choice of the first person pronoun as the Subject and declarative active clauses. Other types of Subject, modals and polarity also played role in her textual self-expression construal. By the help of first person pronoun and modal of certainty, *would,* in a mental clause, the blog-writer puts forward her point and takes a stance -- *If anybody came and asked me who I want to be for sure <u>I would</u> love to be myself.* She scaffolds her stance as an opinion holder by taking the readers on her side through the use of the indefinite pronoun, *Nobody*, in the Subject position, <u>*Nobody is perfect;*</u> then, she takes the role of a confessor to relate to the readers through use of negation and first person pronoun in a relational clause, which attributes a quality to her, *and <u>I'</u>m <u>not perfect,</u>* and confirms her claim by using the same pronoun in a positive active clause, *and <u>I</u> made mistakes.* She strengthens her point through using the third person pronoun in a declarative positive present clause, *but all human being make mistakes.* By the use of a derivation of the first person plural pronoun*, our,* she pulls the audience's voice into the text to show her solidarity with them, *thats <u>our</u> nature,* and expresses herself through a mental positive clause, *<u>i</u> <u>believe</u> that no life without problems is a boring life*. Then, her choice of the first person pronoun as Subject, the Mood adjunct, *simply*, and the negative modal ability, *couldn't,* construes her voice, exemplifies her experience and shares it with the audience*<u>: I</u> tryed to live my life without problems but <u>I simply couldn't</u>;* she increases the likelihood of her proposition with the modal ability *can* and pulling the audience into the text, *and no one can.* The choice of *I* in subjective interpersonal metaphors *I think* and *I believe* signifies the blog-writer's intention to leave rooms for the audience's opinion, as in: *<u>I think</u> that problems make life more interesting and that is true for me.*

5.6   Conclusion

As the register analysis has shown, the high frequency of the declarative clause type in Blog 1 makes this blog more informative than interactive. In addition, the language used in it

signifies the linguistic features of both the spoken and written modes of language. This analysis has shown that although this blog-writer is separated from her audience spatially, she has tried to construe a relation with her audience through her particular choice of Subject, the imperative and interrogative patterns, and addressing the audience directly. Also, placing the old or given information at the beginning of clauses and producing long sentences are both characteristics of speech. On the other hand, this blog-texts have shown a high tendency to be more monologic than dialogic due to the high number of declarative non-elliptical clauses and lack of interpersonal tenor meanings. To sum up, this blog is an informative type of blog with a few linguistic indications of tenor and a blend of features typical of both the spoken and written modes. As a result, it is true to say that blog-space can provide an environment where writers feel able to shift from one mode of language to another in their texts to achieve their purpose, which is communication. This might raise the question of whether other factors can affect the mode of language in Blog 1. Switching from one mode of language to another may have other reasons such as the blog-writer's lack of linguistic competence; this could mean that the blog-writer as an EFL learner is unable to control the channel of information and role of the language due to her limited lexico-grammatical knowledge; however, this style might be a culturally appropriate and accepted mode of discourse within the community and a deliberate strategy to communicate effectively. These issues need further attention and need to be investigated in the socio-cultural context where the discourse is happening.

The genre analysis suggests that this blog contains various genres with different stages and sub-stages. Half of the texts were analysed as an instance of Arguments genre and the rest belonged to Self-introduction, Recounts, Narrative and Exemplum genres. The schematic stages of the dominant genre in the texts were sometimes mixed with other genres. This has led some texts to contain the features of two or more genres simultaneously. This could be because of writing in the virtual environment of blogs where the blog-writer is not limited to formal language patterns. This provides evidence of how the mode of writing can affect the construction of discourse. Furthermore, the role of audience and purpose in determining the schematic stages of blog-texts is striking in the analysis. Thus, it seems rather simplistic to associate all of the blog-texts with a particular genre.

The analysis of the hyperlinks and comments did not show any particular discourse community in this blog. However it indicated that the blog-writer was engaged with her audience through the small talks happening in the comments. Considering the wide audience of blogs, who can lurk and not leave any comments, it is rather hard to apply the notion of a discourse community to blogs.

The talk-around-text interview showed the reason for some of the blog-writer's linguistic choices in her texts and provided a better understanding of the purpose of this blog. As the blog-writer said, she used her blog to publish her life stories, talk about her family and tell people about her beliefs and feelings; this resembles McNeill's (2003) online diary, and Herring et al.'s (2004) and Puchman's (2010) personal journal/diary, where blog-space is used to record the blog-writer's internal and external personal experiences, reflections and emotions. Considering the blog-writer's point of view, it can be suggested that blogs can influence the linguistic features of the discourse and give the blog-writer the freedom to voice her opinion and feelings when necessary. The use of the first person pronoun, which the blog-writer feels is inappropriate in a real face-to-face discourse, confirms this issue. Judging from the responses, the blog-writer used the second person pronoun to draw the audience into the text and relate with them (Ye, 2010, p.146); by using the first person plural inclusive pronoun 'we' and its derivations, she shows solidarity and persuades the readers to agree with her opinions. The blog-writer's response regarding her choice of modality indicates the importance of audience in constructing the discourse; she stressed that, as the audience of her blog is not certain, she used the medium low obligation modal 'should' to show how she avoids sounding authoritative in her texts and to give space to the readers' opinion.

Active declarative clauses had the main role in construing the blog-writer's self-expression and stance in texts; through this she expressed things as facts that did not leave any space for the readers' opinion. In a few instances, she constructed her textual position with the help of imperative and interrogative clauses; through such clauses, she engaged with the readers and pulled their voice into the texts. In some instances, she expressed herself and construed her authorial stance by using the first person pronoun; through this she assigned herself the role of a knower or an advisor. Using the first person plural pronoun inclusive (we) helped her show her solidarity and align her voice with her readers. She also used different types of modality to reinforce her voice and stance, to state her uncertainty, to negotiate with the readers, to recommend something and sometimes to bring the readers' voice into the text. She sometimes expressed her proposition through negation and sometimes challenged her readers' thoughts. This analysis also showed that the blog-writer's self-expression, voice and stance were construed in relation to the social purpose of the blog-texts, and that is there is a constant interaction between the genre and register of discourse. Overall there is a strong tendency to descriptive register and genre in Blog 1 and the main topic of the blog-texts is the writer. A possible way to help the student-writer develop more complex genres and reflective language can be blogging along with writing instructions as a scaffold that needs more investigation.

Chapter 6 Data analysis of Blog 2

Chapter 5 provided a detailed analysis of Blog 1. In this chapter, I will turn to the analysis of Blog 2, which comprises 14 texts containing pictures, hyperlinks, comments and emoticons. The blog-writer is an 18-year-old female student and I will address her with her chosen pseudonym 'Kika'.

The first part of this chapter addresses the first research question of this study: To what extent can my students' blog-texts be conceptualised as belonging to a register? It describes my student-writer's language variation in her blog-texts in terms of TRANSITIVITY, MOOD and THEME analyses. This was done firstly by looking at the whole blog (Tables 27 to 33), and then by examining individual texts (See Appendix E: Tables 62 to 65 in Blog 2).

The second part of this chapter addresses the second research question: To what extent can my students' blog-texts be conceptualised as belonging to a genre or an emergent genre? I conducted a genre analysis by which the stages and the purpose of the texts were investigated. The results of my genre analysis are presented in Tables 70 to 83 in Appendix F. As in Chapter 5, the genre analysis was supplemented by two sets of interview data and an analysis of the links and the comments. The first interview was a general one to find out the blog-writer's language proficiency and use of the Internet. The second one was a talk-around-text interview (see Table 37).

To examine the concept of a discourse community, the hyperlinks and the frequency of the comments in Blog 2 were investigated and the findings are presented in Table 35 and Table 36. The next section deals with my first research question that involves register analysis and begins with analysing TRANSITIVITY in the texts.

6.1   Phase I: Register analysis of the whole Blog 2

6.1.1   TRANSITIVITY analysis of the whole Blog 2

The ideational meaning, in Blog 2, is examined through analysing the TRANSITIVITY system. This contains the analysis of processes, participants and circumstances in this blog.

Process types

Table 27 shows the frequency of the different processes used in the blog-texts. These processes are material, mental, behavioural, relational, verbal and existential.

Table 27: Process types in Blog 2

Process-type		N=245
Material	24.49%	60
Mental	17.96%	44
Behavioural	4.49%	11
Relational	46.53%	114
Verbal	3.27%	8
Existential	3.27%	8

As Table 27 shows, 245 processes were used in this blog. Relational processes account for just under half of all the processes with 46.53% showing that Blog 2 focuses on descriptions and identifications of things and people; the relational processes used in this blog are: *be, get* and *have*. The process '*come'* in the sentence, 'The food comes really fast' is also treated as a relational process. Material processes are the second most frequent processes in Blog 2, accounting for 24.49%, through which the blog-writer gives information about what has happened and is done. The low frequency of mental processes, with 18% of the total processes used in Blog 2, suggests that the blog-writer is not concerned with the mental processes states, feelings and emotions of the participants, including herself, involved in the processes. Other types of process used in this blog are in a minority, verbal and existential processes with a 3.27% frequency each and behavioural processes with 4.5% of the total processes.

Participant types

As shown in Table 28, 397 participants are used in Blog 2 and 226 of them belong to the participants involved in relational processes: carrier 15. 6%, attribute 13.6%, identified 8%, identifier 8%, token 2.5%, value 25%, possessor 3.5% and possession 3.2% of the total participants.

Table 28: Participant types in Blog 2

Participants-type		N=397
Actor	10.83%	43
Goal	6.05%	24
Senser	8.82%	35
Phenomenon	5.29%	21
Carrier	15.62%	62
Attribute	13.6%	54
Identified	8.06%	32
Identifier	7.81%	31
Token	2.52%	10
Value	2.52%	10
Possessor	3.53%	14
Possession	3.27%	13
Behaver	1.26%	5
Sayer	1.76%	7
Target	1.01%	4
Verbiage	1.51%	6
Existent	1.76%	7
Scope	0.5%	2
Omitted-participants	4.28%	17

The high frequency of carrier and attribute show that the blog-writer intended to describe thing and people and then identify human and non-human entities. It is noted that only 21 out of 226 participants of relational processes refer to the blog-writer and the majority of these, 13 out of 21, are carries, through which she describes things about herself and her belongings, as in: *if I could be invisible; I'm free; I was happy.* Of participants directly involved in processes, 67 belong to the category of actor and goal accounting for 10.8% and 6% of the total participants respectively. 23 of the actors refer to the blog-writer construing her doings and activities as an Agent in clauses in blog-texts. 56 participants are involved in mental processes; 22 of them refer to the blog-writer's thoughts and feelings. This portrays her attempt to show herself as a thinker in mental clauses. Other participants are in minority as their frequency is less than 2% of the total participants in this blog.

Circumstances

Table 29 demonstrates the frequency of the circumstances used in Blog 2. These circumstances are location, extent, manner, cause, contingency, accompaniment, role, matter and angle. The element of place in the locational circumstances comprises both actual place and non-physical place.

Table 29: Circumstance types in Blog 2

Circumstances-type	%	N=108
Place	25.92%	28
Time	32.4%	35
Extent	21.31%	13
Manner	13.11%	8
Cause	11.48%	7
Contingency	0.00%	0
Accompaniment	18.03%	11
Role	1.64%	1
Matter	8.20%	5
Angle	0.00%	0

As Table 29 shows, of 108 circumstances used in Blog 2, the circumstance of location (Time and Place) is used the most; the location (Time), such as *then, all the time, here* and *there*, accounts for 32.4%,; while location (Place), such as *here, there, class, on the top of the doughnut,, in my stomach,* accounts for 25.92% of the total circumstances in this blog. The blog-writer's linguistic choices indicate her intention to provide information about when and where things have happened or are done; these linguistic features have a critical role in constructing experiential meanings in this blog. The circumstance of extent with a frequency of 21.31% of the total circumstances is the second most frequent circumstance in this blog. Other circumstances such as accompaniment with a frequency of 18.3%, manner with 13.11%, cause with 11.48%, matter with 8.20% and extent with 1.64% of the total circumstances are the least frequent circumstances in this blog. The circumstances of contingency and angle were not used in this blog.

6.1.2 MOOD analysis of the whole Blog 2

An interpersonal analysis can help to find out about the tenor of the texts, which is realised through MOOD. In this analysis, examining MOOD, is valuable to determine how the author creates a relation with the audience (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). The presentation of the MOOD analysis of the texts in Blog 2 is as follows: Clause types, Table 30, Finite type, Table 31, MOOD Adjunct types, Table 32 and Subject types, Table 33 used in Blog 2.

Clause types

Table 30 shows the frequency of indicative and imperative types of independent clauses and of interrogative types: yes/no questions and WH- questions used in Blog 2 in percentages.

Table 30: Clause types in Blog 2

Feature	%	N
Independent-clauses-type	**N=195**	
Indicative	98.97%	193
Imperative	1.03%	2
Indicative-type	**N=193**	
Declarative	98.46%	191
Interrogative	1.04%	2
Interrogative-type	**N=2**	
yes/no-q	100.0%	2
WH-q	0.0%	0

There are 195 independent clauses in this blog. 98.97% of the independent clauses are indicative and 1.04% are imperative. The declarative types of indicative clauses have the highest ratio in this blog, accounting for 98.46% of the total. Only 1% of the indicative clauses are interrogatives. Two imperative clauses were used in this blog. There are only two interrogative questions, both of which are yes/no questions: *Have you ever been or heard of BNF road side dinner?* The lack of imperative and interrogative clauses in this blog suggests a weak social relation between the audience and the blog-writer in Blog 2.

Finite operators

Table 31 displays the incidence of tense and modal Finite operators as well as the omitted Finites in Blog 2. This table also presents the frequency of four different types of modals, modal probability, usuality, obligation and readiness (inclination/ability).

Table 31: Finite operators in Blog 2

Feature	%	N
FINITE-type	%	195
Tense	87.2%	170
Modal	12.8%	25
Omitted Finite operators	0.0%	0
MODAL-TYPE	%	25
Modal-probability	64.0%	16
Modal-usuality	0.0%	0
Modal-obligation	4.0%	1
Modal readiness: inclination/ability	32.0%	8

As Table 31 shows, 195 Finites were used in Blog 2. The most frequent Finite operators are tense with 87.2% of the total number of Finites. 12.8% of Finite operators used in blog-texts are modals. Among the modal types, modal-probability, such as *would, may, could*, has the highest frequency, accounting for 64%. 32% of the modals belong to the category of modal Finites: ability. Modals expressing obligation, with 4% of the total modals in this blog, have the lowest frequency.

MOOD Adjuncts

Table 32 provides the frequency of the three types of MOOD Adjuncts used in Blog 2: temporality, modality and intensity.

Table 32: MOOD Adjuncts in Blog 2

Feature	%	N
MOOD-Adjunct-type	**%**	**33**
Temporality	15.2%	5
Modality	36.4%	12
Intensity	48.5%	16

Of the MOOD Adjuncts used in Blog 2, 48.5% of the total numbers are of the type intensity, which is the highest frequency; this included the adjuncts such as *really, only* and *totally*. Modality type of MOOD Adjuncts has a frequency of 36.4% and temporality type has the lowest frequency, which is 15.2% of the total MOOD Adjuncts in this blog.

Table 33 indicates the types of Subjects used in Blog 2, singular and plural, first person pronoun (inclusive) as well as the second person pronoun and its derivations. In addition, the frequency of other types of Subjects addressing other participants and the ones omitted is included.

Table 33: Subject types in Blog 2

Feature	%	N
Subject	**%**	**194**
I/me/my	29.9%	58
You/your	1.5%	3
We/our	1%	0.52
Other	58.8%	114
Omitted	9.28%	18

As Table 33 shows, 194 Subjects were used in Blog 2. The majority of the Subjects, 58.8% of the total Subjects, address the Subjects other than in the first person, second person and first person plural pronoun (inclusive). After that the first person pronoun with 29.9% of all the Subjects is the second most frequent Subject in this blog. This suggests that this blog is less focused on the blog-writer, and the issues relevant to her. Only 1.5% of the Subjects are the second person pronoun, through which the blog-writer addresses the audience implicitly. Of the total number of Subjects used in this blog, 9.28% are omitted and only 0.52% are first person plural (inclusive).

6.1.3 THEME types in the whole Blog 2

Table 34 displays the frequency of the textual, interpersonal and topical THEME, the frequency of marked and unmarked types of topical THEME and the frequency of omitted THEMES in Blog 2.

Table 34: THEME types in Blog 2

Feature	%	N
THEME-TYPE	**%**	**346**
Textual	29.5%	102
Interpersonal	3.5%	12
Topical	67.1%	232
TOPICAL-TYPE	**%**	**N=232**
Marked	5.2%	12
Unmarked	91.8%	213
Omitted	3.0%	7

There are 346 occurrences of THEME in Blog 2. Topical THEME has the highest frequency, accounting for 67.1%, with 91.8% of these being unmarked. This indicates the key role of topical THEME in this blog through which the topic of the blog-texts develops as the discourse progresses. Textual THEME with 29.5% of the total has the second highest percentage in this blog; this included the grammatical patterns such as *because, and, if, then* and *but*. Interpersonal THEME types, with 3.5% of the total THEMES used in this blog, have the lowest frequency. 3% of occurrences of THEME are omitted in this blog.

6.2 Register analysis of the texts in Blog 2

This section deals with the register analysis of each blog-text in Blog 2. This analysis was to gain a better insight into the student's lexico-grammatical choices, their patterns and arrangement when construing meanings throughout the discourse in her texts.

6.2.1 TRANSITIVITY analysis of the texts in Blog 2

This analysis provides details of the types of processes, participants and circumstances through which the experiential meanings are constructed in Blog 2. The TRANSITIVITY analysis showed, relational processes are the most frequent processes as they dominated 8 out of 14 texts in Blog 2, Texts 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12 and 13. The ratio of relational processes in Text 13 is noticeable. There are eleven processes in this text and eight (72.7%) of them are relational. The participants used in this text are mostly carrier and attribute accounting for 15% each as well as identified and identifier with 20% and 10% of the total participants in this text. This can be related to the genre of the text, which is a blend of instances of Description, Exposition and Anecdote genres, which will be explained in Phase II, Genre analysis, 69.6% of the total number of processes used in Text 1 is relational processes. The majority of processes in Texts 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 12 are also relational: half or

more than half of the total number of processes used in these texts. Examining these texts closely showed that participants are frequently assigned the role of carrier and attribute. The commonality of the proportion of attributive relational process and their participants in the blog-texts implies that the blog-writer firstly focuses on describing and then identifying things and entities.

Material processes are the second most frequent processes in these blog-texts. 65.40% of the 26 process types used in Text 2 and 44.40% of the 19 processes in Text 14 are material. The participants playing the role of actor in these two texts are dominated by the first person pronoun and its derivations. This shows that the focus of these texts is the blog-writer's actions and experiences. The number of the material processes in the other texts is low. Mental processes are the third most frequent processes occurring in Blog 2. The low frequency of mental processes with their participants compared with relational and material processes suggests that the blog-writer was not concerned with addressing her own or the participants' feelings and thoughts in the discourse. The frequency of other processes in this blog is very low. How the variation of processes and participants occurring in the blog-texts construes the experiential meanings of the text will be discussed later in the Discussion chapter. This analysis is shown in detail in Tables 63 to 65 in Appendix E.

108 circumstances were used in Blog 2 comprising of the circumstance types of extent, manner, cause, accompaniment, role, matter and location (Time) and location (Place). The analysis indicated that a large proportion of circumstances (Time and Place) are used in Blog 2. The overall percentage of the circumstance of Time in the texts is outstanding. This type of circumstance dominates Text 9 with 100% of the total. Text 2, Text 7 and Text 3 also have a high frequency of circumstance of location (Time, accounting for 72.72%, 61.53% and 60% respectively. The large number of circumstance of Time shows the blog-writer's investment in when things happened or were done in her texts, which will be discussed later. The circumstance of location (Place) is the second most frequent type of circumstance in blog-texts, reaching 42.85% in Texts 4 and 6 and 50% in Texts 1 and Text 11. This reflects the blog-writer's concern with the location of the activities and happenings. The role of the circumstance of location in construing experiential meanings in the blog-texts will be explained further when discussing the schematic structures of the texts. The frequency of the circumstance of Place is relatively low in the other texts in Blog 2.

The circumstance of accompaniment is the third most frequent circumstance in the blog-texts. The highest proportion of this circumstance is in Text 8, accounting for 33.3%. The number of other circumstances in the blog-texts is not substantial. The highest proportion of the circumstance of manner occurs in Texts 5, accounting for 28.75% of the total

circumstances in this blog. The highest frequency of the circumstance cause is in Text 5, accounting for 28.75%. The circumstance of role occurs only in Text 1 with 11.1% of the total. Despite the low frequency of the circumstance of matter in Blog 2, the incidents of this circumstance in Text 13 is remarkable, accounting for 75% of the total circumstances; this is due to the fact that this text describes various issues that will be discussed in the section on genre analysis. The circumstance types of angle and contingency are not used in the blog-texts.

Overall, the analysis shows how the choice of circumstances helps to construe the experiential meanings through which the student-writer constructs her experiences of the world throughout her discourse. More information can be found in Table 65 in Appendix E. To find out about the tenor of the texts in Blog 2 by which the interpersonal meanings are constructed, the clause types, Subject types and Finite operators in Blog 2 are examined and presented in Tables 66, 67 and 68 (See Appendix E).

6.2.2 MOOD analysis of the texts in Blog 2

Clause type

Various mood types are used in Blog 2 comprising independent and dependent clauses. Independent clauses in particular were analysed to find the tenor of Blog 2. These clauses are of two types, indicative (declarative and interrogative) and imperative. As the analysis showed, declarative clauses dominate this blog suggesting that the blog-writer's main purpose is giving rather than demanding information. The number of interrogative clauses supports this view. Only 10% of the indicative clauses are interrogative, yes/no questions, all in Text 1. There are only two imperative clauses in Blog 2, in Text 11 and Text 12. This might show a lack of interactivity of this blog, which will be discussed below. Further information can be found in Table 66 in Appendix E. The next section deals with another element of MOOD: Subject. As discussed in Chapter 4, I am concerned with certain types of Subjects, explained and shown below.

Subject types

The analysis of Subject types comprises the frequency of the first person pronoun and its derivations *I/me/my,* the second person pronoun *you/your,* the first person plural inclusive *we/our,* and other subjects as well as the omitted Subjects. The analysis indicated that the use of Subjects referring to entities other than to the blog-writer and audience in blog-texts is high. The focus of the blog-texts is providing the audience with information about what happened or was done and about the people who are involved in the actions. The number of first person pronouns in Text 3 is striking. Six Subjects has used in this text and they are all

first person pronouns or their derivations. This suggests how heavily the blog-writer invested herself in this texts: a point which will be taken up later. Text 14 also has the highest frequency of the same pronoun. 71.40% of the total Subjects in this text is the first person pronoun and its derivation. Half of the number of Subjects used in Text 8 and Text 10 are also first person pronouns. This pronoun has a low frequency in the other texts in this blog. The second person pronoun and its derivations are not prevalent in these blog-texts. 9.50% of the total number of Subjects in Text 5 and 4.50% of those in Text 1 are the second person pronoun or its derivations. The inclusive first person plural pronoun is used only once in blog-text 5. The low use of the second person pronoun and the inclusive first person plural pronoun suggests low interactivity in the blog-texts. The number of elliptic Subjects in Text 2 is high, accounting for 47.60% of the total. In the other texts, the frequency of this feature is not significantly high. This analysis has been shown in detail in Table 67 in Appendix E.

Finite operators

Finite operators were investigated according to Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004, p.116) "interpersonal deixis": tense and modality. Finite operators of tense dominated the blog-texts in Blog 2. Through this type of Finite operator, the blog-writer relates the validity of the proposition made in the texts "to the here-and-now reality of the speech event" (Thompson, 2004, p.53). Another type of Finite operators, which has a role in constructing a relation with the audience, is Finite modals; however, Finite modals are not prevalent compared to other Finite operators in the blog-texts in this blog. Among the modals used in the blog-texts, the frequency of modals of probability in Text 10 is outstanding, accounting for 41.7% of the total Finite operators used in this text. Text 3 and Text 5 with 33.3% of the total Finites have the second highest frequency of modals. Then, 23.5% of the Finite operators used in Text 11 are modal Finites. There is a low frequency of the modal Finite operators in other texts, Text 12 with 15.4%, Text 14 with 14.3%, Text 13, with 10%, Text 7 with 12.5%, and Text 6 and Text 8 with 5.6%.

Texts 2, 10, 13 and 14 have the highest frequency of modals of probability, accounting for 100%. 71.4% of the total number of modals in Text 5 are also modals of probability. Through the use of this type of modal, it seems that the blog-writer avoids asserting her opinion, and gives space to the reader's voice, which I will discuss in the next phase of this analysis. Texts 6, 7, 8 and 12 are populated with modal Finite operators indicating readiness (inclination or ability), accounting for 100%. 50% of the modal Finite operators used in Text 11 are modals of probability and 50% are modals of readiness (inclination or ability). The complete analysis is shown in Table 68 in Appendix E.

6.2.3   THEME types in the texts in Blog 2

The arrangement of the information in clauses was analysed through looking at the THEME types used in the blog-texts. As the analysis showed, three types of THEME, Topical, interpersonal and textual, were used in the blog-texts in Blog 2. Topical THEME is the most common THEME in Blog 2. The frequency of this type of THEME in Text 6 and Text 9 is very high, accounting for 93.8% and 90% respectively. The majority of the topical THEMES in this blog are unmarked topical THEME, which helps the continuity of the discourse and shows the "structural simplicity" of these texts (Ebrahimi and Swee Heng, 2012). The frequency of marked topical THEME in the blog-texts is quite low compared with that of unmarked THEME, unlike the written mode of language that needs careful planning. The ratio of textual THEME in this blog is not high but it does occur in all the texts. Text 2 with 41% has the highest frequency of textual THEME among all the blog-texts. Text 4 with 37.5% and Text 5 with 36.6% have the next largest majorities of textual THEMES in Blog 2; this indicates that the clauses in these two texts are linked through the use of continuative and conjunctive linking elements. This type of THEME orients the clauses within the texts and makes them coherent. The interpersonal THEME is the most infrequent of the three THEME types; of all the texts in this blog, Text 3 has the highest frequency of interpersonal THEME accounting for 17.6%. This type of THEME along with textual THEME, according to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) constructs the semantic relations in the discourse. The low frequency of the interpersonal THEME suggests the weak interactivity of this blog. This analysis has been shown in detail Table 69 in Appendix E.

6.2.4   Summary and results

As the TRANSITIVITY analysis shows that the blog-writer constructs her outer experience of the world through the use of relational processes and their participants, as carrier and attribute or identified and identifier, as well as circumstances. The high frequency of relational processes suggests that the field of this blog is about describing and identifying the participants, humans and objects. The relatively high occurrence of material processes with their participants, as actor and goal, also indicates that this blog provides the reader with information about happenings and doings. The lack of mental processes in this blog suggests that the blog-writer is not concerned with the participants' feelings, emotions, thoughts and how they perceive the world. Other processes are used infrequently while the existential process is not used at all. The blog-writer of Blog 2 has the purpose of describing and identifying human and non-human entities through assigning the participants the roles of: carrier and attribute; identified and identifier; token and value as well as possessor and possession. This accounts for 57% of the total participants in Blog 2. With the help of the

first person pronoun, she assigned herself the role of the agent in 23 out of 43 incidences of actors involved in material clauses and portrays herself as a thinker in 22 out of 35 incidences of senser in mental clauses. The high incidence of the circumstance of location (Time) in Blog 2 signifies the blog-writer's intention to highlight when things are done and what happens. She also portrays the locations of the actions through using the circumstance of location (Place), which is the second most frequently occurring circumstance in Blog 2. Other circumstances do not play a crucial role in constructing the experiential meanings in this blog.

The MOOD analysis indicates that Blog 2 is populated with indicative clauses portraying this blog as giving rather than demanding information. In the whole blog, she uses only two interrogative clauses comprising yes/no, questions: in Text 1 - *Have you ever been or heard of BNF road side diner?* and Text 10, *If I could be invisible for a day ,then??!!* The infrequency of the second person pronoun and the first person plural pronoun indicates how the blog-writer creates a distance between the audience and herself. The first person plural pronoun *we* is only used once in the independent clauses of the whole blog: *We also learn more from the comments.* The second person pronoun occurs in a few clauses: in Text 1, *Have you ever been or heard of BNF road side diner?*; in Text 5, *you may recieve bad comments from people and it can make you feel bad about your self; You should know how to type because if you dont then it will take a very long time.* Only two sentences are imperative in the whole blog-texts: Text 11, *wish me luck* and Text 12, *Believe it or not.* This implies a weak social relation between the blog-writer and her audience. The highly frequent modal of probability in Blog 2 suggests the blog-writer's low level of certainty about the propositions. This is projected through her statements and questions, in her texts. The low frequency of modulation, comprising modals expressing obligation and inclination, can suggest that the blog-writer tries not to impose her opinions on the reader. This affects the involvement and role of the blog-writer in the discourse in relation to her audiences. For instance, in Text 10, The high number of modals expressing probability indicates the blog-writer's attempt to express the probability of the stated propositions*: I'd do so many crazy things that i've always thought about; [...]I would travel around the world without passport; I think it would be fun; The other thing I might do is control people maybe[...]; I think it would be strange to them but to me, controlling them would be great and funny; I would probably do is getting into a wedding;[...] But too bad, I would be invisible; Those are the craziest three things i would be doing if I'd be invisible.* In Text 5, also, she expresses the probability of the happenings through the use of the modal *may* and *can*: *you may recieve bad comments from people and it can make you feel bad about your self.* Using such modals, she softens her opinion in the texts and gives space to the audience's voice that might differ from hers. She also takes the role of an advisor through the use of low

obligation modal *should*: *You <u>should</u> know how to type because if you dont then it will take a very long time.* In Text 3, she increases the level of probability through modality by the use of the modal *will: I'll be doing my speaking test at 1.20 in the afternoon; I think i'll have butterflies in my stomach when i get to the room.*

The THEME analysis indicates the significant role of unmarked topical THEME in development of the blog-texts. This type of THEME constructs the context for both clauses and texts and helps the readers understand the blog-writer's underlying concerns within the texts. For instance, in Text 5, the frequent reference to the topic of the text through unmarked topical THEME projects what the blog-writer is concerned with as the text unfolds. An extract from this text on the topic of 'Blog- Advantages & Disadvantages', illustrates this:

> There are so many websites [...]. Blog is one of them. It (Blog) is one of the greatest writing sites. There are so many positive sides of the blog. First of all, it (blog) s a good way […] We also learn more from the comments […]. It (blog) is also a way of communication and reading other's blogs. It (blog) helps us improve our reading, too. This website (blog) is an easy […].It (blog) also can be used for buisness […].It (blog) also can be used for buisness too […]it (blog) will also reduce communication among the family members. […]it (blog) can make you feel bad about yourself.

The least popular THEME in this blog is the interpersonal THEME, indicating the lack of interactivity of this blog, which makes it rather far removed from the dialogic mode of language. However, there are a large number of textual THEMES in the blog-texts through which the clauses within the discourse are organised. The role of the textual THEME to help the flow of the discourse in some texts is significant. For instance, Text 2 (My daily routine) has the highest frequency of this type of THEME among the blog-texts indicating how the blog-writer arranges the clauses rhetorically and logically; this makes the text coherent and helps the reader interpret it easily; for instance*: <u>When</u> i wake up around 5 i usually do my homework <u>if</u> i got any, then watch tvfor a while; I enjoy taking pictures <u>when</u> i'm free <u>so</u> i can edit them <u>whenever</u> i can.* The use of textual THEME leads to constructing long sentences comprising several clauses in some texts, which is a typical feature of speech (Crystal, 2011, p.18) and rare in the written mode of language.

Up until now, I have explained the role of the selected lexico-grammatical features by which the experiential, interpersonal and textual meanings are constructed in the blog-texts in Blog 2; considering the findings, it can be suggested that, generally, this blog is of a

descriptive type as it makes use of relational processes with the participants involved in them, as carrier and attribute as well as identified and identifier; it is highly informative since most of the mood types of clauses are declarative; it also shows characteristics of both spoken and written language because of the dominance of topical THEME and lack of interpersonal THEME in the clauses.

In the next section, I will discuss the social purpose of the blog-texts, which is construed through the schematic structures through which the texts unfold.

6.3   Phase II: Genre analysis of blog-texts in Blog 2

The process of the genre analysis, through which I analysed the blog-texts in Blog 2, follows the procedure outlined and discussed in Chapter 3. Text 1 has a Descriptive genre addressed by Rose and Martin (2012, p.130). The aim of this genre is to give information and it has two stages, Classification ^ Description. However, there is a disruption in the stages of this genre. This text is heavily focused on describing a restaurant. The first stage orients the reader to what is to follow, that is the BNF restaurant. The next stage classifies and describes the restaurant. This is done by adding qualities: *small, cosy, comfortable and dark* and classifying it: *it is still new place, popular in the past two years* as well as specifying the food there: *the food comes fast and tastes delicious*. However, it seems that there is a disruption in the next stage as the blog-writer claims that BNF is a famous restaurant and provides evidence to support her claim: *because of its delicious food and their quick service.* This is a typical feature of the Exposition genre. Then, she turns to the Description genre by specifying a food, *Dynamite fries*, and describing its ingredients: *a combination of fries with cheese and it's sauce*. In the next stage, there seems to be another deviation from the primary genre as the blog-writer claims *what makes it better are the waiters* and provides evidence for it: *because they serve you with a big smile on their faces.* This causes a shift in genre. The stages of the genre of this text are: Orientation ^ Classification ^ Description ^ Claim and evidence ^ Description ^ claim and evidence ^ Description. In other words, the stages of this genre are not consistent with the Descriptive report outlined in Chapter 3, Table 10.

The genre of the discourse produced in Text 2 is Recount. In this text the blog-writer recounts her daily activities. As outlined in Chapter 3, Table 10, the Recount genre has three stages, Orientation ^ Records of events ^ Re-orientation. In the first stage, the blog-writer provides a context for the recurrent events in her life. In the next stage, she describes her activities from morning till night sequentially through the use of connectors such as *then* and *after that*. In the last stage, she wraps up the events: *then start a new day with the same routine :).* A large amount of the discourse in this text is constructed through the use of the

first person pronoun and simple present tense. This is consistent with the characteristics of Martin's (2002, p.90) definition of personal recounts.

Text 3, is an instance of the Narrative genre. Rose and Martin (2012, p.42) describe this genre as a story with a complication and four schematic structures: Orientation ^ Complication ^ Resolution ^ Coda. The first sentence identifies the situation as being a speaking test in the afternoon. The next stage indicates a crisis because the blog-writer states that she gets nervous when she has no idea about the topic she is going to talk about. In the next stage, she claims that she will speak fluently and manage the test easily. In the next stage, she does not offer any solution but expands on the complication: *i'll have butterflies in my stomach.* Thus, this text unfolds through the stages of Orientation^ Complication ^ Claim ^ (Expansion of the complication).

Text 4 is an example of the Anecdote genre. The stages of this genre are Orientation ^ Remarkable event ^ Reaction (Rose and Martin, 2012, p.130), through which this blog-writer describes a story about her friend, how they got to know each other, why she left and how the blog-writer feels about this event. In the first stage, orientation, the blog-writer orients the reader to the topic. Through this stage, she introduces her friend in terms of how long they have known each other. In the same sentence, she states her reaction, *I was surprised,* to the event of being in the same class as her friend. In the second stage, she raises a problem - *suddenly the moving college dessition came up.* She describes the reasons why her friend is leaving and gives her comments: *its soo sad that i have to spend all these years along -.-.* In the last stage, she gives her reaction towards the situation, *but i respect her dessition and am happy for her as long as she is :D.* Therefore, the stages along with their phases through which this text unfolds are: Orientation (Reaction ^ Event) ^ Remarkable event (Problem ^ description ^ Comment) ^ Reaction.

Text 5 seems to be an instance of the Argument genre through which the blog-writer assesses various opinions about an issue. This genre according to Coffin et al. (2005, p.469) has three main stages: Thesis ^Arguments ^ Position; in this text the blog-writer assesses the positive and negative points of blogs from her point of view. In the first stage, the blog-writer introduces blog-space as one of the most popular sites with positive aspects. This orients the reader towards the next stage, which is the Argument for having a blog. Through this stage, the blog-writer claims that blog-writing is a way to improve writing skills and then provides some reasons to support her point such as: writing continuously, learning from others, improving reading. Then, she claims that a blog is a relaxed environment and supports this with evidence, *helps us to express our feelings*. In the next sentence, she argues that blog-space is exciting as it has the capacity to include photos, videos and music.

Then, she orients the readers to the negative aspects of blogs through the stage of Thesis in the next sentence. She claims that blogging can be addictive, and strengthens her argument with evidence: *because it will also reduce communication among the family members.* In the next stage, she refers to another point about blogging, which is being able to type. In the same sentence, she provides a reason for her argument: *if you dont then it will take a very long time to type.* She then addresses the reader by stating the negative aspect of blogs, which is receiving bad comments and justifies her claim by stating its consequences: *it can make you feel bad about your self.* In the last section of the text, she puts forward her opinion and, in the last stage, constructs a stance towards the issue. Therefore the stages of Text 5 are: Thesis ^Argument1 (claim ^ evidence^ evidence^ evidence ^ evidence) ^Argument2 (claim ^ evidence) ^ Argument 3 (claim ^ evidence) ^ claim ^ Argument 1(claim ^ evidence) ^ Argument 2 (claim ^ evidence) ^ Argument 3 (claim ^ evidence) ^ Re-inforcement and Recommendation.

Text 6 was analysed as a sample of Reports genre, that is largely descriptive; thereby, it belongs to the sub-category of Descriptive report genre, as explained by Rose and Martin (2012, p.130), with the purpose of describing and classifying two characters, Jojo and Hilary Duff. The stags through which this text unfolds are Classification ^ Description. However, there is a deviation from the dominant genre of this text. In the first stage, the blog-writer orients the readers to what she is writing about through introducing the two characters, *I will write about Jojo and Hilary duff.* In the next stage, she describes and reports the similarities and difference between them. In the final stage, she signals the end of the discourse with *in the end,* and provides the readers with her interpretation through her evaluative language: *they are both amazing actors and singers ☺.* This is a typical stage of the Exemplum genre. The stages through which this text unfolds are: Classification ^ Description ^ Interpretation

Text 7 is analysed as an example of the Narrative genre, as explained by Rose and Martin (2012, p.130). In this text, the blog-writer explains a problem caused by her college and how it is resolved. The stages of such as text, according to Rose and Martin (2012, p.130), are: Orientation ^Complication ^Evaluation ^Resolution ^Coda. In the first stage, the blog-writer orients the readers to the situation: *the roads will be closed at around 12 or 1 in the afternoon and every everyone who goes to school or even works anywhere has to go back home at around 11!.* In the next stage, she expresses a complication by stating that students are not allowed to leave the college. Then, she evaluates and interprets the situation: *maybe they want us to be stuck here.* Following that, she states that the problem is resolved as the closure of the streets was postponed. In the last stage, she appraises the situation as it is, *Now we are fine with the situation we can atleast get home before 2pm :).*

Text 8 was analysed as an instance of the Recount genre with the purpose of recounting the author's activities during a holiday. The stages through which the text unfolds follow the stages of the Recount genre introduced by Martin (1992, p.567): Orientation ^ Record of events ^ Reorientation.

Text 8 exemplifies the Recount genre. In the first stage, the blog-writer orients the reader to when and where things happened and who was involved in the situation: *Last week was a holiday. We had three days off.* In the next stage, she provides the reader with a series of activities and sequences them temporally, *last week, on Tuesday, on Friday.* In the last stage, Reorientation, she refers back to the first stage and expresses her feelings about the proceeding holiday*: I enjoyed my last holiday and I cant wait for the national day holiday which will be for a whole week.* In the last stage, she gives her interpretation of the situation: *Litterly means, FUN FUN FUN!* This genre is written in the first person, which is typical of Martin's (2002, p.90) personal Recount genre.

Text 9 is analysed as an example of the Descriptive report genre defined by Rose and Martin (2012, p.130); in this text, the blog-writer classifies and describes a cartoon character. The schematic structures of this genre are Classification ^ Description (Rose and Martin, 2012, p.130); however, in Text 9, there are some sub-stages in between the obligatory stages of the dominant genre in the text. In the first stage, the blog-writer introduces the character of Sponge Bob. Then, she describes it as eccentric, hyper and fun to watch. Then, she claims that she buys everything associated with this character and provides some evidence: *I have a pillow that has a picture of sponge bob on it.* The next sentence is her reaction: *i LOVE it :p.* Then, she claims that acting like a child is the other side of her own character. In the next stage, she describes what Spong Bob is, where it lives and how it sounds. Then, she expresses her feeling towards it: *funniest and* most *popular cartoonever* ☺. She ends the text with her reaction: I love SpongeBob <3. Therefore the stages of this text are: Classification ^ Claim ^ Evidence ^ Description ^Claim ^ Classification ^ Description ^Evaluation ^ Reaction.

Text 10 was analysed as a Consequential explanation with the purpose of explaining multiple effects, as introduced by Rose and Martin (2012, p.130). The stages of the Consequential explanation genre are Phenomenon: Cause ^ Explanation: Consq. In the first stage, the blog-writer introduces the Phenomenon, the state of being invisible, as a cause, wh.ich has some consequences. In this stage, she explains the consequences of being invisible, such as travelling without a passport around the world. This stage is followed by the Reaction stage - *I think it would be fun!*- which is typical of the Anecdote genre. In the next stage, she explains another thing she desires to do when invisible: *The other thing I*

might do is control people maybe :p. In the next sentence, she reveals her attitudes towards her possible action: *I accually thought of that and I think it would be strange to them but to me, controlling them would be great and funny!* This stage is common in the Narrative genre (Martin, 1992, p.556). It is followed by her reaction towards her own comment: *HAHA but ofcourse not in a bad way :p* . In the next stage, she explains that she would go to a wedding party without an invitation. This proceeds her reaction: *But too bad, I would be invisible :p*. Then, the text ends with re-orientation: *Those are the craziest three things i would be doing if I'd be invisible :D*. The stages of this text are Cause ^ Explanation ^ Reaction ^ Explanation ^ Evaluation ^ Reaction ^ Explanation ^ Reaction ^ Re-orientation.

Text 11 is examined as an example of the Anecdote genre which has three generic stages Orientation ^Remarkable ^ Event ^Reaction (Rose and Martin, 2012, p.130). Here the blog-writer shares her emotional reaction to particular issues in her text. The discourse, shifts to the stages of other genres throughout the text. In the first sentence, the blog-writer orients the reader to the setting of the end of the term. Then, she describes the people in her college and how difficult it was for her to adjust to them. In the next sentence, she claims that she learned a lot of new and helpful things during the term. Then, she explains an upcoming event, *we will all be separated in different classes,* along with her reaction *I feel so unhappy knowing that its the end of this semester*. In the next stage, she brings up an issue, *The finals are coming up really soon*; then she evaluates the situation, *I know this time the exams are going to be hard,* and provides a solution, *I have to study well to get to the next and final level of this foundation!* She ends the text with a reaction and addresses the reader, *Soo May god help us all (A). Wish me luck, fingers crossed*. Therefore, the generic stages of this text are Orientation^ Description ^ Claim ^ Remarkable event ^ Reaction^ Orientation and Crisis ^ Evaluation and Resolution ^Reaction.

Text 12 is analysed as an instance of the Descriptive report genre that is subcategory of the Reports genre defined by Rose and Martin (2012, p.130). This genre, with the purpose of "classifying and describing a phenomenon" (Rose and Martin, 2012, p.130), has two stages: Classification ^ Description. However, there are some deviations in the stages of this genre. The discourse has some embedded genres in this text. The first stage is a classification of the entity: a sweet called Cinnabon. In the next stage, the blog-writer describes it through attributes and qualities: *yummiest sugary sweets* and *melted sauce*. In the next stage, she makes a claim about it, which is a sub-stage of the Expositing genre: *Its a perfect dessert to have specially when a person is depressed, makes you feel better*. Then, she provides evidence: *Atleast that works for me*. Then, she turns to the Descriptive genre by referring to another entity: Dunkin Donuts. Following that, she claims that *it is the most famous shop in the world and the most sugery, delicious sweets anyone can try!* In the next stage, she

introduces another type of sweet, Molten Chocolate from Chili's. Then, she relates her 'unbelievable' experience and her feeling when she tried it for the first time. She finishes the text with a recommendation: *It is so yummy and i recommend every creature in this world to try it!* The stages through which Text 12 unfolds are: Classification ^ Description ^ Claim ^ Evidence ^ Classification ^ Description ^ Claim ^ Evidence ^ Classification ^ Remarkable event ^ Reaction ^ Recommendation.

Text 13 is examined as an instance of the Exposition genre; in Martin (2009, p.14) and Rose and Martin's (2012, p.130) terms, this genre has the stages of Thesis ^Argument ^ Reiteration. The purpose of this genre of this text is to present logical arguments for why the blog-writer likes reading Sugar magazine. In the first stage, the blog-writer orients the reader to what she is going to write about: *Sugar is my favourite magazine* and she claims that it is a suitable magazine for her as a teenager. In the next stage, she reasons that it contains interesting topics such as: fashion, celebrities, real life stories about teenagers, an advice column, and running a nationwide model competition. These are given as the evidence for why she likes reading this magazine. Then, she claims that '*celebrity gossips*' and teenage life, as well as its problem, are the favourite topics to read about. In the last stage, she refers to the setting of the discourse in the Thesis stage and ends the text with reiteration. The stages of Text 13 are: Thesis ^ Argument 1 (Claim ^ Evidence ^ Evidence ^ Evidence) ^Argument 2 (Claim) ^ Reiteration.

Text 14 is examined as an instance of the Recount genre; this genre, according to Rose and Martin (2012, p.130), has the stages of Orientation ^ Recount. Through this genre, the blog-writer recounts her future plans. In the first stage, she orients the reader to the setting, which comprises the time and the participants. She explains her plan to go on a trip with her relatives to visit her grandmother during the summer holiday. In the next stages, she recounts the activities she is going to do there such as: visiting her family and places that she has never visited before. In the last stage, she addresses the Thesis, which is her summer holiday and ends the text by addressing the reader with: *fingers crossed.*

6.4   The discourse community in Blog 2: Comments and hyperlinks

One of the ways to find out if a discourse community is constructed or has emerged through Blog 2 can be by examining the hyperlinks, through which the blog is connected with the outer world, and the comments received from the audience. To this end, the hyperlinks and comments in Blog 2 were investigated and are presented below.

Table 35 presents the hyperlinks visited in Blog 2, the number of comments for each hyperlink and the number of reactions to the audience. These links connect this blog with

the blogs of other blog-writers; the comments also show the interactions between the blog-writer and her audience.

Table 35: Comments and hyperlinks in Blog 2

	Comments	Reaction
1. http://multazimalamri.blogspot.com	0	0
2. http://www.slooha-sweet.blogspot.com	0	0
3. http://oman-brown.blogspot.com	11	10
4. http://aliufo3.blogspot.com	3	2
5. http://redocean01.blogspot.com	0	0
6. http://omanibubbles.blogspot.com	1	1
7. http://omanirose.blogspot.com	0	0
8. http://omanimalak.blogspot.com	0	0
9. http://aljoory.blogspot.com	0	0
10. http://muznadiva101.blogspot.com	5	4
11. http://superhuman.blogspot.com	0	0

As shown in Table 35, there are ten hyperlinks in Blog 2 and four members visited the blog and communicated with the blog-writer through leaving comments. This can indicate a low level of interaction in this blog; however, to have a better view of the community active in this blog, the notion of interaction should be inspected through examining all the comments received from the audience, even those that might not exist among the hyperlinks. This is shown in Table 36, which contains who the commenters were, what their comments were about, whether their comments were relevant to the content of the written text and if the blog -writer reacted.

Table 36: Interactions in Blog 2

Text 1	Commenter/s	Comment	Relevance to the text	Reaction
	Ahmed Brown	Confirming the blog-writer's opinion in the text	Relevant	1
	Ali_matata	Reflecting on the topic of the text	Relevant	1
	muz	Reflecting on the text and expressing her willingness to be her friend	Relevant	0
Text 2	Ahmed Brown	Reacting positively to her daily routines	Relevant	1
	Ali_matata	Reacting positively to her daily routines	Relevant	1
Text 3	Ahmed Brown	Reflecting on the text and wishing her a good test result	Relevant	1
	Ali_matata	Reflecting on the blog-writer's feelings expressed in the text	Relevant	0
	Shams	Asking about her test result	Relevant	0
	Khamis	Asking about her test result	Relevant	1
Text 4	bubbles	Reflecting on the blog-writer's feelings expressed in the text	Relevant	1
	Ahmed Brown	Reflecting on the blog-writer's feelings expressed in the text	Relevant	1
Text 5	Ali_matata	Reflecting on the information provided in the text	Relevant	1
Text 6	muz	Reflecting on the topic explained and stating her own opinion	Relevant	1
	muz	Telling her opinion about other singers	Irrelevant	1
	Shams	Reflecting on her writing style	Irrelevant	1
	Ahmed Brown	Reflecting on the content of the text	Relevant	1
	Ahmed Brown	Informing about his new blog address	Irrelevant	0
	Ebti	Reflecting on the opinion of the writer	Relevant	1
	berrysyrup	Adding to the information provided in the text	Relevant	0
Text 7	Ahmed Brown	Agreeing with the writer's opinion expressed in the text	Relevant	1
Text 8	Ahmed Brown	Expressing his agreement and his own opinion	Relevant	1
Text 9	muz	Reflecting on the content of text and expressing her own view	Relevant	1
	Shams	Reflecting on the content and expressing her own opinion and confirming muz's comment	Relevant	1
	Ahmed Brown	Expressing his agreement with the blog-writer and stating his own opinion	Relevant	1
Text 10	Shams	Reflecting on the content and asking for more information	Relevant	1
Text 11	Shams	Reflecting on the content of the text	Relevant	1
	LiLiAn	Reflecting on the content of the text and asking for more information about the blog-writer	Relevant	1
	LiLiAn	Making jokes about the information provided in the coment	Irrelevant	1
Text 12	LiLiAn	Reflecting on the pictures used in the text	Relevant	1
	LiLiAn	Responding to the writer's suggestion to try the dessert	Relevant	0
Text 13	muz	Reflecting on the content of the text and asking for more information	Relevant	1
	LiLiAn	Reflecting on the content of the text and asking for more information	Relevant	1
	LiLiAn	Asking the writer to visit her blog and write comments	Irrelevant	1
Text 14	Al-lawati girl	Reflecting on the text and asking for friendship.	Relevant	1

The table of interactions in Blog 2 indicates that eleven people visited this blog and left comments. Only four of the visitors are included in the blog-writer's hyperlink lists and the rest are from the audience outside. This shows that the audiences of the blog extend beyond the hyperlinks present in this blog. Table 36 also indicates that most of the comments were relevant to the blog-texts except for five. This shows that some of the audience visited and followed Blog 2 attentively. The irrelevant comments can be also of importance as they may be evidence for interactions among the members of a community in this blog. However, the blog-writer chose particular visitors when reacting to the comments and did not reply to some of them. Receiving no reply from the blog-writer might be one reason for these visitors never visited the blog again or, if they did, they never wrote a comment on this blog. Seemingly, it is rather hard to determine a particular blog community in Blog 2 as visitors can lurk without leaving any comments. Finding out why the blog-writer reacted to some visitors and ignored others needs more investigation, which is outside the scope of this study. Therefore, examining the hyperlinks and comments showed that the concept of community is more fluid than fixed in the analysed blog and did not indicate any specific community.

The next section discusses the interviews carried out to find out about the purpose of the written texts and the reasons behind the blog-writer's lexico-grammatical choices in the blog-texts.

6.5   Interviews

Interviews were carried out to obtain more information about the purpose of the language used in Blog 2; to this end, the blog-writer participated in a semi-structured interview and a talk-around-text interview (Lilis and McKinney, 2003). The first interview was a general one to gather information about the background of the blog-writer participant and her on-line experience.

6.5.1   Interview 1

The blog writer is an 18-year-old female student studying an English foundation course at the college of Banking and Financial Studies. She learned English during her childhood from her parents and she graduated from a private high school, where English was one of the main subjects. She prefers writing to other language skills and believes that writing can help her improve her vocabulary, spelling and even speaking skills. She has access to the Internet at home and has a Face-book page and an email account; however, she has never used blogs before.

The second interview was devoted to her blog-texts to find out her reasons for her lexico-grammatical choices in her text. This is described in the following section.

6.5.2 Talk-around-text interview

To conduct the talk-around-text interview, five texts were chosen from the participant's blog-texts: four texts by the blog-writer herself and one by the researcher. Table 37 shows the texts, their titles and genres and the issues the blog-writer raised during the interview. The interview was carried out around five blog-texts, Texts 4, 7, 9, 10 and 11, which are shown in Table 37.

Table 37: Talk-around-text interviews

Texts	Title	Genre	Linguistic elements in blog-texts	Non-linguistic elements in blog-texts
Text 4	She went	Anecdote	• 1st person pronoun and its derivations • Interrogative clauses • Active and passive voice	• Comments • Pictures • Emoticons
Text 9	Sponge Bob	Descriptive report		
Text 11	The end of this term	Anecdote		
Text 7	This college makes me frustrated:@	Narrative		
Text 10	If I could be invisible for a day, what the??!!	Consequential explanation		

Table 37 shows, the blog-writer was asked about the reason for her linguistic choices to find the purpose of the produced genres in Blog 2. She referred to some specific features through which she construed meanings in her texts.

6.5.3 Summary of the interviews

In the interviews, the blog-writer stated that she used her blog to share her feelings and emotions with the audience. She said, "If I have anything interesting to write or if I have a problem and I need help, I would directly open my blog and post whatever I want and publish it to see what advice people can give". She explained that the reason behind Text 10 (Sponge Bob) was to attract more people to her blog, "I thought of changing the topic this time and make it more interesting for people to read about it"; it seems that one of the purposes of writing in her blog is to express her real personality, which she cannot show in real life. She said, "it's my favourite cartoon character and I like publishing stuff, I like so people can know different sides of my personality […] so I can see what people comment about it". This shows how blog-space can be used as a means of self-expression and identity work, which can draw people into the texts and engage them with in the discourse.

As she said, she wrote Text 4 (She went) because she wanted to express her sad feelings and the problem she might face, "because I have to deal with new people and get used to it. I

think it's hard to cope so easily, depends on how people would think about me […]". She also highlighted the role of the audience, as an advisor, which contributes to the interactivity of this blog; she said that the audience " told me to be happy for her if this is what she wants for her future and I shouldn't be sad about it; I just have to stay in touch". On another point she said, "I wrote about my daily routine because I thought maybe I have to change this routine […] so I share it to get people's opinion". This shows how blogs can be used as a means of interaction between the blog-writer and the audience; these interactions can affect the lexico-grammatical features of the discourse used in the exchange between them.

She stated that she could use the first personal pronoun when speaking in her native language; she says, "For me it's OK; I think it won't be a big problem if we actually use it when we talk". However, she raised some concerns about using the same pronoun in her homework and exam papers: "In writing assignments it is important to keep it formal […]; blog helps me express my feelings more because I can write whatever I want without making it formal". She referred to the relaxed environment of blog-space several times throughout her interviews. For example, she says, "It is a relaxing area to write in any time I feel like it. I just write about anything pops into my mind and publish it". This shows that the blog environment can create a context where blog-writers can practise their knowledge free from the boundaries which a pen and paper context might impose. She highlights the role of the audience in motivating her to write in her blog: "I like receiving comments from others and write to them". This shows how blogging can change writing from a solitary act to an engaging cooperative one, where a sense of audience and community can influence not only the writer's discourse in her texts but her writing habits. This can be considered an advantage of blogs that language practitioners and learners can benefit from. This blog is amplified by the uses of indicative (active voice) clauses. The blog-writer expressed her reason for her choice, "Active is more comfortable for me […] because I think it's an easier way to describe something […]".

In the interview, she also referred to the use of interrogative clauses in her text. For instance, she used an interrogative clause as a title in Text 10, *If I could be invisible for a day, then??!!*; she explained that such patterns make the text more interesting, "I thought it's different and attractive so people can read this text". This shows the blog-writer's attempt to communicate with her audience and draw them into the text to explore what she wrote. She added that she used a great deal of emoticon through which she could express her feelings better. The blog-writer's textual self-expression, voice and stance will be dealt with in the following section.

6.6   The student-writer's textual voice, stance and self-expression in Blog 2

In Blog 2, 58.8% of the total Subjects belong to the category of others. This contains entities

and things other than the blog-writer, the audience or both in Blog 2. The first person pronoun was the second most frequent entity in the Subject position. This may indicate that the voice of the blog-writer is subdued. There are 25 instances of modal Finite operators in this blog. The most frequent modal Finite operator is modal probability, with 64% of the total modals. The categories of modal inclination and readiness are 32% of the total modals. There is only one instance of modal obligation in this blog. Only four of the clauses in this blog were negative and three clauses were written in passive form. 3% of clauses are imperative and only 1% belongs to interrogative clauses in this blog. There are two imperative and two interrogative clauses through which the blog-writer addressed her readers explicitly. In the following section, I will discuss how the blog-writer of Blog 2 made use of the above devices to construct her voice and express herself in each text.

6.6.1   Construing self-expression and voice in each text in Blog 2

The blog-writer of Blog 2 describes a phenomenon, *BNF road side diner,* in Text 1. She construes her voice through the use of an interrogative clause and first and third person pronouns as well as declarative clauses. Through declarative clauses, she states some facts about the appearance, location, food and service, and the people who eat or work in the restaurant; such clauses give the readers no chance to hold their opinion. She sometimes constructs her stance as a knower through the use of the first person pronoun in a mental clause, *i know, this restaurant is still new*. With the help of indefinite pronouns such as *everyone* and *nobody*, she pulls the readers' voice into the text and expresses herself, in line with her the readers' opinions, as in: *Everyone who goes there loves their food immediately; nobody really minds it.* She also made use of an interrogative clause including the second person pronoun but it was not meant to construe the voice of the reader in the text. It is not to challenge the readers but to grab their attention to the phenomenon: *Have you ever been or heard of BNF road side diner?* As explained in the register analysis, interrogative clause types contribute to construct a relation between the blog-writer and the audience.

Text 2, in the Recount genre, focuses on explaining what is happening and done daily. The prevalence of the first person pronoun in this text signifies it as a personal Recount. Therefore, the bog-writer architects her text though using the first person pronoun as the most powerful of all the Subjects used in this text. She expressed herself through active positive declarative clauses; all the happenings and doings are organised sequentially as facts, which leave no room for the readers' opinions.

Text 3 was analysed as an instance of Narrative genre. The blog-writer's voice is construed through the use of modals, negative and positive declarative clauses, first person pronoun and its derivations. The chosen Subject in the whole discourse is the first person pronoun through which she assigns herself the role of the actor and senser. Using positive indicative clauses, she does not challenge the readers and constructs her stance as the knower by providing information about the crisis in her narrative. In one incidence, she expresses her opinion with the help of the negative indicative clause and the circumstance *yet*: *I'm not nervous yet*. She also scaffolds her stance through increasing the probability of her proposition and expresses her certainty about the issue by the use of modal probability, *will*: *I'm sure the topic will be easy.* Then, she adds to the level of its likelihood with the modal probability *would, i would speak about it fluently*. Through the use of the subjective interpersonal metaphor— *I think*, she shares her stance with the readers and communicates with them implicitly, and then states an obligation through the use of an interpersonal objective metaphor of modality *supposed to* (Martin et al., 1997, p.70): *i'll have butterflies in my stomach when i get to the room and look at the topic that am supposed to speak about :P* The prevalence of the use of first person pronoun signifies this text as a personal Narrative.

Text 4 is an instance of the Anecdote genre and contains the stages of: problem, description and comments. The blog-writer constructs her voice through positive indicative clauses, first person and third person pronouns. She creates herself the role of a guide in this text, guiding the readers throughout the discourse (Tang and John, 1999), by which she states a problem, describes it and makes her comments about it. This is done with the help of positive indicative clauses, which restrict readers' reactions to her propositions. Through the use of the third person pronoun in a positive indicative clause she construes her stance when raising the tension through using the modal obligation *have to*: *its soo sad that i have to spend all these years along.* There is no trace of explicit readers' voice in this text; however, expressing feelings and emotions, according to Rose and Martin (2012, p.291), can involve the audience in the text considerably-- *i was surprised [...] I was happy knowing that i have my friend with me*. Such clauses signify that the blog-writer is in a dialogic term with her readers.

Text 5, an example of Discussion, is a sub-category of the Argument genre, because it assesses the negative and positive points of blogs. The blog-writer expresses her self through impersonating most of the clauses by using the third person pronoun referring to blogs in positive indicative clauses. At one point, she takes the role of a knower by using a modal of low obligation, *should* and engages the readers in the discourse through the use of the second person pronoun *you: If you want to have a blog, You should know how to type;*

the use of modal probability and possibility shows that the blog-writer intends to construct a the readers' voice in this text: *you may recieve bad comments from people and it can make you feel bad about your self*. This gives space for the readers' thoughts and opinions. This is in line with Thompson (2014, p.81) writing that sometimes modality "does not signal the speaker's uncertainty but their willingness to entertain, at least provisionally, a belief potentially held by the addressee". In the last stage of this text, she clarifies her stance and construes her voice by taking the role of an advisor through the use of *I* and engages with the readers dialogically by the use of the second person pronoun *you, i advise you not to use it for many hours because it will get addictive.*

Text 6 is an instance of a Descriptive report genre, which compares two characters with one another. At the beginning of the text, she construes her voice through clarifying her role as an architect of the text; that is, she signals and outlines what she is going to write about by the use of the first person pronoun and modal probability *will, I will write about Jojo and Hilary duff.* She expresses herself in positive indicative clauses and with the help of the third person pronoun as Subject, which has dominated the text. Through these, she removes her explicit judgement about the two characters to increase the likelihood of her proposition. This invites the readers to comply with her.

Text 7 is an instance of Narrative genres. The blog-writer construes her voice and self-expression through the choice of modal obligation, probability and possibility, negative and positive clauses, and indefinite pronouns as Subject. For instance, her choice of the indefinite Subject *everyone* helps her to strengthen her proposition as she tries to remove her personal opinion and talks on be half of everybody. She intensifies her proposition by the use of quasi modal obligation *has to* and the indefinite Subject *everyone: everybody has to go back home.* This also creates an expectation for the reader to find out about the problem. Most of the clauses are positive indicative, which restricts readers' opinion about the proposition. However, in one case, she constructs her stance by signalling her disagreement with the situation in a negative clause beginning with the concessive conjunction *but*: *But only this college is not giving any of the teachers or the students the permission to leave until 1!* She brings the readers' voice to the text by using *maybe*: *accually maybe they want us to be stuck here for hours and hours.* Through this, she invites her readers' potential thought and opinion in her claim. Then, she signals a change in the situation and increases its certainty through the modal, *will* and adds to the level of the obligation asserted from the college with the grammatical pattern *have to: But suddenly we got informed that the roads will be closed at 2 pm and we have to leave the college at 1*. She presents the possibility of the ground of her statements with the help of the Subject *we* that suggests a collective voice,

the blogger and other students, and modal *can: Now we are fine with the situation we can atleast get home before 2pm.*

Text 8 is an example of a personal Recount, which focuses on a series of happenings in the blog-writer's life. The blog-writer has a role of the architect of the text constructing her voice by the first person pronoun as the Subject throughout the discourse. As she recounts her activities during a holiday through positive indicative clauses, she leaves no space for the readers' opinion. She relates to the readers by stating her feeling in such clauses: *I enjoyed my last holiday*. In one instance, she expresses herself through using the modal of ability *can* in a negative clause: *I cant wait for the national day holiday;* this signifies her intention to communicate with the readers.

Text 9 is a sample of the Descriptive report with the purpose of describing and classifying a cartoon character, Sponge Bob. The blog-writer expressed her idea about this character through the use of positive indicative clauses, the first person pronoun and its derivations. Such clauses do not allow for accommodating the readers' voice in the text. In one instance, using the first person pronoun as Subject in an interpersonal metaphor of modality, the blog-writer tries to give some space to the reader's opinion in the text: *I know it sounds weird somehow*. Through the use of the indefinite pronoun *everybody*, she assigns the readers the role of a participant and brings their voice into the text: *but everbody has a childish side of their life and this is one of my sides: p.* In another instance, she inserts the potential opinion of the readers with the use of the first person pronoun in the interpersonal metaphor, *I think its the funniest, most popular cartoon ever*. She also expresses her feeling and constructs her stance in a positive indicative clause and the first person pronoun as Subject: *I love SpongeBob.* She also uses some evaluative language to construct a ground for her proposition: *Its an extremely energetic and hyper all the time. Its one of my favourite cartoon charectors! Its soo fun to watch it.*

Text 10 is a Consequential explanation: a subcategory of the Explanations genre defined by Rose and Martin (2012, p.130). She constructs her voice and self-expression through using the first person pronoun and positive indicative clauses mostly; this assigns her the role of a knower and leaves no rooms for readers' opinion. She does not take a strong position when offering her propositions. This is signalled by the prevalence of the modal *could* and *would* in the text showing the low probability of the blog-writer's propositions. She sometimes communicates with the readers and stimulates their thoughts with the help of the first person pronoun in an interpersonal metaphor, *I think*: *I think it would be fun!; But too bad, I would be invisible :p; I think it would be strange to them but to me, controlling them would be*

great and funny! This type of clauses according to Hewings and Coffin (2007, p.136) "leaves open the possibility that others may have a different views".

Text 11 is an instance of the Anecdote genre, where the weblog-writer shares her emotional reaction with the reader. The blog-writer expressed herself through using the first person pronoun, which dominated the text, and projected her as the architect of the text. She sometimes used the third person pronoun as Subject; this takes her personal opinion away from the text. She adds to the possibility of her proposition using the modal probability *will: we will all be separated in different classes.* She strengthens the reader's expectancy of the crisis with the modal probability *will: and we will all end up in different classes* ☹*.* She also explains an unavoidable situation by using an obligatory modal, *will have to: we will all have to move on to another level where everyone will have to choose their own specialization.* This reinforces the ground for her claim in the text. She constructed her self-expression through positive indicative clauses, which does not leave any space for the readers' point of view. However, in some instances, she negotiates her thoughts and feelings with the reader by the use of the first person pronoun as Subject in the mental clause *I know*: *I know this time the exams are going to be hard*. She also addresses the reader explicitly using the imperative clause, *Wish me luck;* this contributes to construing a social relationship with the reader.

Text 12 is a Descriptive genre since it is amplified with the relational process to describe and classify entities such as *Cinnabon, Dunkin Donuts* and *Molten Chocolate.* The blog-writer mainly constructs her self-expression through the third person pronoun and positive indicative clauses. Other features such as the first and second person pronoun, modals and imperative clause also help her to construe her voice in the text. The choice of third person pronoun in positive indicative clauses helped the blog-writer to strengthen her propositions and offer them as facts. However, in some instances, she construed her voice through using the first person pronoun as Subject in a negative clause: *I cant describe it in words because it was amazing.* The modal possibility *can* in a negative form in this clause reinforces her proposition. She takes a stance and assigns herself the role of an advisor and involves the readers when making a recommendation: *i recommend every creature in this world to try it!* Also, the choice of *every creature* as a participant in this sentence helps her to bring the reader to the discourse. The blog-writer draws the readers into the discourse several times. She constructs a stance for herself as a knower but provides a space for the readers' thoughts through addressing them directly by the use of the second person pronoun as a participant: *makes you feel better.* In another instance, she brings the readers' voice into the discourse, by using the indefinite pronoun *anyone* and the modal possibility *can*: *the most*

sugery, delicious sweets <u>anyone can</u> try! She also engages with the audience explicitly with the help of an imperative sentence: *Believe it or not.*

Text 13 is an exemplum of the Exposition; the blog-writer mainly resorts to the third person pronoun, referring to the magazine, as Subject to construct her voice; her choice of positive active indicative clauses help her to state her propositions as facts. Through this, she portrays the readers as a less knowledgeable participant and allows little room for their opinion. In one example, she creates a stance for herself and construes her voice through the use of the first person pronoun *I*, the mood adjunct of polarity *never* and the modal probability *could* in an indicative positive clause: *<u>i never</u> get bored reading it <u>i could</u> spend all day just sitting in my room and read this magazine.* She expresses her reflections by the help of MOOD Adjunct of usuality *always: The topics are <u>always</u> interesting. There is also a special column; Its <u>always</u> interesting.*

Text 14 is an instance of the Recount genre, by which the blog-writer recounts the activities she is planning to embark on for her summer holiday. She constructs her self-expression through the use of first person pronoun as Subject in positive active indicative clauses mainly. She also uses modal probability to increase the probability of her propositions: *it <u>will</u> be so much fun there;* She expresses her feelings through the use of the first person pronoun as Subject: *<u>i</u> am so excited; <u>i</u> am sure it will be so much fun there.* She communicates with the readers through a first person wishful sentence: *I hope it will be a summer.* This gives some space to readers' thoughts.

In the next section, I will provide my findings from the interview with nine of 15 tutors of the foundation course and one of the writing tutors who was involved in this research through following student-witters' blogs anonymously. These interviews were conducted to answer my four and fifth research questions, discussed in the next section.

6.7   Conclusion

The register analysis has indicated, a high frequency of relational processes and the circumstance of location (Time), as well as when things happened or were done through which the blog-writer has identified and described entities and people in her blog-texts. The large number of declarative non-elliptical clauses provide the audience with information rather than engaging in a social relation with them. However, some instances of the use of the second person pronoun and first person plural pronoun (inclusive) as Subject and of imperative clauses in the blog-texts show the blog-writer's attempt to relate to the audience. The frequent use of topical THEME and joining several clauses together with the help of textual THEME make the mode of the language in the whole blog rather more like spoken than written language. However, the lack of interpersonal THEME type, scarcity of the

imperative clauses and second person pronouns in the blog-texts indicate the monologic aspect of this blog. This can suggest that Blog 2 shows characteristics of both speech and written modes of language; this mode in this blog may relate to low language proficiency, the influence of L 1, the relaxed environment of blogs, the conventions of the community in which the blog-writer is involved or the impact of audience; such issues are beyond the scope of this study but deserve more investigation in the social context where the discourse is functioning.

Blog 2 comprises relatively a narrow ranges of genre. Four of the blog-texts belonged to the Descriptive report genre and the rest were analysed as an instance of Recount, Narrative, Anecdote and Argument genres. This can indicate the descriptive nature of this blog, which is in line with the findings of register analysis. In some cases, the dominant genres in the texts show the schematic structures of other genres indicating that other genres are lurking behind. Therefore, this blog provided an environment where this blog-writer could switch from one genre to another to achieve her purpose; a process that leads to genre hybridity in her texts. The limited range of genres in this blog can be due to the narrow focus on teaching text types in writing classes. To explore the notion of audience and discourse community in Blog 2, the hyperlinks and comments were examined; however, they did not indicate any established or emergent discourse community. The wide audience of blogs, who might lurk, has made the notion of the discourse community of blogs fuzzy. The interviews give a better view of the blog-writer's intention behind her language use in her blog-texts. As the blog-writer states that she used her blog as a tool to express her opinions as well as to get advice from the audience. Despite the information she provides in the interviews, the register analysis shows the majority of the Subjects do not address the blog-writer. Thus, it can be inferred that Blog 2 is not a personal diary and is used to record matters other than the blog-writer's personal issues.

As discussed previously, the blog-writer of Blog 2 used active declarative clauses to construe her self-expression and stance in texts; imperative and interrogative clauses had little roles in this but helped her pull her audience's voice into the texts. This could strengthen her claims. Self-referencing was not prevalent in this blog but showed her authorial voice in some instances, especially in mental clauses. She used the third person pronoun frequently in her texts. This could help her to express herself objectively and make her proposition less negotiable. Of the modality types, the probability type had a great role in construing the blog-writer's textual self-expression, reflecting her uncertainty and negotiating her authorial stance with the readers. A possible way to improve the students' writing skills can be the use of blogs to incorporate some genre awareness activities into the writing curriculum. This can expose the students to a wide range of genres and enhance

their lexico-grammatical knowledge when construing meanings in their texts. This is out of the scope of this study and needs more investigation.

Chapter 7 Register and genre variations in Blogs 1 and 2

Chapters 5 and 6 presented the register and genre analyses of Blogs 1 and 2. This chapter will provide a comparison between the genre and register of Blogs 1 and 2. Then, it deals with the role of blogs in EFL writing classes in the context of this study.

7.1   Comparison of Blogs 1 and 2 in terms of genre and register

This section discusses the variations among the linguistic elements in Blogs 1 and 2, through which their field, tenor and mode are construed. First the TRANSITIVITY analysis, then the MOOD types analysis and the textual analysis of Blogs 1 and 2 are presented below. I then explain the similarities and differences between the key features of the genres constructed in these blogs, comprising stages, purpose and discourse community. I begin by discussing the register elements of Blogs 1 and 2 to show if and to what extent these blogs are similar to one another.

7.1.1   TRANSITIVITY elements in Blogs 1 and 2

To understand the field of Blogs 1 and 2, the elements of TRANSITIVITY, the processes and circumstances, were examined. The variations of the TRANSITIVITY elements in Blogs 1 and 2 are shown in Figures 18, 19 and 20; the first element of the TRANSITIVITY system is 'processes'. There are 225 processes in Blogs 1 and 245 in Blog 2 as shown in Figure 18 below.

	Material	Mental	Behavioural	Relational	Verbal	Existential
Blog1	34.96%	15.93%	2.65%	34.51%	8.85%	3.10%
Blog2	24.49%	17.96%	4.49%	46.53%	3.27%	3.27%
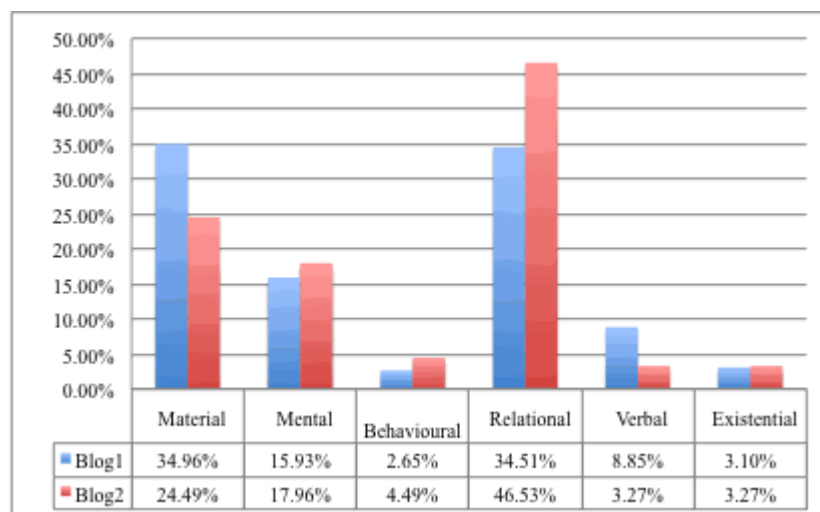
Figure 18: Process types in Blogs 1 and 2

In Figure 18, the percentages of material processes in the two blogs are compared. For Blog 1 this is 34.96% and for Blog 2 it is 24.4% of all the processes. The occurrence of mental processes in Blog 1 is 15.93%, and in Blog 2, is 17.96% of the total processes, which are both relatively low compared with material and relational processes. The occurrence of

relational processes in Blog 1 is 34.51% and in Blog 2 it is 46.53%. There are no frequent instances of other processes in the two blogs.

The differences between these two blogs can be seen in the choice of material and relational processes. The instances of relational processes in Blog 2, compared with Blog 1 are noticeable since they account for 46.53% of all the processes. This shows the blog-writer's vision and experience in relation to her outer and inner world, which shows the field of this blog. Considering the prevalence of relational processes, in all of the texts, in relation to other processes, it can be suggested that the subject matter or field of Blog 2 is built upon identifying entities, human or non-human, by assigning attributes or qualities to them when describing and classifying them. The frequency of mental process in Blog 2 compared with Blog 1 suggests the blog-writer's focus on her inner experience: how she feels and perceives the world. However, in Blog 1, there is high occurrence of material and relational processes, each accounting for 34.96% and 34.51% of the total processes, suggesting that the blog-writer's texts are filled with describing and identifying entities as well as what, how and when activities happened or were done. The second element of the TRANSITIVITY analysis is the participant types used in Blogs 1 and 2 shown in Figure 19.
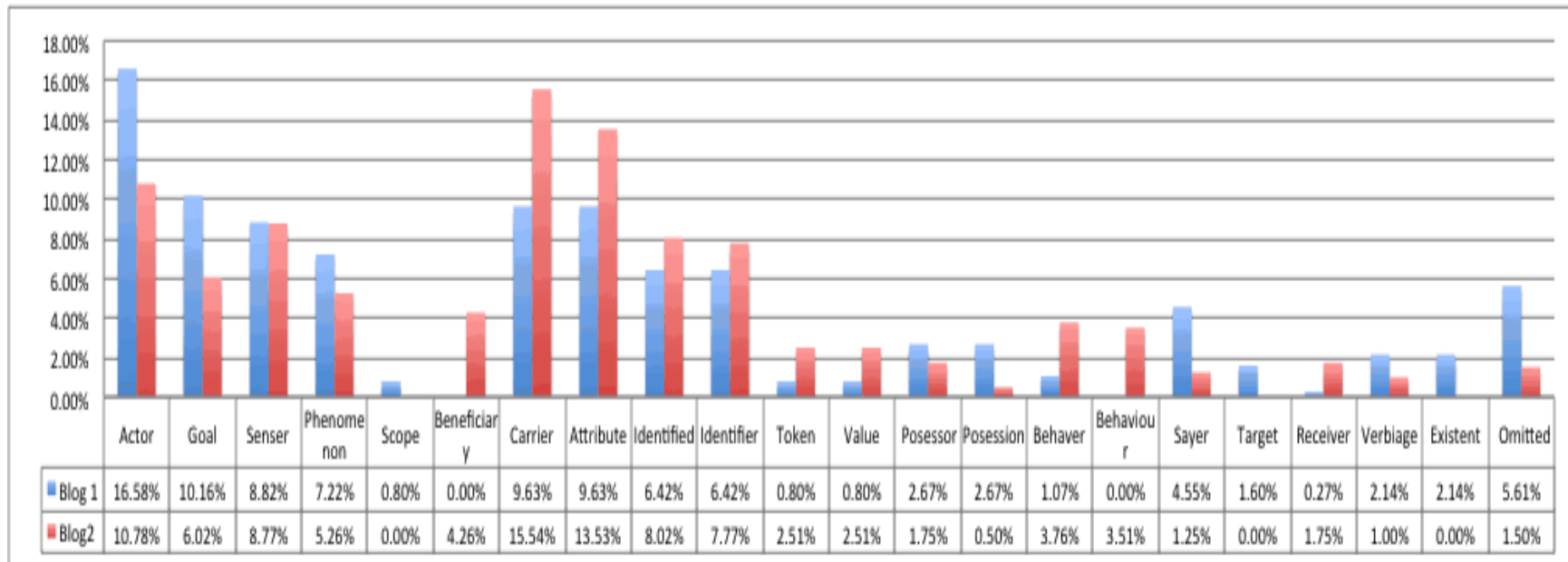
Figure 19: Participant types in Blogs 1 and 2

Blogs 1 and 2 differ in terms of the frequency of participants involved in processes. The frequency of participants involved in relational processes in Blog 2, carrier and attribute, identified and identifier, token and value as well as possessor and possession, is higher than that in Blog 1. Of the participants in Blog 2, the number of carrier and attribute is high, showing that this blog focuses on describing human beings and things. This can show the descriptive nature of this blog. In Blog 1, however, actors and goals involved in material processes are more frequent than that of in Blog 2. The next element of the system of TRANSITIVITY used in Blogs 1 and 2 is circumstances and the frequency of their occurrence is shown in Figure 20.

	Location	Extent	Manner	Cause	Contingency	Accompaniment	Role	Matter	Angle
Blog1	59.00%	1.00%	8.00%	7.00%	0.00%	9.00%	7.00%	9.00%	0.00%
Blog2	40.79%	17.11%	10.53%	9.21%	0.00%	14.47%	1.32%	6.58%	0.00%
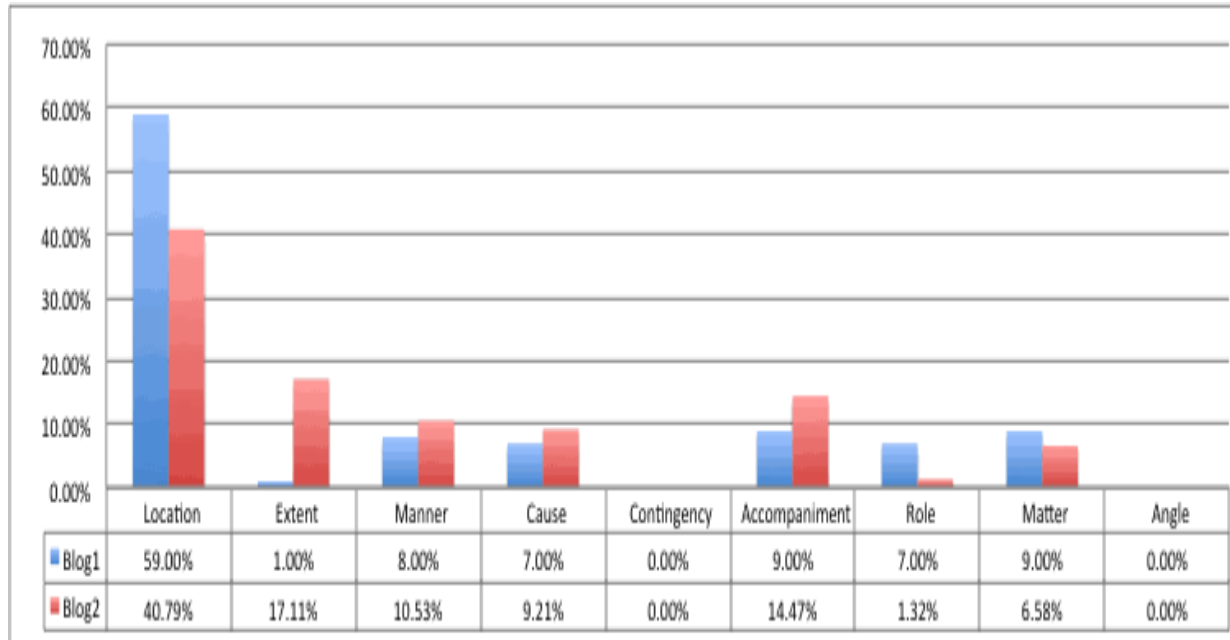
Figure 20: Circumstance types in Blogs 1 and 2

Firstly, in Figure 20, the percentages of the location type of circumstance are given. These are 59% and 40.79% of the total circumstances in Blogs 1 and 2 respectively. The instances of the accompaniment type of circumstances are different: 9% and 14.47% of the total circumstances in Blogs 1 and 2 respectively. The frequency of other types of circumstances is low. The location type of circumstance shows the time and location of the activities and happenings. In both blogs, the frequency of this type of circumstances compared with other types is striking; however, it is higher in Blog 1 than in Blog 2. The occurrence of the circumstance of matter in Blog 1 is a little higher than in Blog 1. This suggests that the choice of the location type of circumstance, comprising Time and Place had a role in constructing the field of these two blogs. The two blogs are relatively similar in the use of other circumstances. This can be due to the field of these blogs, which can affect the selection of the linguistic features of discourse; I will explore this further in the Discussion chapter.

7.1.2   MOOD elements in Blogs 1 and 2

The social relation between the blog-writer and the audience, tenor, was examined through the MOOD analysis. This was done by analysing the clause types, the Finite operators and the Subjects. The similarities and differences of the MOOD elements in these two blogs – Clause types, Finite operators and Subjects – are shown separately in Figures 21, 22 and 23.

	declarative	interrogative	imperative
■ Weblog1	99.37%	0.63%	1.86%
■ Weblog 2	98.96%	1.04%	1.03%
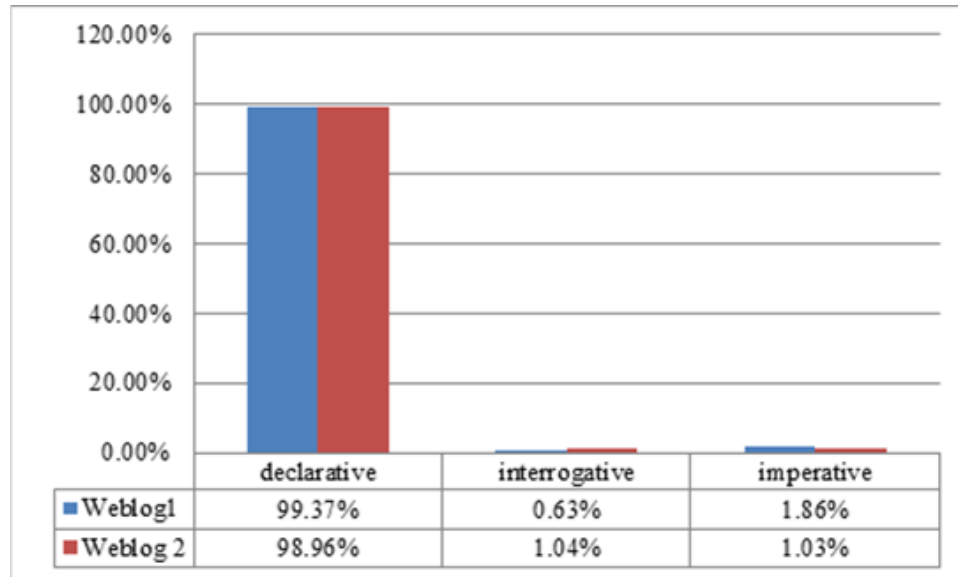
Figure 21: Clause types in Blogs 1 and 2

As Figure 21 shows, the first comparison shows the instances of declarative clauses in Blogs 1 and 2, accounting for 99.37% and 98.96% respectively. This suggests that both of these blogs are informative types of blog, giving information about things and people to the reader. The second comparison is the percentage of interrogative clauses in these two blogs, Blog 1 with 0.63% and Blog 2 with 1.4% of all the clause types. The last comparison is the percentage of imperative clauses, accounting for 1.86% of the total clauses in Blog 1 and 1.03% of the total clauses in Blog 2. The low frequency of interrogative and imperative clauses in the two blogs can indicate low interactivity between the author and the audience. Therefore, it can be implied that Blogs 1 and 2 are both rather monologic than dialogic.
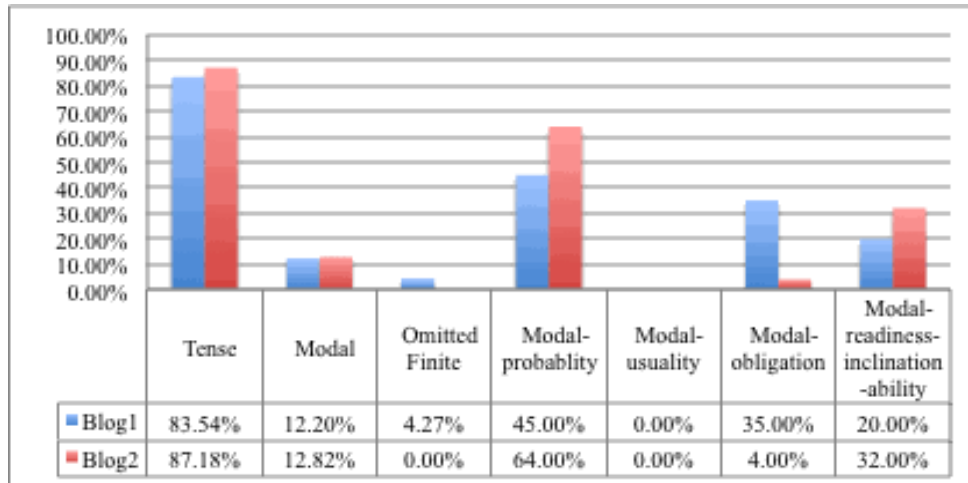
Figure 22: Finite types in Blogs 1 and 2

As shown in Figure 22, Blogs 1 and 2 differ in some of the linguistic features through which the tenor of these blogs are realised. The first comparison shows that the frequency of the Finite operator, tense, in Blog 1 is slightly lower than the same Finite type in Blog 2. The instances of modals are almost the same, 12.20% of the total Finite operators used in Blog 1 and 12.82% of all Finite operators in Blog 2. In Blog 1, there is a high frequency of modal obligation, and the first person pronoun. Through the use of the modal obligation, the blog-writer suggests a moderate stance in relation to her readership, and her high preference for the first person pronoun suggests her tendency to invest herself in the discourse. In Blog 2, however, the instances of Finite operators of tense, modal probability, modal readiness and Subjects, which refer to entities other than the readers or the blog-writer, are frequent. The frequent instances of modal probability suggest the blog-writer's inclination to give space to her readers' opinion.
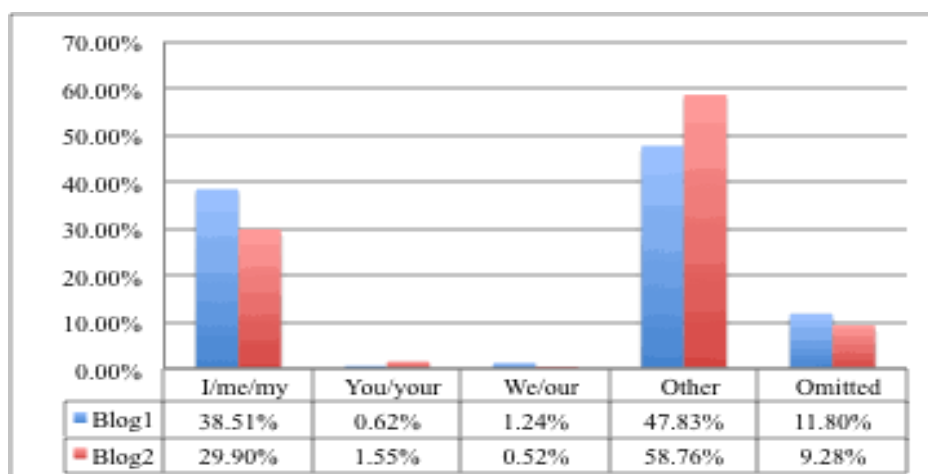
Figure 23: Subjects elements in Blogs 1 and 2

Figure 23 shows the comparison of various types of Subjects used in Blogs 1 and 2. The frequency of Subject types other than the first and second person pronoun and the inclusive

first person plural pronoun is relatively high in both blogs: 47.83% of all Subjects in Blog 1 and 58.76% of all Subjects in Blog 2. The first comparison of Subjects in Figure 23 shows that the percentage of the frequency of the first person pronoun used in Blogs 1 and 2 is high. This accounts for 38.51% of all the Subjects in Blogs 1 and 29.9% of the total number of Subjects in Blog 2. The infrequently occurring Subjects such as the second person pronoun and the inclusive first person plural pronoun are weak signals of tenor in both Blogs 1 and 2.

7.1.3   THEME types in Blogs 1 and 2

In order to find out how the textual metafunctions of Blogs 1 and 2 are construed through the blog-writers' choices, the elements of textual, interpersonal and topical THEME were captured. The variations among these elements in Blogs 1 and 2 are presented in Figure 24.

	Textual	Interpersonal	Topical
■ weblog 1	36.20%	1.50%	62.30%
■ weblog 2	29.50%	3.50%	67.10%
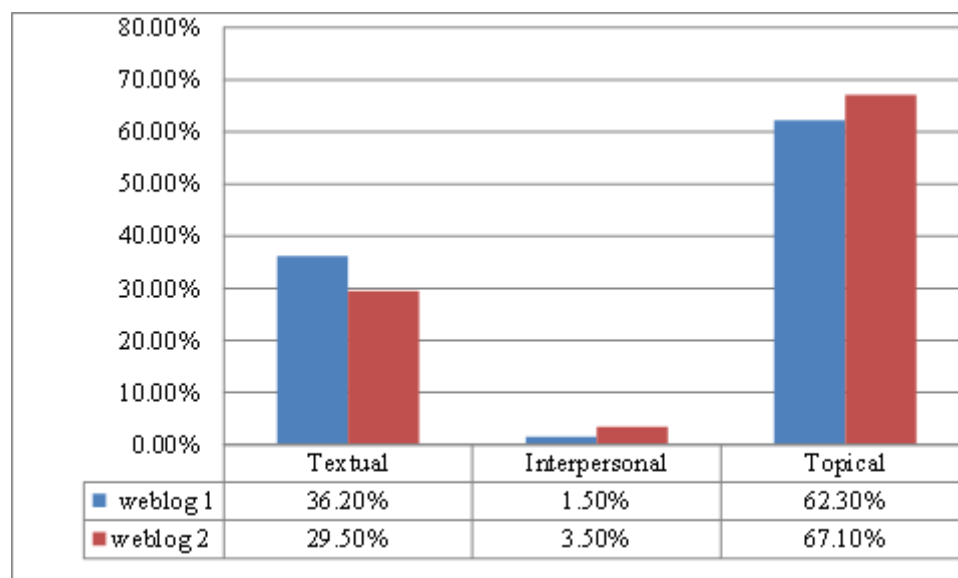
Figure 24: THEME types in Blogs 1 and 2

The first column compares the frequency of textual THEME in Blogs 1 and 2. This is 36.2% of the total number of THEMES in Blog 1 compared with 29.5% of the total THEMES in Blog 2. The second column compares the frequency of interpersonal THEME in Blogs 1 and 2. This is 1.5% of the total THEME types in Blog 1 compared with 3.5% of the total THEME types in Blog 2. The last column compares the frequency of topical THEME in Blogs 1 and 2, accounting for 62.3% and 67.1% respectively. As Figure 24 shows, these two blogs are similar in their frequent choice of topical unmarked THEME. This shows that the grammatical subject is positioned in the thematic position showing the simple structures of the texts (Ebrahimi and Swee Heng, 2012). The frequency of this type of THEME is slightly higher in Blog 2 than in Blog 1. The occurrence of the topical THEME/Subject in these blog-texts can indicate that the mode of their language is more like speech than like writing. The instances of textual THEME in Blogs 1 and 2 are relatively high compared with the

other two types of THEME. This type of THEME shows the occurrence of coordinate clauses in discourse, which, according to Wattles and Radicï-Bojanicï (2007, p.54), is a characteristic of the language of speech. The frequency of interpersonal THEME is not statistically considerable indicating a weak social relation between the blog-writers and their readership. The lack of interpersonal THEME, 1.5% and 3.5% of all THEME types in Blogs 1 and 2 respectively, highlights the monologic aspect of their language, which is typical of the written mode of language.

Overall, Blogs 1 and 2 are different in terms of their field or subject matter, as indicated by the blog-writers' various choices of processes and circumstances. The tenor of both blogs is signalled weakly in the blog-texts and the modes of their language shows characteristics of both speech and written mode of language. To evaluate the statistical significance between Blogs 1 and 2 a Chi-squared test was applied; the results of which are presented in Table 38.

Table 38: Chi-squared Test

Hypothesis	Result	Decision
Ho: The Blogs are independent Ha: The Blogs are dependent	χ^2 Test statistic = 3.049225 Critical value = 14.06714 p-Value = 0.880411	Both blogs are independent of each other

Note: All values of % are taken and single and null responses are omitted.

As Table 38 shows, the result confirms the null hypothesis: Blogs 1 and 2 are independent. At a 95% level of significance, the table value of χ^2 = 3.049225 is less than the calculated value χ^2. This shows that the value of the Chi-square test is significant. That is, there is a significant difference between the linguistic elements used in Blogs 1 and 2 in terms of field, tenor and mode. In other words, each blog has its individual register.

7.1.4   Genres in Blogs 1 and 2

In terms of genre, there are some similarities between Blogs 1 and 2. Different genres with different purposes have been produced in these two blogs, as shown in Table 39.

Table 39: Genres in Blogs 1 and 2

Blog 1			Blog 2		
Text	**Genre**	**Stages**	**Text**	**Genre**	**Stages**
Text 1	Self-introduction	Salutation ^ Self-identification ^ Impressions	**Text 1**	Descriptive	Orientation ^Classification ^Description^ Claim and evidence ^Description ^claim and evidence ^ Description
Text 2	Exposition	Thesis ^Argument ^Reiteration	**Text 2**	Recount	Orientation ^ Records of events ^Re-orientation
Text 3	Recount	Orientation ^Record of events ^Reorientation	**Text 3**	Narrative	Orientation^ Complication ^Claim^ (expansion of the complication).
Text 4	Narrative	Orientation^ Complication^ Evaluation^ Resolution^ Coda	**Text 4**	Anecdote	Orientation (Reaction ^event) ^ Remarkable event (Problem ^ description^ Comment)^ Reaction
Text 5	Exemplum	Orientation ^Incident 1 ^ Interpretation 1 ^Incident 2 ^ Interpretation 2^ Evaluation	**Text 5**	Argument: Discussion	Thesis ^Argument1 (claim evidence^ evidence^ evidence ^ evidence) ^Argument2 (claim ^ evidence) ^ Argument3 (claim ^ evidence) ^ claim ^ Argument1(claim ^ evidence^ evidence) ^ Argument2 (claim ^ evidence) ^ Argument 3 (claim ^ evidence) ^ Re-inforcement and Recommendation
Text 6	Argument: Discussion	thesis ^argument (for) 1 ^argument (for) 2 ^ argument (for) 3 ^ argument (against) 1 ^ argument (against) 2 ^ Re-inforcement.	**Text 6**	Descriptive report	Classification ^ Description. ^ Interpretation
Text 7	Exposition	Thesis ^ Argument^ Biodata ^ Argument prompt^ reasoning ^claim ^evidence ^ evidence ^Expansion of the argument ^Evidence^ Evidence ^Evidence ^Evaluation ^ Evidence^ Reiteration	**Text 7**	Narrative	Orientation ^Complication ^Evaluation ^Resolution ^Coda
Text 8	Exposition	Thesis^ Argument^ Incident and interpretation	**Text 8**	Recount	Orientation ^Record of events ^Reorientation.
			Text 9	Descriptive report	Classification ^ claim ^ evidence ^ Description ^claim ^ Classification ^ Description ^Evaluation ^ Reaction.
			Text 10	Consequential explanation	Cause ^ Explanation ^ Reaction ^ Explanation ^ Evaluation ^Reaction ^ Explanation ^ Reaction ^Re-orientation.
			Text 11	Anecdote	Orientation^ Description^ Claim^ Remarkable event^ Reaction^ Orientation and Crisis ^evaluation and Resolution ^Reaction.
			Text 12	Descriptive report	Classification ^Description ^Claim ^Evidence ^Classification ^Description ^Claim ^Evidence ^Classification ^Remarkable ^Reaction ^Recommendation.
			Text 13	Exposition	Thesis ^ Argument 1 (Claim^ Evidence ^Evidence ^ Evidence) ^Argument 2 (Claim) ^ Reiteration
			Text 14	Recount	Orientation ^Recount

The genres shown in Table 39 suggest that the blog-writers' personal thoughts and feelings are being expressed in the Anecdote, Exposition and Argument genres; as well as describing things in the Descriptive genre, and explaining what and how things happened in the Narrative and Recount genres. Blog 1 seems to be more focused on Argument genres as four out of eight blog-texts are analysed as instances of the Discussion or Exposition genres: in Text 2, the blog-writer argues why she thinks Al-Qurum Natural Park is the best play for enjoyment; in Text 6, she expresses her stance with evidence about the pros and cons of blog; in Text 7, she claims that she has the best family in the world and provides reasons and evidence to strengthen and support her claim; in Text 8, she reasons why she is happy with her life. The rest of the texts in this blog belong to other type of genres. However, Blog 2 tends to be more descriptive than Blog 1 since four of the blog-texts were analysed as instances of the Descriptive report genre: in Text 1, the blog-writer describes a restaurant; in Text 6, she classifies and describes two singers; in Text 9, she describes a cartoon character; in Text 12, she describes and classifies desserts and sweets. Other blog-texts in Blog 2 are an instance of other genres.

These two blogs are similar in genre hybridity. That is, there are some deviations from the dominant genre to other genres in some texts in both blogs, such as Texts 7 and 8 in Blog 1 and Texts 2, 4, 10, 11 and 12 in Blog 2. Reasons why the blog-writers might resort to other genres will be offered in the next chapter, Discussion. The purpose of the genres was checked through the purpose of their schematic structures; this information along with the information obtained through the interviews helped finding out about the purposes of the whole blogs; that is, giving information about the blog-writers' lives and personal matters and thoughts. Considering the analysis of the hyperlinks and comments, it seems that no particular community emerged among the blog-writers and their audience in these two blogs. This will be discussed in the Discussion chapter.

7.2   What is the role of blogs in EFL writing classes in the context of this study?

The majority of the tutors stated that the writings classes mainly aim at enabling student-writers to produce writings for both general (such as: emails and letters) and academic writing. Four out of nine tutors believed that writing courses are designed to prepare student-writers to pass their final exams or IELTS test, which is the main requirement for elevating them to their specialisation courses. These tutors expressed their concerns over the writing tasks presented in the in-house prepared material that encourage student-writers to follow, memorise and produce the samples in their writing material so they can pass their final exam. In the upper levels, as they stated, students can learn paragraph writing, how to plan, draft their ideas and organise their essays and how to prepare project-based reports.

This, according to the tutors, persuades students to do teamwork, and practise "how to write not what to write". One of the tutors was not sure of the aim of the writing tasks and asked the students to practice paragraph writing and grammatical patterns, which she believes are challenging for her students. One of the tutors pointed out that the writing curriculum has "no creative writing sessions" and "no competitions and reward for best". Eight of the tutors raised their concerns over the student-writers' achievements. Some of them thought the writing syllabus and material do not match the writing aims. Three tutors referred to the back-wash effect of the tasks on the students' finals exams. As they stated, such tasks increase students' test scores but they do not help them to be confident writers; one of them said, the writing curriculum

> "is successful in a the sense that some students who are drilled
> produce a formulaic response which they have learned off by
> heart receive a fairy high score in the exam but in my opinion it
> is not successful in encouraging creative thought ad confidence
> in expressing their own ideas, as soon as they have to write
> something they have never done before they cannot apply the
> skills they have learned and the language level drops
> dramatically".

One tutor brought up the point that although 100% of the students' evaluation is done through written assignments in their specialisations, teaching writing skills has not received enough attention. Most tutors evaluated their students' computer skills as good. Some tutors addressed the issue of the low level of the students' language proficiency that hampers their understanding of online tasks; one of the tutors found her students' computer literacy very low and as she said, "This can be a major hindrance in the use of any kind of e-teaching". Four of the tutors referred to the positive aspects of using CALL such as: bringing "students from passive to active state"; being "more interactive than the traditional face-to-face classes […] and advantage for all students specially shy and passive one" and being "more stimulating than conventional chalk and talk sessions". However, others thought that using CALL in classes needs time and skilled tutors; it also depends on the design and format of the tasks as well. They found their students very enthusiastic in using social media such as Facebook. However, they raised the issue that there should be clear and suitable instructions of how to choose appropriate sites; one tutors addressed the positive effect of blending CALL with the traditional way of teaching for visual learners: "Online exercises can be visually interesting + tap into visual learners". One of the tutors doubted if using CALL could result in actual learning as students focus on passing their exams. Four of the tutors believed that using CALL in teaching might not motivate all the students, except for "those

who have clear goals and have developed disciplined study habits". Some tutors referred to online activities as a type of "independent learning" and effective teaching tools that highly depends on the level of the students. As they said, educational activities could be blended with teaching textbooks but could not be a replacement for conventional teaching. As one of the tutors noted, online educational web tools and their activities should be scientifically designed with "strong administrative and academic support". They also listed their criteria for selecting online activities matching the level of the students' language proficiency and their culture; being relevant to the lessons; being fun, accessible, authentic and easy to navigate with various question types. They also said that such activities should provoke logical thinking. They also raised the negative points of online activities as: spelling or grammatical errors; sometimes poor quality and ease of use; these, they believed, would oblige them to check the activities before administrating or designing their own activities. Most tutors believed that suitable online activities and web tools could enhance students' text scores; however, one of the tutors expressed her concerns about using such activities in writing classes as they might lead to rote learning.

None of the tutors received any computer training in the college and they were not aware of IT related resources provided by the college. They believed that training the tutors could improve their awareness of the necessity of the use of computers but could not encourage them to use computers much. Some of them gave their reasons: not being emphasized in the curriculum; "inherited resistance to change" among the tutors; "packed curriculum"; shortage of time, students' limited language proficiency and tutors' "personal perception of learning or rigid syllabus". Also they addressed the lack of technical support, insufficient number of computer labs and computers as well as the low speed of the Internet as barriers preventing them from using online activities. Some tutors thought that online web tools and their activities are a distraction unless they are well-planned and "aligned with the curriculum and use similar modes of assessment to the exams". The tutors pointed out that safety and ethical issues may be another reason for avoiding using educational web tools and urge vigilance when using them in the class. Therefore, tutors should monitor and supervise students, which, according to some tutors, is physically challenging and time-consuming. However, some described such activities as multi-layered, interactive, engaging and fun, enabling students to be "independent learners", and be "attentive"; they can also encourage students "to participate in the activities" and "work productively".

One of the tutors described email and online socialising activities as another mode of self-expression that students can benefit from; she said, "This helps them to learn new vocabulary, facts and expressions to talk, discuss and then write on the topic". The speaking tutor also addressed to her student-blog-writers' language improvement, "I observe that

students involved in blog-writing are better and more fluent speakers to compare with others; specially in terms of mind mapping and using better vocabulary when discussing the topic. What is obvious is their speaking fluency (not their accuracy) is improving fast". Some tutors also stated that online exercises could be help their students to be "creative and innovative in their ideas", learn the "the concepts of language (grammar and vocab), learn editing and paragraph developing and be familiar with good samples of writings; they help "shy and inhibited students to learn better in the privacy" as well. She referred to some of the potential dilemmas when implementing online activities such as: low level of learners' maturity, weak typing skills, adapting online informal language and using abbreviations. One of them stated that using spellcheck makes learners lazy and confused as there are different ways of spelling and formatting.

The writing tutor stated that adding blogging to the curriculum of some Eastern countries is farfetched to imagine due to the lack of facilities and support and the rigid formal setting of classes. She believes that blog-space can be an asset in language classes and describes them as "an important tool in enhancing basic language skills and confidence of students. Moreover, it can promote self-study skills". She referred to her student-writers' perception of blogs, they found it "very interesting" and an "excellent tool for education". She noted that student-writers used their blogs as "a personal communicative tool" through which they "make more friends, share their emotions etc.".

The writing tutor pointed out that her students were very excited about blog-writing as they could be linked with a wide audience including their friends. The tutor provided a series of advantages of blog-writing: "it will equip students with confidence, better expression and correct grammar […] will limit the teachers' job to guide students on the right procedures of producing academic writing instead of reiterating basic structures". In the interview, she suggested that who the audience are and the comments they give to student-blog-writers are of high importance. As she said, she followed her students anonymously to avoid creating a feeling that they were being monitored, as they "may feel their privacy being encroached". This is due to the fact that it could prevent them from writing or expressing themselves. She also wrote comments on her students' posts in their blogs with no intention of correcting their language errors. This, according to her, was "to encourage their expression, which in turn motivated them to venture better vocabulary to express their thoughts".

7.3   Conclusion

In this chapter, Blogs 1 and 2 have been compared in terms of their lexico-grammatical patterns and their genres. This investigation suggests that there is much variation between Blogs 1 and 2 in terms of field but that they are more similar in terms of tenor, which is

weakly signalled; and that in terms of mode they both show the characteristics of speech and writing. I elicited the tutors' perceptions of using technology and the role of blogs in classes through two sets of interviews. Some of the tutors expressed their interest in using online activities and web tools as a means of education in language classes through which students can enhance their language skills. They pointed out that online activities using web tools can be productive if they are carefully planned and matched with the students' proficiency level and based on the final exam. Based on their views, it can be suggested that the blog-space can enhance interactions among students and encourage collaborative learning. The tutors were mostly concerned with their teaching load, lack of time, technical support and rigid perception of teaching and assessing as the main barriers against using technology in classes. The writing tutor also stated that both language practitioners and students can benefit from blog-writing. Blog-writing can help student-writers to elevate their confidence, vocabulary and grammar and this will reduce the tutors' teaching load giving them some space and time to work on academic writing styles and procedure. She also referred to her students' views of blogs, as a private web tool where they can share their feelings and express themselves and as a public setting where they can meet friends and interact with the audience. This interview suggested that the audience plays a great role in encouraging student-writers on what and how to write that needs attention when implementing blog-writing in language classes.

I turn now to the discussion chapter, where I will discuss the findings of my data analysis in relation to the studies explained in Chapters 2 and 3.

Chapter 8 Discussion

8.1   Introduction

This study has investigated how a group of Omani EFL students uses language in blogs. I adopted a bottom-up approach to data analysis to find out if there is a relation between the elements of the context of situation, and the social purpose of the blog-texts, at the level of clause and beyond. This chapter brings together the register and genre analyses and relates the findings to the previous studies discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. I explain the findings by addressing the research questions of this study:

1. To what extent can my students' blog-texts be conceptualised as belonging to a register? a. How do the student-writers construct their experiences of the world through their blog-texts? b. How do the student-writers relate to their audience? c. What is the mode of the language produced in the blog-texts?

2. To what extent can my students' blog-texts be conceptualised as belonging to a genre or as an emergent genre? a. To what extent can the purpose of this genre be identified? b. Is any discourse community constructed among the student-writers? c. What are the stages of this genre?

3. How do the student-writers construct their voice and express themselves in their blog-texts?

4. What is the role of blogs in EFL writing classes in the context of this study?

The organisation of this chapter is as follows, firstly, I will provide an overview of the main findings of the register and genre analyses of Blogs 1 and 2. This includes the findings of the analyses of the hyperlinks, comments and interviews with the blog-writers regarding their blogs and the language they used in their blogs. Following that, I will discuss the findings in relation to my research questions in detail.

It should be noted that to discuss the register of the language used in Blogs 1 and 2 in terms of the frequency of their linguistic features, some comparative data is needed so that the frequencies of these features for both written and spoken data can be compared. However, to my knowledge, there is very little in the literature about quantitative studies, with an SFL perspective, on the linguistic features of spoken and written language, particularly in non-academic contexts such as blogs. This may be because registers vary widely. For instance "some written registers are more interactive than others, and some spoken registers are less interactive: this makes it difficult to arrive at usual frequencies" (Thompson, 2013). For the same reason, my interpretations of the frequency of the lexico-grammatical features used in

my student-writers' blog-texts are tentative suggestions. In other words, my aim has been to show the characteristics of the register of my student-writers' language in their blogs: what people do with the language, who are involved in it and what purpose it serves. Considering the written nature of blogs, Halliday's (1989, p.44) view on the written mode of language is valuable: "writing came into being precisely so that new registers could be created". However, whether the language in blogs can be associated with speech or writing and whether it is an emerging register needs to be investigated through examining a large amount of data.

8.1.1   Overview of the main findings

The TRANSITIVITY analysis of Blog 1 suggested that the field of this blog is the blog-writer's external experience of the material and social world. I came to this conclusion after noting the frequent use of material processes, with 34.96% of the total processes and their participants, actor and goal, with 26.74% of the total participants to express actions and happenings; relational processes with 34.51% of the total processes to identify and explain the things and people involved in activities; this is supported by the frequent instance of participants with the role of carrier and attribute, accounting for 19.26% of the total participants involved in relational processes. The field of this blog was also portrayed by the use of circumstances of Time and Place, accounting for 27% and 32% of the total circumstances, which showed where and when things occurred.

The tenor of Blog 1 suggests a weak relationship between the audience and the blog-writer, which has made this blog rather monologic, like much written language. This is due to the lack of imperative clauses, accounting for 1.86%, and interrogative clauses, with 0.63% of the total clauses, as well as the low preference for the second person pronoun, *you,* 0.60% and the first person plural pronoun (inclusive), *we,* accounting for 1.20% of the total Subject types in this blog. However, the analysis of the mode of Blog 1, with 62.30% of topical THEME types and 1.50% of interpersonal THEME types, implies that this blog is more like speech than written language. Furthermore, the findings of the genre analysis indicate that the schematic structures of some texts (Texts 7 and 8) showed the characteristics of other genres within the dominant genre.

The TRANSITIVITY analysis of Blog 2 suggested that the world constructed in this blog is the world of relations where things and people are identified or described. This is suggested by the high frequency of Relational processes, with 46.53% of the total processes, participants with the role of carrier and attribute, accounting for 29% of the total participants involved in relational processes and of the circumstances of location Time and Location, accounting for 32.4% and 25.92% of the total circumstances, in Blog 2. The lack of

imperative and interrogative clauses, 1.03% and 1.04% of the total clauses respectively, as well as the scarcity of the second person pronoun *you* and the inclusive first person plural *we,* accounting for 1.5% and 0% of the total Subject types respectively, suggests a weak relationship between the audience and the blog-writer. This implies that Blog 2 is monologic rather than dialogic. The analysis of the mode of this blog, however, shows the frequent use of the topical THEME with 67.1%, and textual THEME with 29.5% of the total THEMES compared with the interpersonal THEME, which is only 3.5% of the THEMES, implying a strong tendency for this blog to resemble spoken rather than written language. Furthermore, the findings of the genre analysis suggested that some of the blog-texts (Texts 1, 9, 10, 11, 12) comprise embedded genres.

The analysis of the hyperlinks, comments and interviews did not suggest any specific discourse community in Blogs 1 and 2. The register and genre analyses, as well as the interviews, suggest that these two blogs have a diary-like genre, recording the experiences, activities, thoughts and emotions of the blog-writers.

Sub-section 8.2 deals with the first research question of this study, if my student-writers' blog-texts can be conceptualised as belonging to a genre. This section has been organised around the three elements of register - field, tenor and mode - of the blog-texts.

8.2 To what extent can my students' blog-texts be conceptualised as belonging to a register?

I carried out the ideational, interpersonal and textual analyses to see if the blog-texts in the student-writers' blogs share the same field, tenor and mode, which, if that were the case, would mean that they are associated with the same register. This involved the analyses of the TRANSITIVITY, MOOD and THEME systems.

The TRANSITIVITY analysis showed that Blogs 1 and 2 are different in terms of the field they construe. This is due to the blog-writers' lexico-grammatical choices, comprising the processes and circumstances by which the texts are constructed. This is discussed in the next sub-section.

8.2.1 How do the student-writers construct their experiences of the world through their blog-texts?

Field is associated with the realisation of ideational meanings, which in turn is realised through the TRANSITIVITY system. To find out about the field of Blog 1, the angle of representation was examined through the analysis of the processes and circumstances used in blog-texts. This is explained below.

Processes, participants and circumstances used in the blog-texts

The analysis suggested that the blog-writer presents the world as consisting of attributes, since 34.51% of all processes are relational, and as "predominantly tangible, physical actions" (Eggins, 2004, p.335), since 34.96% of all processes are material. The mental states of the people, their feelings and thoughts, including the writer herself are not highlighted in the texts since only 15.6% of all processes are mental. Other processes such as behavioural, with a 2.65% frequency, and verbal, with 8.05%, played a small role in construing the field of this blog. Therefore, the blog-writer's frequent choice of material processes with their participants, actor and goal, probably illustrates her outer experience of the world, containing happenings and actions. The blog-writer's high preference for relational processes and the prevalence of their participants as carrier and attribute also represent the attributes of people, places and objects, and describe the participants involved in the processes; moreover this shows the blog-writer's attitudes and feelings towards these entities. As a result, examining the processes used in each blog-text suggested that Blog 1 is concerned with describing happenings and actions, how and where they occurred and who were involved in them.

The analysis also suggested the blog-writer presented circumstantial information in the blog-texts through setting the location (Time and Place), 59% of the total circumstances, circumstances of accompaniment and matter, each accounted for 9%, and manner, with 8% of the total circumstances. Other types of circumstances have a low frequency in this blog. What is striking is the large frequency of the circumstance of location, which indicates how writers situate "events in time and space, noting where, when and how long took place" (Eggins, 2004, p.337). Using this type of circumstantial information seemingly contributed to construing the experiential meanings of the total blog, through which the field of this blog is realised.

Overall, the TRANSITIVITY analysis indicated that the content and purpose of Blog 1 as a whole along with the blog-writer's intention is giving information. Therefore, it can be suggested that the field or the subject matter of Blog 1 is to show when and where incidents happened or what actions were done and who was involved in the happenings or did the actions, as well as describing and identifying things and people involved in the processes.

The findings discussed above have been based on what is happening in the whole blog; however, this raises an issue when looking at each text in this blog because examining each text individually gave a different picture of the field of Blog 1. As the analysis showed, the number of material processes is slightly higher than the relational processes in Blog 1. However, as Table 43 below shows, the frequency of relational processes in more than half

of the texts, five out of eight texts – Texts 1, 2, 4, 6 and 8 – is much higher than the frequency of material processes. This table shows the instances of the material and relational processes in each text individually and provides a better view of what is happening in the blog-texts.

Table 40: Material and relational processes in each text in Blog 1

	Material	Relational
Text 1	0%	100%
Text 2	5.30%	47.40%
Text 3	51.10%	31.90%
Text 4	34.80%	39.10%
Text 5	48.30%	17.20%
Text 6	25%	35.70%
Text 7	29.60%	31.50%
Text 8	37.50%	45.80%
Total	34.96%	34.51%

As Table 43 shows, there is a variation among the texts in terms of using material and relational processes; this suggests that different fields were constructed through different choices in blog-texts. The percentage of relational processes in Text 1 with 100%, Text 2 with 47.4%, Text 4 with 39.1%, Text 6 with 35.7% and Text 8 with 45.8% of the total processes in each text is higher than that of material processes in the same texts. This does not mirror the field of the whole blog, which has been determined through examining all the processes used in this blog. Thus, it is rather difficult to associate the field of this blog with any particular field. This suggests that the result extracted from the analysis of the each blog-text to compare with the whole blog can provide more information about other aspects of the blog-writer's intention. This indicates that examining the texts individually can provide a better insight into the field of the blog itself, which needs to be taken into consideration when determining the field of the whole blog.

In Blog 2, the TRANSITIVITY analysis suggested that the blog-writer constructed a world of being and having. This is supported by the frequent use of relational processes, accounting for 48.6% of all processes. The frequent choice of carrier and attribute types of participants, accounting for 15.62% and 13.53% of the participants involved in relational processes, helped the blog-writer to describe human and nonhuman entities in her blog-texts. The frequency of other processes, such as material with 24.49%, mental with 17.96%, behavioural with 4.49% as well as verbal and existential with 3.27% of the total processes each are in a minority and so probably do not play an influential role in constructing the field of Blog 2. Examining the occurrence of Time and Place with 32.4% and 25.92% of the total circumstances, I noted that the blog-writer is concerned with providing information about when things happened and were done. Thus, considering the frequent choice of

relational process and locational circumstances, it can be inferred that the field of Blog 2 is to signify the qualities and attributes of people, places and objects, as well as the blog-writer's attitude and mind-sets towards them.

This interpretation is based on what is happening in the whole blog, which may lead to the hypothesis that all of the blog-texts share the same field. However, looking at the processes used in each text can give a different picture of the field of Blog 2; in other words, the variation among the processes used in the blog-texts indicates that various fields have been constructed throughout the discourse in the blog-texts; therefore, the whole blog cannot be related to a particular field. This issue is shown in Table 44 below which contains the variation in the frequency of all the processes – material, mental, behavioural, relational, verbal and existential – used in Texts 2, 11 and 14 of Blog 2.

Table 41: The frequency of the processes in Texts 2, 11 and 14 in Blog 2

	Process types	Material	Mental	Behavioural	Relational	Verbal	Existential
Text 2	%	65.4%	7.7%	11.5%	11.5%	3.8%	0
	N=26	17	2	3	3	1	0
Text 11	%	31.6%	36.8%	0	31.6%	0	0
	N=19	6	7	0	6	0	0
Text 14	%	44.4%	11.1%	0	44.4%	0	0
	N=9	4	1	0	4	0	0

As Table 44 shows, material processes are the most frequently occurring process in Text 2, *My daily routine!*, accounting for 65.4% of all the processes in this text. This type of process helped to construct the field of this text, which recounts the blog-writer's daily activities. Text 11, *The End Of This Term :'),* with a high frequency of mental processes, 36.8% of the total processes, constructs the mental state of the blog-writer in relation to a crisis. The equal proportion of mental and relational processes occurring in Text 14, *My plans for this summer,* with 44.4% of all the processes, suggests that the blog-writer is equally interested in describing and identifying things and people as she is in expressing her emotion and feelings towards the issue. In this text, with the Recount genre, the student-writer expresses her future plan, her activities and what she thinks about them. As expected, like Blog 1, the variations among the constructed fields in these blog-texts do not support the field of the whole blog, which is picturing a world of relations with qualities and attributes. This is a point that deserves close attention when determining the field of the discourse in the virtual environment of blog, which contain a large number of long texts or short messages written with various intentions.

Comparing Blog 1 with Blog 2 has indicated that these two blogs vary from one another in terms of their fields; this is realised through the variation in the lexico-grammatical choices, through which the fields of these blogs are realised. Blog 1 is intended to express a world of

happenings, describing actions, entities and humans. Blog 2 suggests a world of characteristics attributed and ascribed to entities and human or non-human beings. This probably shows how blog-writers can construct their inner and outer world through their preferences of processes and circumstance.

The second subcategory of my first research question asks about the constructed tenor of my student-writer's blogs, which I try to answer by discussing the findings of the MOOD analysis of Blogs 1 and 2. This comprises the clause types, Subject types and Finite operators, and is discussed next.

8.2.2 How do the student-writers relate to their audience?

Blog 1 has 161 clauses, comprising 158 indicative and three imperative clauses. In percentages terms, 98.14% of the indicative clauses are declarative and only 0.63% of the clauses are interrogative. Due to the lack of imperative and interrogative clauses as a means of interactivity between the blog-writer and audience, I suggested that the social relation between the audience and the blog-writer is not strongly indicated; this may be due to the nature of blog through which interactants are spatially and temporally apart from one another. Also, analysing the modality of the blog-texts suggested that this blog-writer did not create a strong stance or position in relation to her readership in the blog-texts. Examining the comments also demonstrated infrequent contact between the audience and the blog-writer.

In Blog 2, 195 independent clauses were used, comprising 193 indicative, of which 191 were declarative and two interrogative, and two imperative clauses: that is 98.97% of the indicative clauses are declarative and only 0.04% of the clauses are interrogative. The scarcity of imperative and interrogative clauses suggests that the tenor is weakly signalled in this blog; only 25 modals were used in this blog and 64% of them are of modal probability as opposed to other types of modals suggesting that the blog-writer did not construct a strong authoritative voice in the blog-texts in relation to her readership. My investigation of the comments also suggested infrequent interactions between the blog-writer and the audience. The first element of MOOD is clause types, which I turn to in the following sub-section.

Clause types

According to Martin (2000a, p.281) the analysis of MOOD elements has the purpose of positioning "speakers in relation to listeners as stating, questioning, commanding or exclaiming" in clauses. The MOOD analysis in this study shows a high frequency of non-elliptical declarative clauses in Blogs 1 and 2. This is consistent with Eggins' (2004, p.332) claim that this feature is a typical characteristic of the written mode of language, when

feedback between the writer and the audience is absent. The prevalence of declarative clauses suggests that these blogs are informative rather than interactive, which means that they lack immediate and direct contact between the blog-writers and readers. Consequently, it can be suggested that the language produced in Blogs 1 and 2 is monologic since there is little interaction between the blog-writers and their audience. However, the term "monologic" does not deny the potential interactivity that each blog-text may have. As Halliday (1987) notes, interaction is an essential characteristic of any type of discourse: "Text is the means of exchange of meaning among societal members in the context of situation" (Halliday, 1987, p.4). The same point is made by Webster (2013, p.7) who writes that "by means of my 'text', I participate in an act of interpersonal exchange, communicating my sense of my own identity, my world view, my interpretation of experience". Thus, the term "monologic" refers to the way in which meanings are exchanged between the speaker and the audience. In other words, texts, whether monologic or dialogic, come into existence when transferring information, which can lead to direct or indirect interaction. This issue makes it hard to claim that these blogs contain a monologue type of discourse.

In Blog 1, most of the texts may seem monologic when looking at the type of clauses, but it can be argued that other linguistic features in the texts helped to build up a relation between the reader and the blog-writer, which are worth looking at. As the analysis showed, the imperative and interrogative clauses signify the construction of a weak power relation between the blog-writer and audience (see Texts 5 and 7). For instance, the blog-writer projects a question in one of her texts: *Why do I think we are the best?* This is consistent with Thompson's (2014, p.89) view of "the voice of the reader-in-the-text" which is generated by assigning speech roles to the writer and readers. By posing the question in her discourse, the blog-writer assigns her readers the role of questioner and creates the expectation of an answer; simultaneously, she assigns herself the role of answerer, which creates a dialogue: a dialogue through which she prepares the ground for expressing her arguments. All of this suggests how the blog-writer brings the readers' voice to the text, creates their position and shares her stance with them. Although the instances of such linguistic patterns are scarce in this blog and play a minor role in constructing interpersonal meanings, they can still affect the exchange of meanings and establish a relationship between the blog-writer and her audience (see Table 24).

The analysis of the clause types in Blog 2 also showed a high frequency of declarative clauses; this characteristic, in Eggins' (2004, p.332) terms, can be related to the written mode of language. This can suggest that this blog is informative and non-interactive. However, as in Blog 1, looking at the types of clause used in each text individually signals

the blog-writer's attempt to interact with her readership. For instance, the blog-writer starts Text 1 with an interrogative clause, yes/no question: *Have you ever been or heard of BNF road side diner?* Using this clause, the blog-writer assigns the reader the role of answerer; through this small dialogue, she tries to draw the reader into her text and creates an expectation of finding more information about the place. In two of the texts, the blog-writer directly addresses the audience through imperative clauses, by asking them for goods and services such as in Text 11 - *wish me luck*, or strengthening her proposition in Text 12 - *Believe it or not*.

Looking at the clause types in Blogs 1 and 2, it can be said that tenor is weakly signalled although, in some instances, the blog-writers attempt to build up a social relation with their readers. This issue is further explored through examining the Subject types that I discuss in the following section.

Subject types

To understand the roles of the Subjects used in constructing interpersonal meanings in my blog-texts, two types of Subject were investigated, the first person plural pronoun inclusive, *we,* and the second person pronoun, *you*. These are the linguistic features by which the blog-writers address the audience and engage with their readership.

In Blog 1, the blog-writer expresses something of her relationship with the audience by using the second person pronoun, *you,* and its derivations, for instance, in Text 2, *hope u all get a chance to visit it*, and Text 3, *you can say I'm a boring person*. This creates an instance of the dialogic mode of language, where the speaker and the audience are involved in a face-to-face conversation. The blog-writer makes her text interactive by "bringing the reader's view" (Thompson, 2001, p.58) to the surface of the discourse: *you can say I'm a boring person but its OK with me because in the weekend i change my routine*. She states the reader's opinion through the use of the second person pronoun and signals her different point of view with the conjunction *but* and provides a reason for her proposition by the use of *because*. Such linguistic features are interactional resources that "involve the reader collaboratively in the development of the text" (Thompson, 2001, p.59). The blog-writer also suggested the same point in her interview; she said that she used 'you' "to attract people or the reader". Her choice of the first person plural inclusive, *we*, also implies how the blog-writer pulls the audience into the text and involves them in the discourse. She uses this strategy to seek for support and solidarity in establishing her opinions and giving suggestions, as in this quotation from Text 5: *if one of them past away we'll feel bad about it and we wont forgive our selves*. This linguistic choice illustrates the interactional aspect of this blog. Although such choices are not frequent in blog-texts, they still contribute to the

construction of tenor in the texts. These choices show how the blog-writer's choice can influence the written mode of language, involve the readers in the discourse and create a relationship with them. This is in line with Ye (2010, p.146) who writes that the use of the second person pronoun and first person plural pronoun makes the discourse dialogic, shows solidarity and creates a relation between the speaker and audience.

The analysis of the Subject types showed that the first person plural pronoun inclusive, *we,* was only used once in the independent clauses in Blog 2. It also indicated a low frequency of the second person pronoun, *you,* with 1.5% of the total Subjects in the independent clauses. Although the occurrence of the second person pronoun is not high, the role of this linguistic feature in constructing the interpersonal meanings through which the tenor is realised should not be ignored. An examination of the incidence of these pronouns, with their derivations, in both dependent and independent clauses projects a different, picture as shown in Table 45.

Table 42: Use of second person pronoun *you* and the first person pronoun (inclusive) *we* in Blog 2

Text	*You* in both independent and dependent clauses	*We* in both independent and dependent clauses
Text 1	• Have *you* ever been or heard of BNF road side diner?	
Text 5	• *you* may receive bad comments and it can make *you* feel bad about your self. • If *you* want to have a blog *You* should know how to type. • If *you* don't then it will take a long time.	• *We* also learn more from the comments [that] *we* receive from other people. . • […] because *we* write continually. • […] express our feeling through writing what *we* want. • What makes it more exciting is that, *we* can upload any photos or music or even videos
Text 12	• when a person is depressed, makes *you* feel better	

Considering both the independent and dependent clauses in the blog-texts, Table 45 shows the blog-writer's tendency to construct a social relation with her audience by addressing the audience explicitly through the use of the pronoun *you*. For instance, in Text 5: *If you want to have a blog you should know how to type*. This is in line with Chafe's (1982, p.45) view that the use of the second person pronoun shows the speaker's involvement with or detachment from the audience. The blog-writer also shows her solidarity by the use of the inclusive first person plural pronoun, *we*, and reinforces her propositions by involving the audience when establishing her opinions and justifying her claims as in Text 5: *We also learn more from the comments […] because we write continualy*. This pronoun involves the

reader in the discourse and makes it dialogical (Ye, 2010, p.146) . However, such issues may raise the query of whether analysing the independent clause can be sufficient to support the interactivity of the blog-texts. Thus, it seems that considering both types of clauses when examining the Subjects can give a better view of how the blog-writer constructs a social relation with her readership; this issue seems worth looking at when analysing the tenor of the blog-texts. The Finite operators used in Blogs 1 and 2 are discussed next.

Finite operators

From Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004, p.116) categories of Finite types, Temporal and Modal Finite operators, the writer of Blog 1's choice of Temporal Finite Operators seems significant, since they comprise 83.54% of all Finite operators. This blog-writer used this type of Finite operators to refer to the time of discourse; the use of this linguistic feature helps her to limit the proposition in texts to be able to argue about them. The blog-writer makes relatively few uses of modal Finite operators, accounting for 12.2% of the total Finite types. It can be suggested that she has chosen not to make her judgement of the likelihood of something explicit. Therefore, the overall result of the analysis of Finite operators, in the whole blog suggests that the blog-writer did not construe any strong authoritative voice and position in her blog. However, this might be different when examining modality in each text individually, as seen in Chapter 5. In fact, the blog-writer voices her and the readers' opinions through the use of modal probabilities and obligations in some texts, such as Text 5, which helps to make the blog interactive. It should be noted that Table 46 indicates a high percentage of modality in some texts; for instance, Text 1 with two Finite operators has one Finite modal shown as 100% modal probability; such high percentages might challenge the statistical validity of the findings; however, this is due to the small sample size and the findings could be made more reliable by increasing the data sets.

Table 43: Modal types in Blog 1

	Total number of finite-type	Modal-type	modal-probability	modal-usuality	modal-obligation	modal-readiness-inclination-ability
Text 1	%	%	100%	0%	0%	0%
	N=2	N=1	1	0	0	0
Text 2	%	%	0%	0%	100%	0%
	N=16	N=3	0	0	3	0
Text 3	%	%	100%	0%	0%	0%
	N=36	N=1	1	0	0	0
Text 4	%	%	100%	0%	0%	0%
	N=14	N=1	1	0	0	0
Text 5	%	%	33.30%	0%	66.70%	0%
	N=22	N=6	2	0	4	0
Text 6	%	%	0%	0%	0%	100%
	N=18	N=2	0	0	0	2
Text 7	%	%	100%	0%	0%	0%
	N=41	N=3	3	0	0	0
Text 8	%	%	0%	0%	0%	100%
	N=18	N=3	0	0	0	3

Using modal verbs expressing obligations, the blog-writer seems to express her view explicitly in some texts such as, *they should put him in jail* (Text 5); through this type of modal, she establishes her point with respect to her audience's view. In other instances, she comments on the issues proposed in the texts and involves the readers in evaluating the situations through the use of modal possibility and probability and the inclusive pronoun *we*, *If one of them past away we'll feel bad about it and we wont forgive our selves* (Text 5). The choice of the modal probability also shows that she evades an explicit assertion when giving her point of view about an issue, especially when the readers' opinion might be different, *Some people dont have mannres, they put bad comments that may hurt peoples feeling*. By using the modal probability, *may*, the blog-writer avoids the use of modal obligations so as not to assert her opinion to the readers. This is in line with Martin and Rose (2003, p.50), who state that modality "opens up a space for negotiation, in which different points of view can circulate around an issue, a space perhaps for mediation and possible reconciliation". This issue has been noted by Thompson (2001, p.63) who argues that the use of modal probability *may* signals that "the writer needs to avoid making categorical assertions about the reader's thoughts, feelings and beliefs". The presence of such modals suggests that the blog-writer has tried to communicate with her assumed readers, involve them in the discourse directly and guide them through the discourse as the texts unfolded. However, as my analysis showed that the instances of such linguistic features are not frequent in this blog.

The MOOD analysis of Blog 1 suggests that the blog-writer probably intentionally creates boundaries between herself and her readers through the use of non-elliptical declarative clauses, the scarcity of the second person pronoun and inclusive first person plural pronoun as well as a low level of authority and power relations. Therefore, the tenor is weakly signalled in Blog 1 and functionally this blog is giving information to the audience.

In Blog 2, the Temporal Finite operators have the highest frequency of Finites, accounting for 87.18% of the total Finites. As discussed earlier, this type of Finite operators indicates the time of discourse and limits the extent of the proposition to be discussed. The use of modal Finite operators is relatively low in this blog, accounting for 12.8% of the total Finite types. Among the modal Finites, 64.0% express modal probability and only 4% express modal obligation. Through the use of modal probability, the blog-writer probably softens her voice and tried not to express her opinions explicitly; it can be suggested that the blog-writer has not created a strong position in relation to her readership in her blog-texts. Looking at the texts individually shows how the blog-writer involves the audience in the discourse and encourages them to accept her views or do things. For instance, she tries not to impose her opinion on the audience with the help of the modal *may, you may receive bad comments*. In Text 5, the blog-writer uses the high modality to persuade the audience to accept what she suggests must be done*: You should know how to type*. She also expresses a possibility with the use of modal *can*: *It also can be used for buisness too; It can be so addictive and make people spend so many hours; [...] and can effect on them; it can make you feel bad.* The blog-writer construed an imaginary state and phenomenon throughout her discourse by using the modal probability, *would: [...] I'd do so many crazy things; I would travel around the world without passport; it would be amazing just going in to a plane and get to onother country!; [...] but to me, controlling them would be great and funny!*

These examples show how the blog-writer interacts with her imagined audience, negotiates with them, advises them and informs them about the possibilities. Overall, due to the infrequency of modals in Blog 2, the frequent use of indicative clauses and scarcity of the first person plural pronoun and second person pronoun, I can suggest that the social relation between the audience and the blog-writer is not highlighted in the blog-texts; this can imply that the blog-writer probably distances herself from her audience; therefore the tenor is weakly signalled and this blog is rather more informative than interactive.

To find out about the mode of my student-writers' blog-texts, the textual metafunctions of the produced discourse in the blogs were examined. Due to the similarities between Blogs 1 and 2 in terms of textual, interpersonal and topical THEME, and to avoid repetition, the findings of all three are discussed together.

8.2.3   What is the mode of the language produced in the blog-texts?

The analysis of the textual metafunction of the blog-texts, which enables both the interpersonal and ideational metafunctions, indicates that the mode of Blogs 1 and 2 contains linguistic features that are characteristics of both spoken and written language. The analysis suggests that the blog-texts are indicative in both blogs: telling the audience what occurred as well as explaining attributes and qualities of things and people (Blog 1) or giving information about entities and humans through describing and identifying them (Blog 2). Therefore, the language in both blogs is used to construct knowledge and the blog-texts are ideationally oriented to construct the field of these blogs; such texts in Martin et al.'s (1997, p.518) terms are called "reconstructing", and they include the "biography" text as one example. At the same time, the analysis showed the mode of these blogs is also a channel of negotiation between the blog-writers and their audience; this is because some of the blog-texts, such as those with the Exposition and Argumentative genres, were oriented towards both ideational and interpersonal meanings and language had a role of persuading the audience to accept and comply with the blog-writer's point of view. This is the case for Texts 6, 7 and 8 in Blog 1 and Texts 5 and 13 in Blog 2. In such genres, according to Matheissen (1995, p.30), "the interpersonal and ideational are interleaved to convince the listener or reader (interpersonal) of new knowledge construction (ideational)". The role of THEME types in constructing the mode of language in Blogs 1 and 2 is explained in the following sub-section

THEME

The textual analysis of Blog 1 showed the blog-writer's frequent choice of topical THEME in the clauses in the blog-texts, accounting for 62.3%. This suggests the blog-writer's tendency to present new information in the second section of the clauses. The interesting point is the blog-writer's preference for unmarked topical THEMES, accounting for 83.3%, in relation to marked THEME, accounting for 9.0%, and omitted THEMES, accounting for 7.6% of the total THEME types.

The findings of the THEME analysis in Blog 2 indicated a relatively similar pattern to that in Blog 1. It showed that there is a high frequency of topical THEME in Blog 2, accounting for 67.1% of the total THEMES. The frequent choice of unmarked topical THEME in Blog 2, with 91.8% of the total THEMES, in relation to other types of THEME is noticeable; marked THEME accounts for 5.2 % of the total and the omitted THEME, accounts for 3% of the total THEMES.

As explained in Chapter 3, topical THEME is the point of departure of the clause or, in other words, what the writer is concerned with. The high frequency of topical THEME in

Blogs 1 and 2 suggests that this type of THEME had a great role in construing the blog-writers' angle of thoughts in the clauses; it also suggests the dialogical mode of the discourse in my blog-texts. This is in line with Taboada's (2004, p.79) point that topical THEME is mostly used in a face-to-face spontaneous communication. Through a continuum, Taboada shows the use of marked and unmarked THEMES, in different modes of language, including spontaneous casual conversation.
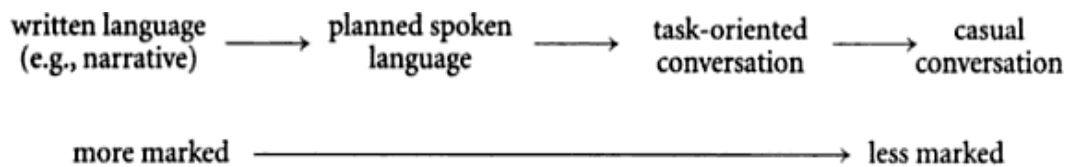
Figure 25: Cline according to the presence of marked themes (Taboada, 2004, p.79)

This analysis also suggests that textual THEMES are relatively rare in Blogs 1 and 2. The use of textual THEME, with 36.2% of the total number of THEMES in Blog 1 and 29.5% of the total THEMES in Blog 2, demonstrates the structural relation among the clauses in the blog-texts; this suggests that sentences are linked through conjunctions, such as the co-ordinate conjunctions *and,* which resulted in producing long sentences that are rare in the written mode of language (Crystal, 2011). This echoes Wattles and Radić-Bojanić's (2007) view noting that using co-ordinated linkers such as 'and' and 'then' reduces the structural complexity of sentences and makes them more like speech than writing. This type of syntax, according to Crystal (2011, p.68) can be assigned to the discourse in blogs. Such sentences are constructed in these blogs as in the following texts.

Blog 1:

Text 4: *In real world I'm good in speaking but when I come to know its a test I get scared and nervous and I don't know what to say and screw up.* Tex 5: *If anyone saw a fight should stop it not sit and watch as if there's something funny to watch because if one of them past away we'll feel bad about it and we wont forgive our selves.* Text 6: *And I enjoy reading others blog because some people write about their problems and I love helping people in solving them and its a easy way form me to express my feeling.*

Blog 2:

Text 2: *When i wake up around 5.00 i usually do my homework if i got any, then watch tv for a while.* Text 11: *I know this time the exams are going to be hard and I have to study well to get to the next and final level of this foundation!!; Text 14: I am planing to go to so many other places in Africa where i haven't visited before and that makes me more excited for this long journey trip with my loving family.*

Due to the presence of clauses with complex THEME types, and the prevalence of unmarked topical THEMES, compared with marked topical THEME, in these two blogs, I suggested that mode of the language in Blogs 1 and 2 is more like speech than writing. This is consistent with Wattles and Radić-Bojanić's (2007, p.54) claim that the presence of textual THEME indicates "coordinate clauses", which are "typical for spoken communication".

The analysis of the linguistic features in the thematic position of clauses showed that the interpersonal THEME is not highlighted in Blogs 1 and 2, accounting for only 1.5% and 3.5% of the total number of THEMES respectively. The scarcity of interpersonal THEME, according to Matthiessen (1995, p.42), makes the mode of the language of the blogs more monologic than dialogic. One of the reasons why the written mode of language is encouraged in Blogs 1 and 2 may be the textual nature of blog-space: firstly, blogging is not face-to-face and interactants are not in immediate contact with one another; secondly, the discourse produced in blogs is not context dependent and lacks immediate feedback, which is the case with the written mode of language.

Considering the findings and discussion above, I suggest that Blogs 1 and 2 have a hybrid mode; this means that the language used in these blogs contains characteristics of both speech and writing. This result is in line with the findings of Piriyasilpa's (2009, p.352) analysis of online discussions: "Online discussions include combined features of both spoken and written language, reflecting a hybrid nature of the communication this way".

Examining topical THEME was also helpful in identifying the dominant genre in Blogs 1 and 2. In both blogs, the blog-writers used a variety of pronouns in the thematic/Subject position due to the various demands of the discourse. Interestingly, the analysis showed the frequent use of the first person pronoun in the thematic position in Blog 1 compared with Blog 2, which mainly uses other Subjects. This shows that the blog-writer's main concern, in the discourse of Blog 1 is her personal inner and outer world. This characteristic, according to Eggins (2004, p.323), is distinctive in the spoken mode of language where "our point of departure is for most of our messages is ourselves or those somehow connected with us". This finding is also consistent with Lomborg's (2009) view that the visible first person pronoun in a blog can signify its autobiographical type. The blog-writer also made an interesting point in her interview about choosing the linguistic feature 'I' in thematic/Subject position in her blog-texts and the influence of the cultural conventions in her discourse. She said, "It is not really likely for Arabs to use 'I' a lot because they find it rude […] I use 'I', it depends on the text but I like to express my feelings so I use I […] I like to write in my blog because it is more comfortable to write". This shows how the blog

environment can affect the mode of writing and can give the blog-writer the opportunity to go beyond the standard socio-cultural boundaries and produce texts that might be far from what is expected in society. It seems that blog-space can be used as a tool through which student-writers can learn how to express themselves and position themselves in relation to the wide audience of their blogs, which needs more investigation. The presence of the first person pronoun in Blog 1 suggests that this blog has a diary-blog genre, a point which is discussed in the following section. Overall the register analysis suggested that Blogs 1 and 2 vary in terms of register. The Chi-squared test also confirmed the difference between these two blogs is driven by register.

To examine the social purpose of the texts in Blogs 1 and 2, the framework of my analysis was based on work by Martin (1992) and Rose and Martin (2012). This study also progressed the findings in previous investigations on genre by Coffin et al. (2005) and Piriyasilpa (2009). Through examining the "context of electronic conferencing", Coffin et al. (2005, p.471) specified the structure and functional stages "of argumentation". Their findings of the stages of the Argument genre along with their sub-stages, "*Argument* stage consists of *Claim* and *Evidence*" as well as "Argument prompt" (emphasis as in the original) were used in my data analysis.

8.3   To what extent can my students' blog-texts be conceptualised as belonging to a genre or an emergent genre?

To understand the genres of Blogs 1 and 2, the genres of the whole blogs and each text were investigated. To do this, the purpose, stages and discourse community of the blog-texts were analysed. The findings of these analyses are discussed in the following sub-sections starting with the purpose of the texts in Blogs 1 and 2.

8.3.1   To what extent can the purpose of this genre be identified?

The genre analysis of the texts in Blog 1 helped me to find out about the social purpose of the stages through which blog-texts are constructed: the stages through which the texts were realised as an instance of a genre or genres, serving a particular social purpose. Also, it showed the instances of various genres in this blog, comprising

- Text 1 (Self-introduction);

- Text 2, Exposition genre (Al-Qurum Natural Park);

- Text 3, Personal Recount genre (my daily routine);

- Text 4, Narrative genre (Speaking Test);

- Text 5, Exemplum genre (STOP FIGHTING!!!);

- Text 6, Argument genre (pros and cons of the blog-spot);

- Text 7, Exposition genre (The Best Family I could Get!);

- Text 8, Exposition genre (My life).

I suggested that the social purpose of this blog is to portray the blog-writer's life and her inner and outer experience of the world. The existence of various genres in this blog with the focus of giving information about the blog-writer's life seems in line with the definition of "personal journal" or "blog diary" given by Scheidt (2009, pp.15-16). She claims that "the written entries" in blog diaries or personal journals "explore terrain internal and personal to the writer-his emotions, her point of view, their description of what happened in their lives today". In the interview the blog-writer talked about the purpose of her blog: "this blog is all about me because it is easy to talk about myself, because I know every thing about myself […] I wrote about my family to tell people how great my family is and how much I love them". This characteristic of Blog 1 is in accordance with Herring et al.'s (2004, p.1) claim that blogs have a strong tendency to be "individualistic, intimate forms of self-expression". The blog-writer made the same point when talking about her blog: "I like to write in my blog because in my assignments I can't express my feelings because it must be formal". This is consistent with McNeil's (2003, p.29) point of view that "web diaries focus on the quotidian and personal, foregrounding the diarist's experience and emotions".

The macro-genre of Blog 1, Diary, has been constituted through the micro-genres, the genre of each text, individually; in other words, the stages of the genre through which each text unfolds scaffold the genre of the whole blog. In Blog 1, Text 1, as an instance of the Self-introduction genre (Piriyasilpa, 2009), has the purpose of introduction. Text 2 is a sample of the Exposition genre because it argues for a point of view where the blog-writer provides her reasons for why Al-Qurum Natural Park is the place to relax and enjoy. Text 3 is an instance of the Recounting genre (Rose and Martin, 2012) reporting daily events, through which the blog-writer provides information about what she does during the day sequentially. Text 4, an exemplar of the Narrative genre (Martin, 1992), has the purpose of resolving a complication where the blog-writer explains her fear of taking the speaking test and her solution at the end. Text 5 is an instance of the Exemplum genre with the purpose of judging behaviours where the blog-writer explains a scene of fighting in the street and gives her judgment and evaluation of violence. Text 6 is an example of the Discussion (Coffin et al., 2005) genre indicating the intention to discuss two or more points of view; in this text, the blog-writer discusses the positive and negative points of blog-writing. Texts 7 and 8 have, as an example of the Exposition genre, the purpose of arguing for a point of view; in Text 7 the blog-writer provides her views and reasons why she thinks she has the best family and in

Text 8 she gives her views about her life. As stated previously, the purpose of the main genres in Blog 1's blog-texts is consistent with Rose and Martin's (2012, p.56) definitions of genres (Chapter 3). However, in some cases, the lexico-grammatical choices in the stages of the genres dominating the texts show the characteristic of other genres, which serve other purposes. This means that some of the stages deviated from the generic stages of particular genres, when the texts unfold. This causes a disruption in the expected flow of discourse in some texts (Texts 5, 6, 7 and 8) and led hybrid genres emerge (see Chapter 5).

In the same manner, identifying the blog-texts as instances of genres, I suggested that the social purpose of Blog 2 is to represent the blog-writer's life experience of the world through describing and identifying human and non-human entities. The texts of Blog 2 were analysed as follows:

•   Text 1 (A place: B+F) as an instance of the Descriptive report (Rose and Martin 2012) because it classifies and describes a restaurant;

•   Text 2 (My daily routine!) as an exemplum of the Recount genre through which the blog-writer recounts her daily activities.

•   Text 3 (Speaking test) as an example of the Narrative genre, explaining a crisis/complication which might occur in her speaking test.

•   Text 4 (She went ☹) as an example of the Anecdote genre, in which the blog-writer shares her emotional reaction to her friend's leaving the college with the audience.

•   Text 5 (Blog- Advantages & Disadvantages) is an instance of the Discussion genre (Coffin et al 2005) where various points of view about blog-writing are discussed.

•   Text 6 (JOJO AND HILARY DUFF) as an example of the Descriptive report (Rose and Martin 2012) classifying and describing two of her favourite characters.

•   Text 7 (This college is getting everybody frustrated) as an example of the Narrative genre by which a complication is explained and a solution is provided.

•   Text 8 (The Holiday) as an example of the Recount genre, where she recounts her activities during a holiday.

•   Text 9 (SPONGE BOB SQUARE PNTS!) as an example of the Descriptive genre through which the blog-writer classifies her favourite cartoon character and describes it.

•   Text 10 (If I could be invisible for a day, then??!!) as an instance of the Consequential explanation genre (Rose and Martin 2012) explaining the effects of her being invisible.

- Text 11 (The End Of This Term) is an example of the Anecdote genre, where the writer shares her emotional reactions with her readers.

- Text 12 (My Favourite Kinds Of Desserts, Sweets) as an example of the Descriptive genre, and has the purpose of introducing and classifying types of her favoured sweets.

- Text 13 (Sugar magazine) as an example of the Exposition genre with the purpose of giving information on why she likes this magazine.

- Text 14 (My plans for this summer 2011!) as an example of the Recount genre describing what she is going to do during her summer holiday.

The instances of the genres in the blog-texts are consistent with Martin (1992), Coffin et al. (2005) and Martin and Rose's (2012) definitions of types of genre (Chapter 3). It can be seen that all the texts in Blog 2 are intended to provide information about the blog-writer's personal life. This point also emerged in the blog-writer's interviews. She said that she used her blog as a means of self-expression and self-disclosure. She claimed that she likes writing about her life and sharing her experiences and feelings with her audience. She also stated that one of her intentions of writing about her lifestyle, concerns, interests and problems is to portray different sides of her personality and learn about others' reflections, through their comments. This shows the interactive and informative aspects of Blog 2, which is organised towards both interpersonal and ideational meanings. Therefore, as for Blog 1, Blog 2 can be considered as a blog or journal diary, through which the blog-writer presents her thoughts, emotions, likes, dislikes and experiences, (McNeill 2003, Herring et al. 2004 and Puchman 2009). The self-disclosure of the blog-writer can be because of the nature of blog-space, where, according to Huffaker (2005), the name, age and place of the blog-writer remain anonymous; how this issue can affect the discourse in blogs is beyond the scope of this study but it requires more investigation in the EFL context of Oman.

It should be noted that not all of the texts in Blog 2 follow the stages identified by Martin (1992), Coffin et al. (2005) and Rose and Martin (2012, p.130); in other words, the macro genres of the blog-texts sometimes include stages of other genres, which serve other purposes. What is happening in Blogs 1 and 2 suggests the phenomenon of genre hybridity through which the dominant genre of the texts may show characteristics of other genres, a point which I turn to in the following sub-section.

8.3.2 What are the stages of this genre?

Genre hybridity

As my genre analysis suggested, both sets of blog-texts include several genres. Blog 1's texts have the genres of Self-introduction, Narrative, Exemplum, Recount, Exposition and

Argument. Blog 2's texts have the genres of Narrative, Anecdote, Recount, Exposition and Descriptive report, and Consequential explanation. The stages of the texts produced in these blogs are generally consistent with the stages of the genres defined by Rose and Martin (2012), Martin et al. (1997), Coffin et al. (2005) and Piriyasilpa (2009); however, some texts do not follow the linear pattern of genre stages and the blog-writers switched from one genre to another. For instance, in Blog 1, Text 1, the blog-writer inserted the Salutation stage at the beginning of the self-introduction genre; this stage is reported as a stage in business letters such as tax computation letters (Flowerdew and Wanb, 2010) and an optional stage in electronic messages (Hayati et al., 2011). Piriyasilpa (2009) refers to Salutation as a means to relate to the audience; thus, the insertion of this stage in the self-introduction genre increases the interactivity between the blog-writer and her readership. Text 5, an instance of the Exemplum genre, would be expected to end with a Coda, according to Rose and Martin (2012, p.130); however, it ends with the blog-writer's evaluation of the issue. In Text 6, an example of the Argument genre, the blog-writer fuses the last stage of the Argument genre (Coffin et al., 2005), Reinforcement, with a stage of hortatory Exposition (Piriyasilpa, 2009, p.205), Recommendation; in Text 7, the Exposition genre, is combined with the Self-introduction genre and Text 8, is an instance of the Exposition genre but turns into the Exemplum genre in the middle.

In Blog 2, Text 1 is an example of the Descriptive report, but it starts with the orientation stage, to provide information about what the blog-writer identifies as a restaurant, and then about where it is, which is a typical stage of the Narrative genre (Labov and Waletzy, 1997, Martin and Rose, 2012); then the blog-writer classifies and describes the restaurant. There is a shift to the Exposition genre, as she claims that it is a famous restaurant and gives evidence for that. Then, she switches to the Description genre as she explicates detailed information about the restaurant; however, then she changes to the Exposition genre as she makes a claim and gives reasons to justify it. Text 3 is an instance of the Narrative genre but is blended with a phase of the Argument stage of the Exposition genre. In the stage of Orientation in Text 4, as an exemplum of the Anecdote genre, the blog-writer describes an event and her reaction. Then, in the next stage, Remarkable event, she resorts to the Descriptive report genre to describe a happening. Text 9 as a sample of Descriptive reports has an embedded stage of the Exposition genre and ends with the stage of Reaction, which is common in the Anecdote genre. Text 10 with the Consequential explanation genre has the Reaction stage embedded, which is a typical stage in the Anecdote genre. Text 11, as an example of the Anecdote genre is mixed with the Exposition and Descriptive genre. In Text 12, as an instance of the Descriptive report genre, the blog-writer starts the text with the Classification stages to introduce and classify an entity and then moves to the description stage to give more information about it; however, she switches to the Exposition genre by making a claim and providing evidence for that.

Then, she returns to the linguistic features of the Descriptive genre by classifying and describing another entity; there is a shift again to the linguistic features of the Exposition genre and after that she moves the Anecdote genre by writing about an event and her reaction. She finishes the text with the Recommendation stage of hortatory Exposition (Piriyasilpa, 2009, p.205).

Although Taboada (2011, p.249) points out that "Stages are the constitutive elements of a genre, which follow each other in a predetermined fashion, specific to each genre", my analysis showed a disturbance in the conventional flow of stages of the texts, which resulted in borrowing the linguistic features of other genres. The variation within the genre stages of the blog-texts highlights the dynamic characteristics of the genres in Blogs 1 and 2; this suggests that blog-writing is not a stable textual activity and that blogs can provide an opportunity for blog-writers to manipulate the schematic structures of genres to achieve their communicative purposes. This makes the discourse in Blog 1 similar to what Bhatia (2004, p.25) calls "the real world of discourse, which is complex, dynamic constantly developing and often less predictable".

Genre variation in Blogs 1 and 2 might reflect a range of factors such as the impact of situation (that is the effect of discourse community and communicative purposes), constructing situations, adjusting the prior knowledge and the role of audience. The section below discusses these issues.

The impact of situation on genre construction

Genre is the response to a socio-cultural demand (Miler 1984) or, in other words, "a response to situation" (Coe and Freedman, 1998, p.42). Devitt (1993, p.578) explains, "As our constructions of situations change and new situations begin to recur, genres change and new genres develop". Considering these views, it can be implied that the genre variations in Blog 1 can be due to the influence of the situation within which they are situated. In other words, the virtual environment of blogs can create a specific situation, which may lead hybrid genres to emerge; this is due to the fact that different situations with different communicative purposes demand different needs. This is in line with Martin and Eggins (1997, p.232), who write that "each text appears to carry with it some influences from the context in which it was produced. Context, we should say, gets 'into' text by influencing the words and structures that text-producers use". Therefore, the influence of the situation can cause hybrid genres to emerge; this can imply that the outcome of such a process, the text, can carry some specific characteristics of the situation where the discourse is happening.

The most critical components of the context of the situation of Blogs 1 and 2 are the community that the blog-writers are in contact with and the communicative goals they

pursue. As the analyses of the comments and interviews in Chapters 5 and 6 showed, the discourse constructed in Blogs 1 and 2, to some extent, was under the influence of these two.

Constructing situations

Considering the impact of the situation on the schematic structures of genre, it can be true to say that the link between genre and situations is reflexive. A genre is to some extent generative of the situation and can create the situations throughout the discourse; for instance, in Text 8, an instance of the Exposition genre, the blog-writer creates a suitable context by her choice of genre through which she can argue why she is satisfied with her life. To construct this situation, she provides the audience with her claims and evidence. However, at one stage, the function of the text changes as the blog-writer describes an incident in her life and adds her interpretation, through which she judges her character and behaviour. This causes a disruption in the schematic structures of the Exposition genre by the move to the Exemplum genre, which creates another situation. This process shows the impact of the function of the text in terms of the schematic structures of genres, which can lead to changing or generating a situation. Taboada (2011, p.249) addresses the same issue; "The staging appropriate for a text is the result of the function of the text in a given situation. The broad term "function" encompasses two different aspects: the communicative purpose of the text and its social function". Thus, it can be suggested that the schematic structures of genres can be shaped by their particular purpose and function, which in turn will shape the situation, through changing its structures; this may lead to generating a new situation to achieve the purpose of the discourse. Therefore, one of the reasons for the genre hybridity in these blogs might be the blog-writers' deliberate choice to change the situations through using a combination of genres to make meanings and transmit information effectively.

It is true to say that there is a mutual interaction between genres and situations: "each constructing and responding to other in a semiotic interchange" (Devitt, 1993, p.580). Coe and Freedman (1998, p.41) refer to a similar issue pointing out: "genre is now understood rather as the functional relationship between the structure and situation". This means each of them can cause the other to change or emerge based on the communicative goal of the discourse community. Whether genres are used differently to manage and organise the situations, or whether it is the situations which control genres is beyond the scope of this study, and would need detailed exploration as a separate issue.

Adjusting prior knowledge

One of the reasons for genre hybridity in Blogs 1 and 2 might be the result of the student-writer's attempt to adjust her background knowledge of genres to the new environment. In fact, joining the new environment of blogs and interacting with the audience, the blog-writer noticed that a particular discourse was being used among the community members. Consequently, drawing on her previous knowledge of genres, the blog-writer tried to adjust her discourse, through resorting to the linguistic features and functions of other genres, to make it fit and legitimate in the dynamic virtual environment of blogs: a process that can lead to genre hybridity and eventually the emergence of a new genre. Santini (2007 , p.4) makes the same point, stating that there are "three forces interacting" in the dynamic environment of the web: "what we bring from the past (reproduces genres), what is new or adapted to the new environment (novel genres and adapted genres), what is going to emerge and is not fully formed yet (emerging genres)".

However, how the prior knowledge of genres is modified and a new genre emerges and how this new genre will be accepted and how long it should be practiced by a community to be named as a genre is beyond the scope of this study and requires a longitudinal investigation.

The role of audience

Another noteworthy finding in this investigation is the role of audience in constructing the schematic stages of genres in Blogs 1 and 2. One of the texts, *The advantages and disadvantages of blog and blog-writing*, Text 6 in Blog 1 and Text 5 in Blog 2, was a practice assigned by the writing teacher to help the students prepare for the final exam. The genre and stages through which this text is produced are clearly consistent with the Argumentative genre in the literature; this can raise the possibility that the sense of audience, the writing teacher, and the purpose (final exam) obliged the blog-writers to stick to the conventional steps when producing this text. This echoes Thompson's (2001, p.59) claim that "one area directly affected by audience awareness is the way which the text is organised and the organisation is signalled". The blog-writers organise the stages of their texts to fulfil the purpose of the Argument genre; the blog-writer of Blog 1, in the Thesis, sets the background and expresses her intention explicitly: *In this essay i would love to write about the pros and cons of blog.* She gives her points of view, provides the reasons through conjunctions, *so and because*, and signals their sequence by the use of internal conjunctions, *firstly* and *moreover.* She also flags out the last stage of her text, Re-inforcement of Thesis, through the help of a concluding phrase, *To sum up.*

In the same manner, the blog-writer of Blog 2 follows the conventions of academic writing prescribed in her writing-class when writing Text 5; for instance, she provides the

background and purpose of the essay firstly - *There are so many websites which are so popular around the world. Blog is one of them .Its one of the greatest writing sites. There are so many positive sides of the blog.* She arranges her points of view and sequences them through the use of conjunctions, *First of all, Firstly, last but not least,* or adds her points by using *also* and *too.* She signals her evidence with the conjunctions *so* and *because.* At the end, she signals the end of her essay through the concluding phrase: *In conclusion.* On the other hand, in other texts, the blog-writers show their freedom to blur the boundaries of genres in their blog-texts, as shown in Texts 7 and 8 in Blog 1 and Texts 9, 10, 11 in Blog 2. This is in accordance with Ivanič (1998) who notes that people may write for the interest of their audience, which affects their lexico-grammatical choice and the style of their writing. This issue also highlights the interactivity of the blog diary, which is in line with McNeil's (2003, p.29) view that "web diaries respond to the needs and interests of both writer and reader". As a result, this analysis suggests that purpose and audience can have a greater impact on shaping the schematic stages of genre of a text than the mode of communication.

Another issue, which might affect the discourse in blogs, is the discourse community. This leads to the third sub-questions: whether any discourse community is constructed among my student-writers. This is addressed next.

8.3.3   Is any discourse community constructed among the student-writers?

Swales (1990) points out that organising genres to meet their purpose can signify the features of the discourse community that the blog-writer is involved in. In other words, the discourse community where the genre is constructed, shared and interpreted can also affect the linguistic features and eventually the schematic structures of the genre. This means that being and functioning in a discourse community demands a particular use of language: the particular discourse that the community members share. This leads to the hypothesis that producing hybrid genres in Blog 1 may be the result of a conventional practice in the community she belongs to, helping her achieve shared communicative purposes.

The genre analysis could not indicate any specific discourse community in Blogs 1 and 2 since the blog-writers' lexico-grammatical choices in the texts do not refer to any particular community or an emerging community in a specific field; in fact, all the texts were intended to give information about the blog-writers' personal experiences, issues, likes and dislikes. However, it can be argued that a blog is not limited to the blog-writer's textual entries. Blog-space provides the blog-writer with "affordances" (Myers, 2010a, p.21) such as links and comments that connect them with the outer world. Considering this issue, the hyperlinks and received comments were examined in terms of who and how often they interacted with the blog-writer.

The analysis showed that there are 11 hyperlinks and seven comments in Blog 1, which might identify the community that the blog-writer is involved in. However, inspecting the hyperlinks and comments in Blog 1, I noted that only a small number of the members in the hyperlink list were engaged with the blog-writer through writing comments, other comments were from the audience outside. In Blog 2, there are ten hyperlinks. Eleven people visited this blog and left comments; only four of these people were in the hyperlink list in Blog 2. In both blogs, most comments are relevant to the content of the blog-texts but there are also some comments about things other than the blog-texts such as the blog-writer's writing style. These may show the visitors' attempt to create or maintain their interaction with the blog-writer and portray the blog as an interactive environment where a community may be constructed. Interestingly, both blog-writers reacted to only some of the comments and ignored others; this can signify how blog-writers select the members of the community they wish to be in contact with. How blog-writers construct their community through interacting with their readership through hyperlinks and exchanging comments is not the focus of this study and deserves further research.

Swales (1988, p.211) writes, "discourse communities are centrifugal", that is, certain people belong to a certain group following particular conventions and discourse. To find out if these blogs have specific type of audience, the frequency of the readers' interactions with the blog-writers were examined. The results showed that only two of the members of the audiences visited the blog three times and the others left the blog after their first visit. Such irregular and infrequent reactions to the received comments do not support and sustain the connection among the members. Thus, investigating the comments indicated that this blog does not identify a particular audience group that can form a distinct discourse community. This might raise the issue of whether looking at comments and links in a blog is sufficient to recognise its community. The audience of a blog is not restricted to those who reflect on blog-entries and write comments. What makes the concept of discourse community of blogs uncertain is the point that people can 'lurk', that is, read but leave no comments. As Puschmann (2012 p.90) writes, "blog readers can lurk without indicating that they have even received a message, and the blogger can likewise claim not to have addressed anyone in particular with her thoughts". McNeil (2003, p.36) calls these lurkers "Read-only" audiences "since they take in personal stories of the diarist without revealing anything of themselves, and without accepting the community membership being offered them".

Therefore, it seems that communication or the frequency of interactions in blogs cannot be a requisite of belonging to its discourse community. In other words, there might be an invisible community in Blogs 1 and 2, which is not traceable through the links and comments on the surface of blogs. This community can be identified through using spy

software; however, this can raise ethical issues and socio-cultural concerns that researchers should pay attention to.

Another way of investigating the discourse community in blogs can be through examining the similarities in language features among the active members. For instance, although the limited comments in Blogs 1 and 2 show few interactions between the blog-writers and their blog-visitors, the language used in the comments share the characteristics of informal chats with some ellipsis and unconventional orthography along with some emoticons. An instance of this issue in Blog 2 is shown in Figure 26.
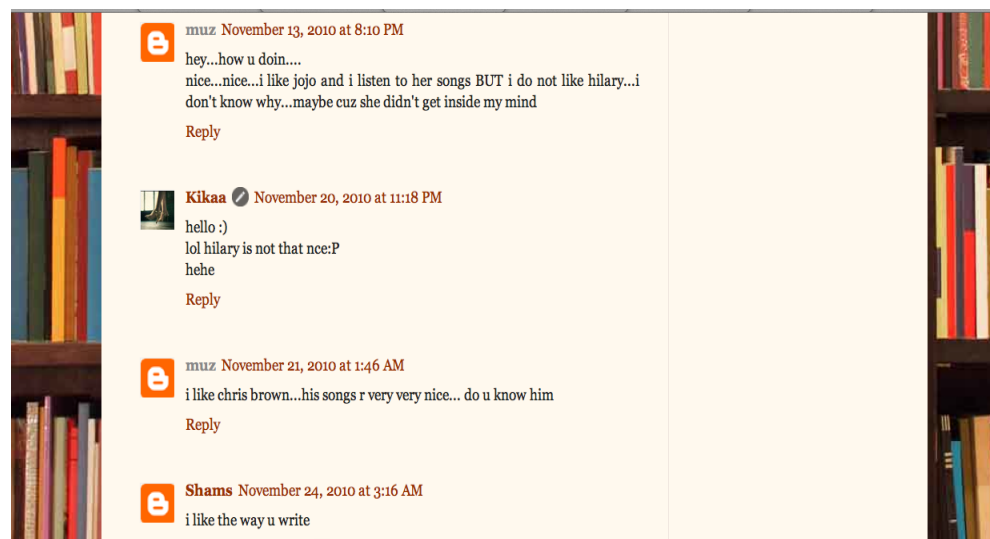
Figure 26: Language of comments

In Figure 26, the contracted forms, *don't,* the abbreviations, *lol, unconventional spellings doin*, *u* and the emoticons ☺ can imply that the language of the social group active in these blogs has similar characteristics. These features are in line with the speech mode of language defined by Crystal (2011, p.18) that can be assigned to the discourse happening in blogs, revealing "the way writers think and speak" (Crystal, 2011, p.68). It is also consistent with Swales (1988, p.211) who writes, "a discourse community is composed of those who share functional rules that determine the appropriacy of utterances". The characteristics of the language used in comments and why this type of register is encouraged and developed among the interactants in Blogs 1 and 2 deserves deeper investigation, which is beyond the scope of this study.

The next critical feature through which genres can be identified is communicative purpose. Swales (1990, p.58) believes that genres are mainly constructed for communicative purposes. He writes that communicative purposes form "the rationale of the genre": the rationale through which "the schematic structure of the discourse" is shaped. Therefore, the disruption in the schematic structures of genres in Blogs 1 and 2 can reflect the influence of

their communicative purposes in each stage of the text. Bhatia (2002a, p.10) also refers to the notion of communicative purposes and genre hybridity. He states

> Although in much of genre analysis, we identify textual artefacts in terms of pure genre analysis, in practice, we often find them in mixed or embedded forms, either because they are designed to achieve a mix of communicative purposes […] or to communicate 'private intentions' within the context of 'socially recognized communicative purposes'.

This is consistent with Swales' point of view that purpose is critical in shaping genre/s. Analysing the blog-texts in this study indicated that each schematic structure, constituting the genre/s, has a particular purpose. This is in accordance with Piriyasilpa (2007), who refers to the functional purpose of the schematic structures of genres and how writers move from one stage to another to fulfil the purpose of the text. In this analysis, the blog-writers' move from the stage of constructing interpersonal meanings to the stage responsible for creating experiential meanings is noticeable. In Blog 1, Text 1, salutation as the first stage contributes to the interpersonal metafunctions of the text. The second stage, giving personal information, adds to the experiential meanings, through using relational processes as well as the first person pronoun and its derivation. The same issue can be seen in Text 7 in the same blog; through using an argument prompt, the blog-writer tries to stimulate readers' thoughts on the issue she is writing about. This signals a shift from experiential meaning to interpersonal meaning to engage the audience and then to the experiential meaning again to give her opinion and evidence. In Blog 2, Text 1, the blog-writer starts the text with a question: *Have you ever been or heard of BNF road side diner?* This question is not intended to seek an answer but is valuable in constructing the interpersonal metafunctions of the text and the flow of the discourse; such shifts, in turn, contribute to the interactivity of the text and make these texts dialogic to some extent.

This implies that the blog environment, with its dynamic nature, persuaded the blog-writer to go beyond the formal conventions of written genres and construct a hybrid genre. This is consistent with the findings of Coffin et al. (2005, p.478) writing that genres such as the argumentation genre can be affected "by the mode of communication". As a result, it is rather hard to associate some of the texts, in Blogs 1 and 2, with a specific genre. The same phenomenon can be found in speech where the discourse does not belong to a particular genre. Thus, it can be said that in some mediums, the generic categorisation of texts remains fuzzy and hard to determine. This echoes Walker and White's (2013, p.68) point of view on

online texts writing that "new written genres are relatively unstable, and so it becomes more difficult to predict their language and organization".

With a different view, scholars such as Askehave (1999, p.21) argue that communicative purposes cannot be considered "as genre determinant" mainly; however, as discussed above, analysing the texts in Blogs 1 and 2 shows that purpose plays an important role in genre construction. This study may not support Askehave's (1999) view but it does not contradict it either. This means that looking at the schematic structures may not be sufficient to interpret the intention and purpose behind genre variations within a text. Carrying out interviews is valuable to gain a better insight into the blog-writer's purpose behind the chosen schematic structures, since it is the blog-writer who owns the text and knows what was going on in her head when using the language to write it.

Overall, Blogs 1 and 2 tend to be like a diary or journal blog, amplified with the blog-writers' personal issues, experiences, feelings and interests; they share the characteristics of genre hybridity in the texts. The purpose of the genre in these blogs as an instance of a diary blog was achieved through the purpose of the stages by which their texts unfolded. In other words, the schematic structures of the texts within these blogs scaffold the purpose of the texts and eventually the entire blogs. The analysis did not show any community or emerging community in these two blogs.

8.4   How do the student-writers construct their voice and express themselves in their blog-texts?

The issue of voice and self-expression in this study was drawn from the point that my students-writers' assignments and final exam papers lacked features such as the authors' textual voice, self-expression and sense of audience. To address these issues, features such as speech functions, Subject types, modal Finite operators, types of clauses, polarity and active/passive sentence-patterns were selected. As discussed previously, writers' choice of such features can be under the influence of the social purpose, genre, of the texts. Therefore, "what is largely semiotically created must be investigated in a semiotic environment, which is, properly speaking, discourse" (Hasan and Fries, 1995, p.xix). To this end, I analysed each text in relation to its genre to have a better view of the blog-writers' self-expression in their texts. This analysis was carried out based on the MOOD system in Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004) systemic functional linguistics framework.

Exploring the use of different Subject types, modals, clause types, polarity and voice indicated how my student-writers positioned and expressed themselves when proposing a proposition, arguing for a point of view, negotiating with their readers and relating with

them. They mainly used active declarative clauses to take a stance and expressed things as facts. Using this type of clause, according to Coffin (2002, p.516) provides direct information that cannot be debated by the readership. The blog-writers positioned themselves through commanding and addressing the readers explicitly with the help of imperative clauses; this type of clause engages writers with their readers dialogically and contributes to the interpersonal aspect of the discourse (Thompson and Muntigl, 2008). The blog-writers, in some instances, construed their voice through interrogative clauses. Some of the interrogative clauses were intended to pull the readers into the text by stimulating their thoughts (Coffin et al., 2005, p.469) and others were used to bring the readers' potential questions and opinions to the text (Thompson, 2014, p.89); this helped the blog-writers to express themselves through their readers' voice. In some texts, the blog-writers chose first person pronoun and its derivations to express themselves as a knower, an advisor or even an authority, which is called "authorial identity" (Hyland, 2002a, p.1098). However, the low frequency of such instances in Blogs 1 and 2 may be due to the cultural and social background of the student-writers. This was concluded through the gathered data in the interviews with the blog-writers; the blog-writer of Blog 1 explicitly referred to the this issue stating, "it's not likely for Arabs to use *I* a lot because they find it rude"; this indicates that the impact of culture, social conventions and L2 on students' textual self-expression cannot be ignored. The blog-writers sometimes chose the third person pronoun to remove their own voice and express their readers' thoughts on behalf of them. They sometimes showed their solidarity by using first person plural pronoun inclusive (we) and expressed their voice in line with their readers. The use of this linguistic device involves the readers in the argument (Hewings and Coffin, 2007) on one hand and lessens the writers' authorial stance (Vladimirou, 2014) and establishes an equal position for writers and readers in text on the other. They also used the second person pronoun to express the readers' potential thoughts and relate with them (Ye, 2010, p.146). This shows that the blog-writers were engaged with their imaginary audience and tried to narrow the gap between them. The use of the third person pronoun (singular or plural) also indicated that student-writers intended to express themselves objectively; this can distance the writers from their readership but strengthen their authority as it makes their proposition less negotiable (Hewings and Coffin, 2007).

My student blog-writers used modality for several reasons in their blog-texts: to strengthen their proposition (Thompson and Muntigl, 2008, p.111) and their textual position, to express their uncertainty (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, p.116), to share their power with their readers and negotiate with them (Martin and Rose, 2003, p.50), to recommend something and sometimes to bring their readers' voice into the texts (Thompson, 2014). The blog-writers also implemented negation to express their proposition as facts and sometimes to

challenge their readers' thoughts (Eggins, 2004, pp.150-153). It should be noted that the blog-writers' voice and self-expression reflected the social purpose of their texts, through which they represented their experience of the world.

Overall, this analysis showed that my student-writers implemented different lexico-grammatical patterns to construct their textual voice and self-expression to fulfil the purpose of their blog-texts. They sometimes: a) took a strong position and construed their authorial voice; b) blended their voice with their readers' and shared their authority with them; or c) voiced their readers' potential thoughts on their behalf to express themselves. It seems that it is impossible to mute the readers' voice in blog-texts; this suggests that the blog is a platform for both self-expression and communication. In fact, this analysis suggests that blog-writing is social and sensitive to the social context and to the relations between the blog-writer and whatever exists in the context.

This urges language practitioners to make their EFL students aware of how self-positioning, stance and interpersonal relation can affect their lexico-grammatical patterns and the social purposes of their texts at the discourse level. It will also shift the learners' mind from grammatical correctness to societal appropriateness and make them aware of the tight relation among the context, content and lexico-grammatical patterns. This can encourage them to consider why some texts work better than others and how grammar contributes to fulfilling the purpose of texts. It should be noted that self-expression and voice are not limited to the linguistic features of the texts in blogs; the colour, font, template, pictures, YouTube, slide-shows and all the gadgets in blogs can help the blog-writer to construct their voice in the blog and signal their self and identity.

8.5   What is the role of blogs in EFL writing classes in the context of this study?

The findings of the analyses of the interview with the tutors and the interview with the writing tutor suggested that all of the tutors believed that integrating technology and web tools with teaching could benefit EFL learners. They referred to the role of using e-mails and socialising websites as a means of self-expression in writing classes. This is consistent with Noytim's view (2010) that the blog, as a web tool, is a platform to interact and socialise globally and a means of self-expression. This capacity of blogs, he believes, can enhance "creative, analytical and critical thinking skills, creating social interaction and good relationships between writer and reader, and supporting the learning community" (Noytim, 2010, p.1127). The role of web tools and educational websites in language learning was also brought into focus by the tutors in the interviews. As the tutors stated, online activities such as blog-writing could improve students' vocabulary, grammar, idiomatic expressions and

general knowledge as well as their confidence. Thereby, their EFL learners could discuss and write about topics better and could develop more organised paragraphs than before. This is in line with Sun's (2010, p.337) findings that blog-writing can "build language awareness and develop learner's autonomy and promote confidence and motivation".

However, one tutor raised the point that using the spell checker in web tools can make student-writers lazy and harm their spelling skills. She also referred to the various ways of spelling and formatting styles offered by various web tools that can confuse EFL learners when writing. However, the blog-writers had a different view; in the third interview; the blog-writer of Blog 1 said, "the only thing I think is about my spelling because it is embarrassing if people read what I write and see that I have spelling mistakes" and the blog-writer of Blog 2 stated, "I love writing on blog because it makes me write in a better way, I can check my spellings after writing so it makes it easier to learn from my spelling mistake and helps me to improve in a good way". There are also some opposing views about this issue; for instance, Mohammadi et.al. (2012) refer to the positive effect of using CALL on their postgraduate EFL learners' spelling and grammar. Implementing blogs in an undergraduate course, Sun (2010) also reports that his EFL students enhanced their writing skills through extensive writing in their blogs. However, if and to what extent free writing in blogs can be helpful in low levels of language learning, such as foundation courses where the level of students' language proficiency is low, requires more investigation.

In the interview, some tutors raised their concern about using informal language, expressions and abbreviations in online interactions. However, this characteristic of blogs seemed to be a motivating factor to encourage my student-writers to write in their blogs; as the blog-writer of Blog 2 stated in the interview, "Blogs helps me express my feelings more, because I can write whatever I want without making it formal". Yet, the tutors were uncertain whether the frequent use of informal language can help EFL students to learn the academic writing genre. Scholars such as Purcell et al. (2013, p.2) explain that creeping "of the informal language and style into" students' writing tasks is an impact of using "digital tools". This may seem a drawback of using digital tools in teaching academic writing; however, Purcell et al. (2013, p.2) argue that this capacity of web tools that can be exploited to teach how "voices" and "registers" vary with the audience of discourse. Taking this issue into account, it seems that blogs with the capacity of writing texts and comments can be a valuable resource to make students aware of the genre/s and lexico-grammatical features to fulfil the purpose of texts in relation to their particular audience.

At one point, the tutors referred to the motivating and interactive aspect of using web tools and the Internet, which persuades students to take part in activities and engages them with

their tutors and other learners. Referring to the similar points, Yuksel (2009) writes that using blogs along with conventional teaching methods improves cooperation among learners and encourages collaborative learning. This helps to "enhance learning motivation, satisfaction, and performance as well as to improve the instructors' teaching effectiveness" (Shih, 2012, p.204).

The tutors also expressed their interest in implementing interactive exercises in writing classes; however, they suggested that such activities should be applied in suitable conditions with the aim of enhancing writing skills and passing the writing exams. This echoes Shin's (2012, p.204) view of using a method of blended face-to-face teaching and blogs in his ESP classes; he states that such a blended approach is effective when it "is well planned, the equipment is sufficient and supportive as well as students are familiar with related applications". Therefore, it seems that blending online activities with conventional ones, presented in course-books, needs to be well-organised and requires careful assessment to support learners and scaffold the purpose of the course.

The speaking tutor stated that the students involved in blog-writing could improve their speaking fluency; she observed that her students' vocabulary and analytical thinking improved, as they could discuss more fluently with better lexes than before when doing the speaking tasks. This is consistent with Jiménez-Caicedo et al.'s (2014, p.99) learner's perspective stating that being exposed to new grammatical patterns and lexis and practicing them in his blog "helped him to feel able and ready to use those new forms when speaking". The speaking tutor, however, expressed her doubts if blog-writing can enhance learners' speaking accuracy. Improving speaking fluency can have several reasons such as the capacity of blogs to engage students in small talks exchanged through comments. In other words, comments, like speech, have the capacity to create the context and situations through which blog-writers can be involved in meaningful interactions with their audience; this suggests that text in blogs is a dynamic process and carries the characteristics of speech such as informal grammar (Crystal, 2006, p.45), which according to Halliday (1989) may be considered as non-standard from the angle of written-grammar. It should not be ignored that sentences in comments are often short and dense with information. This allows little room for grammatically correct and accurate sentences, which might affect bloggers' writing accuracy. It seems that the notion of accuracy in blogs should be investigated with the help of a semantically oriented approach rather than a syntactic one as "blogs are loosely structured" (Crystal, 2006, p.45).

In the second interview, the writing tutor pointed out that some colleges are not often interested in introducing blogs to writing curriculum. She referred to various reasons such as

lack of facilities and technical support as well as the nature of academic courses that demands a formal setup and formal teaching methods. As an EFL teacher in the context of this study, resistance to using blogs in classes, most likely, has roots in the learning objectives dictated by the curriculum and the extensive materials which need to be covered within a short time. This hardly allows the tutors to add extra activities to what is prescribed by the text-books.

The tutor also referred to the point that blogs provide students with an opportunity for self-expression. This echoes Noytim's (2010, p.127) findings that students think of blogs as a platform "for self-expression in English writing for both a local and global audience". Why blogs motivate EFL learners to express themselves can have several reasons such as providing equal status for the blog-writers and their audience. As the tutor explained, she was following her student-writers' blogs anonymously; this could remove the power position between the blog-writer and the audience and persuade student-writers to disclose their emotions and feelings in their blog-texts. This in line with Zhang's (2009, p.65) view that "Blogs disregards the status of users" since bloggers are under pseudonyms. Therefore, being anonymous can help blog-writers express themselves with no restrictions that might probably be imposed by the audience. Elsewhere, the tutor stresses that her student-writers are comfortable with blogs and eager to do blog-writing if they are not observed and monitored by their tutors. As, she explained, apart from being anonymous, she did not correct her students-writers' grammatical errors in their blogs; this, she believed, could be another factor that had a positive impact on student-writers' self-expression and vocabulary. This raises the questions of whether and to what extent a pedagogically designed blog, controlled by a moderator and monitored by tutors, could motivate students to write in their blogs.

The tutor stated that blogs could help her students enhance their basic language skills such as using grammatical patterns and vocabulary. She believes blog-writing can reduce the tutors' teaching load and affect students' academic writing. Her view is consistent with Noytim's (2010, p.131) findings that blogs are "a powerful tool for English language learning particularly reading and writing skills". Arslan and Sahin-Kizil (2010) also claim that integrating blogs with class teaching can develop EFL learners' writing skills. The blog-writer of Blog 2 also stated that her writing skills have improved as blogs could provide her with various ideas of what and how to write. The blog-writer of Blog 1 referred to the same point: "when I write in the blog I make sure I wrote perfectly [...] It improves my writing skills and I learned more vocab".

Apparently, blogs provide an environment where student-writers can be exposed to a wide range of words and grammatical patterns on one hand and to academic and personal written communication styles on the other. They can also help students to perfect what they know and serve as a means of pushing them to new areas. This can be considered as an advantage of blog-writing over pen and paper writing and valuable for both language learners and practitioners. From the tutor's point of view, students believed that blog-writing is interesting and is an excellent tool to be used for teaching purposes. This is a point that EFL tutors can benefit from as students' positive attitude and perception of the learning and teaching environment play a key role in their learning achievement.

Summary

In this chapter, I have first given an overview of my analysis comprising the register and genre analyses of Blogs 1 and 2. I have then discussed my main findings in relation to the literature and answered my research questions. As suggested, these blogs are informative with a low level of interaction between the blog-writers and their audience and contain the characteristics of both spoken and written modes of language use. The genre analysis showed that various genres are constructed in the texts in these two blogs. I have also explained the possible reasons for genre hybridity in some texts. As discussed previously, student-writers construed their voice and self-expression through their choice of Subject types, modals, clause types (indicative or declarative), the voice of their clauses and polarity in their blog-texts. The analysis indicated that student-writers' blog-texts are an amalgamation of the blog-writers and their imaginary readers' voice; this helped them to construct their authorial presence as an advisor or a commander, to show their solidarity with the readers, to bring their readers' opinions in and share their power with them to maintain the relation with their readers. It was also suggested that their self-expression and stance are under the influence of the genre of the texts. Some of the tutors stated their positive attitudes towards using web tools in classes; however, most of them believed that lack of time and technical supports prevent them from using them in classes; they also pointed out that blending a web tool with a conventional course needs to be well-planned and well-instructed and the selected activities should be matched with the level of the students and according to final exams. The interview with the writing tutor suggested that blogs could boost student-writers' confidence, motivate them to write, elevate their basic language knowledge in terms of vocabulary and grammatical patterns, and help them to express themselves, interact with their audience and share their feelings with them. It also showed the importance of the audience's role and comments in blog-writing, as they might hinder student-writers from writing. In the next chapter, I explain the limitations, contribution, further work and the conclusion of the present study.

Chapter 9 Conclusion

9.1   Introduction

In this chapter, first, I will explore the limitations and implications of the present study. Then, I will discuss the contributions to the theory: practice and context. Following that, I will provide some suggestions for further work and research. This chapter ends with the conclusion of this study.

9.2   Limitations

One of the main limitations of this study is related to the generalisability of the findings to a larger population. The data are limited to two blogs and the participants were selected from only one college. This means that the findings might differ in a study involving a larger cohort of blog-texts and a broader context of EFL learners. Therefore, the genre and register constructed in these two blogs cannot represent Omani EFL learners' language use in the same context. Engaging the research in a large online context with a large number of participants can mitigate this drawback. However, this analysis has its own strength; limiting the number of the samples enabled the researcher to produce an in-depth study of data.

9.3   Contribution to theory

Blogs as a new mode of communication create a relaxed environment where blog-writers are not limited to the formal conventions of language and can go beyond the socio-cultural boundaries of the classroom when using language. As my study suggested, this environment can prompt blog-writers to draw on features of both spoken and written modes of language to make meanings. Therefore, to study this type of language, both the lexico-grammatical features and the meanings construed throughout the discourse should be captured. It seems that systemic functional grammar can be a valuable theory to observe and understand how language is constructed in blogs. It is due to the fact that, for SFL, language is interwoven into the social context, where it is happening; where grammar is functional, enabling the language to function for a specific reason, which is communication. Furthermore, it does not mainly refer to the structures through which the language is produced. This theory dose not undermine the role of grammar in producing the language but provides another lens for looking at EFL students' language, through which meaning making obliges and selects the linguistic features of the language and not vice versa.

Therefore, this theory can lend itself fully to studying the language in blogs, which can be an amalgam of the written and spoken forms of language, filled with grammatical and non-grammatical sentence patterns and unconventional lexis.

9.4   Contribution to practice

This study has suggested the value of systemic functional grammar as a tool to understand the relation between the social purpose and the linguistic features of EFL students' texts in blogs. This can benefit language practitioners to provide EFL learners with explicit genre knowledge and linguistic patterns to help them understand and achieve the social purpose of the discourse they are involved in. Being aware of the social purpose of texts, student-writers can also recognise the field of the discourse, which in turn can help them choose appropriate process types along with their particular participants as well as the necessary circumstances to construct their outer and inner experience of the world.

It seems that having a genre approach to teaching the language can shift the focus of writing classes from teaching traditional grammar, with the focus on sentence structure, to teaching meaning construction in the social context where language is functioning. Functional grammar is more concerned with how meanings are made in texts and what purpose texts serve than with how sentences are structured; it also highlights grammar as a means of providing various patterns and organisations when constructing various meanings in text. Therefore, building on traditional grammar, systemic functional grammar can help EFL learners to become familiar with the role of linguistic features and the possible patterns for constructing text.

This theory can help teachers to draw learners' attention to the interactive aspects of discourse through the choice of clauses - declarative, imperative and interrogative - and types of Subject and Finite operators needed in their text. This can be valuable for understanding how particular genres require particular clause types, Subject and tense. Also raising learners' awareness of how to organise the information in clauses and how to join them to become coherent and logical will help them produce more effective texts. For instance, teaching learners about the social purpose of the argumentative genre, the types of processes, participants and circumstances as well as creating a stance and position through using modal Finite operators along with the internal and external conjunctions to make the text coherent will give them a better insight into this genre.

9.5   Contribution to the context

It should be noted that this is the first time that notions of the language variation and meaning-making of EFL learners in blogs has been studied in the context of Oman; considering the findings of this study, it seems that introducing the non-threatening blog environment into the curriculum of writing courses may change Omani EFL-learners' approaches to learning writing skills and persuade them to write more. For instance, the capacities of blogs such as anonymity can help learners, especially shy learners, to write

about what they desire to write about without the stress of being judged or corrected. Through blog-writing, Omani writing teachers can engage student-writers with one another and motivate them to share their ideas and experiences, read their peers' writing and reflect upon what they have written. This may lead to collaborative learning, which is hardly achievable in traditional pen and paper writing classes.

9.6   Further suggestions and work

One of the ways that blogs enabled students to move beyond the conversations of classroom writing is the use of emoticons in the blog-texts. In my study, there are many instances of emoticons in Blog 2 through which the blog-writer expressed her feelings and thoughts. The role of these emoticons in construing meaning is crucial in the schematic structures of the texts as they unfold; for instance, in Blog 2, Text 11, the use of the non-linguistic feature ☹, and in Text 9, *I think its the funniest,most popular cartoon ever ☺; I love SpongeBob <3* has made the blog-writer's emotion explicit and intensified. This is the multimodality side of this blog that helps the readers engage with the blog-writer's feelings and interpret the text better. This is an interesting area worth further investigation more.

The blogs also revealed that the students' knowledge of writing drew from sources outside the English classroom and in particular their knowledge of Arabic writing; this is most obvious in the fact that some of the Arab EFL students use both Arabic and English language in their blog-texts. In fact, the student-writers' blog-texts is an amalgamation of Arabic phrases and English patterns—for instance, "*sorry i'm realy sorry _inshallah_ from today i will begin to write*"; "*i'm fine and great alhamdllah*" (http://omaniemotionalqueen.blogspot.co.uk/). Such language shifts, from the foreign language to their mother tongue, make the student-writers' discourse vary in terms of linguistic features and language patterns. Why blog-writes resort to their mother tongue to express themselves, what role these Arabic phrases play in their discourse and how this affects their communication in blogs is an interesting area that could be explored. This code shifting or translanguaging is representative of a broader phenomenon of students using knowledge about Arabic writing to support their English writing.

The thematic choices of the discourse in Blogs 1 and 2 also deserve a thorough investigation as this can show how the information in blog-texts is organised and developed logically as the texts unfold. One of the findings in this study was the prevalence of textual THEME and long sentences in the texts. Drawing on my own experience among Arabic speakers, it seems to me that the frequent use of textual THEME can be explained by the influence of L1 on L2. It could be due to the fact that Arabic speakers tend to link their clauses continuously when engaged in a dialogue. This issue, the choice of THEMES in clauses

constructed by Arab EFL learners, requires more investigation. This lack of development raises an important issue of whether blog-writing without other support can lead to most sophisticated language use. My initial feeling is that the students in my study would have made more progress if they had had more scaffolding related to genre and register development. Therefore, it would be helpful to find out if more sophisticated writing would emerge from a longer of period of blog-writing or if some scaffolding was needed.

Another issue that needs exploring is a comparison of EFL student-writers' language in their assignments with their language use in their blogs: in other words, to look at texts in the same field but different in mode and tenor. This can provide a better insight into how the channel of information and the relation with the audience can affect student-writers' language. It can also be a way of exploring whether such changes can help students develop their language skills.

The writing my students produced was of a very encouraging quality. The question of whether blog-writing can be used as a general technique for scaffolding Arab EFL student-writers' writing skills is also an area worth exploring. As some writing-classes are mostly teacher-centred and still limited to pen and paper, specifically drawing on the context of this study, blogs may provide the students with a relaxed learning setting that enables them to practise not only what they learn in their writing classes but also to build up their vocabulary and language patterns as well as extend their knowledge of genres through reading other websites and getting feedback from their audience. Examining whether blog-writing can lead to a learner-centred writing class through which students can develop their creativity, motivation and originality could be a valuable study.

Another point worth looking at, along with the genre and register of the texts in blogs, is what blogs offer blog-writers and how blog-writers make use of it to produce their texts. Drawing on my experience of teaching Arab student-blog-writers, I noticed that most of the students used photos related to their texts to clarify or elaborate on what they wrote; in one case, the student-writer wrote just one sentence to establish the setting of her texts and then narrated her stories through photos. It seems that the non-linguistic features of blogs have a critical role in constructing the discourse, writers' identity and self-expression in blogs. This calls for a detailed multimodality analysis that this study was not concerned with.

9.7   Conclusion

This research was an attempt to examine the Arab EFL student-writers' language use in blogs. It showed that genre and register analyses provide a valuable lens for understanding texts born online in the blog environment. The register analysis helped to examine linguistic features in the blog-texts and their functions in the context of the situation in which they

were operating in. The register analysis showed that the field of the Blog 1 was giving information about happenings and action as well as identifying and describing participants. The tenor constructed in this blog was weak as the relation between the blog-writer and the audience was not highlighted. The mode of this blog was an amalgam of spoken and written modes of language. The same analysis indicated that the field of Blog 2 was intended to ascribe qualities and attributes to human and nonhuman entities as well as describing and identifying them. The tenor in Blog 2 was signalled weakly and its mode was a blend of spoken and written language. This is in line with Crystal's (2011, p.21) view of Internet language that "selectively and adaptively" shows characteristics of both speech and writing. It was also shown that the elements of the context of situation give a different picture of these two blogs when blog-texts are examined individually. Due to the variations among the blog-texts in terms of field, tenor and mode, neither of these blogs could be associated with a particular register. The comparisons of the linguistics elements of Blogs 1 and 2 showed that they are independent of one another and attributable to a different register.

This study was also useful for understanding how blog-writers' linguistic choices can shape the schematic structures of the stages, which scaffold and constitute the social purpose, genre or genres, of the blog-texts. This investigation demonstrated that Blogs 1 and 2 are an instance of the diary genre amplified with the blog-writers' experiences, thoughts and concerns. In addition, looking at the blog-texts individually showed that texts can have hybrid genres for different reasons such as the influence of situation, communicative goals, discourse community and audience as well as the blog-writers' prior knowledge of the discourse. Due to the wide and variable audience of blogs, it was suggested that the notion of discourse community in my blogs is rather fluid and can hardly be associated with a particular group.

The student-writers' choice of lexico-grammatical patterns indicated how their textual voice and self-expression were constructed throughout the texts; as suggested they sometimes took a strong position through self-referencing, using strong modal obligations and certainty, negation, active (mental) clauses as well as commanding; they sometimes removed their voice from the texts and stated things as a fact that did not give room for the readers' thoughts. They sometimes amalgamated their voice with their readers' to bring their thoughts to the texts and share their authorial stance with their readers. This was done through addressing the readers directly, showing their solidarity through using the first person plural pronoun (inclusive *we*) and using modals of less certainty and obligation as well as interrogative clauses.

Considering the tutors' responses in the interviews, it was concluded that using blogs as a digital tool was useful in familiarising learners with the sense of audience when writing. Writing and receiving feedback through comments engaged the student-writers in small talks and exposed them to various writing styles and a register that differed from their formal writing practices in their writing classes. It was also suggested that blogging boosted the learners' self-confidence in writing and helped them express their thoughts and feelings. This can be because of being anonymous in the virtual blogs environment that not only reduces the blog-writers' stress of being judged by others but also creates an equal status for both student-writers and their audience. Apparently, based on the interviews with the tutors, blogging had a positive impact on students' speaking fluency but did not affect their speaking accuracy. Blogging could also help students improve their basic writing skills in terms of using suitable vocabulary and basic grammatical patterns. This can be the result of reading their peers' blog-texts, writing comments and being connected with websites through their blogs.

Therefore, it seems that using the blog-space in classes can help teachers bridging the gap between formal and informal writing. Assigning writing tasks to be done through blogs can re-engage students with the academic content presented in the class, connect them to a broad range of online sites, and involve them in a community through an on-going discussion. This shows that blogs have the capacity to remove the constraints of time, place and content of learning which language practitioners can benefit from in EFL classes.

This study shed light on the fact that despite the public nature of blogs, they can turn out to be very individual. Also, it has demonstrated blogs as a suitable resource where EFL student-writers' particular choices of language use and their stylistic means of making and conveying meanings can be examined.

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Appendix A The consent form, ethical approval letter and interview questions

Participants' consent form

Title of Research Project: Writing and Blog: Omani college students' texts and experiences

Name of the Researcher: Azita Farhadi

- I have understood the information about this research project and I have been given the chance to ask my questions in Arabic or English.

- I understand that this study includes a series of interviews including talk around text interviews, which will be in written form. I have been also given the opportunity to answer the questions in Arabic or English.

- I have been informed that some samples of my homework, final exam papers and texts in my weblogs will be collected.

- I am aware that my participation in this study is voluntary and I can stop or withdraw at any stage of this research.

- I agree that the gathered data can be used for research purpose and will not be revealed.

- I understand that my identity would not be revealed and I would remain anonymous in this research project.

Lead researcher	Azita Farhadi Shamsabadi	
Participant	**Name**	**Date**
	……………..	**………………..**

Thank you for your time and cooperation

Ethical Approval Letter

Performance, Governance and Operations
Research & Innovation Service
Charles Thackrah Building
101 Clarendon Road
Leeds LS2 9LJ Tel: 0113 343 4873
Email: ResearchEthics@leeds.ac.uk

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Azita Farhadi Shamsabadi
School of Education
University of Leeds
Leeds, LS2 9JT

AREA Faculty Research Ethics Committee
University of Leeds

19 August 2015

Dear Azita

Title of study: **Writing and Blogs: Omani college students' texts and experiences**

Ethics reference: **AREA 14-195 retrospective evaluation**

The above research application has been retrospectively by the Chair of the ESSL, Environment and LUBS (AREA) Faculty Research Ethics Committee and the following documentation was considered:

Document	Version	Date
AREA 14-195 Azita Farhadi Ethical_Review_Form_July 2015.doc	1	23/07/15
AREA 14-195 Participants consent form.docx	1	23/07/15
AREA 14-195 researcher's response.txt	1	11/08/15
AREA 14-195 researcher's 2nd response.txt	1	19/08/15

This is a retrospective evaluation and as such the committee has not had the opportunity to amend the ethical dimension to the project should it have been necessary. Given this consideration, the Chair of the AREA Faculty Research Ethics Committee was satisfied that the necessary procedures had been put in place and are consistent with the University's guidelines on ethical conduct within research.

The Chair made the following comments about your application
- In your application you stated *"This study was carried out at a time when ethical approval was not required"*. Ethical review has been a requirement since 2007 at the University of Leeds.

It is anticipated that the researchers involved will seek to provide the opportunity for ethical review in a timely manner in future and certainly before the research has commenced.

The committee wishes you success in your PhD studies.

Yours sincerely

Jennifer Blaikie
Senior Research Ethics Administrator, Research & Innovation Service
On behalf of Dr Andrew Evans, Chair, AREA Faculty Research Ethics Committee
CC: Student's supervisor(s)

Student-writers' interview questions

First interview: Students-writers' language background and their experiences with the Internet

Name: …………

Date of Interview: September – October 2010

1. Can you please tell me a brief story about your life, how you got to this point?
2. Have you studied English before? If yes, how long?
3. Which skill are you comfortable with, reading/writing/listening/speaking? Why?
4. Why are you interested in learning English?
5. How do you think your life history is related to your attitude towards learning English?
6. Do you use the Internet?
7. Do you have a blog, Facebook page book or email?
8. What do you do with your Facebook page?

Second interview: Talk around text interviews

Name: ………………

Date of interview: February-March 2011

Referring to the participants' texts, the following linguistic and non-linguistic features are checked:

- 1st person pronoun and its derivations 'I'
- 1st person plural pronoun (inclusive) 'We'
- 2nd person pronoun 'You'
- Modality
- Active and passive voice
- Interrogative and imperative clauses
- Comments
- Pictures
- Emoticons

Third interview: Perception and attitude of the participants towards blogs and blog-writing

Name: ……………….

Date of interview: May 2011

1 What is your blog about? Explain

2 Do you put photos and films in your blog? Why?

3 Why have you chosen this colour for your blog?

4 Why have you written some words in bold?

5 Which one do you prefer, writing in a blog or on paper?

6 What do you like about your blog best?

7 Do you think the comments you received in your blog were helpful to improve your writing skill?

8 What do you usually write in your blog?

9 Have you received any bad comments? If yes, how did you feel about it? Was it helpful? How?

10 Have you written a comment for anybody? Why?

11 Do you think blog-writing can help you improve your skills in English?

12 Do you think blog-writing has improved your writing skills? How?

13 Which one do you prefer, writing in your blog or for your assignments? Why?

14 What do you think of blog-writing in general?

15 Will you continue your blog-writing?

Bubbles' interviews

First interview: Students-writers' language background and their experiences with the Internet

Name: Sumaya

Date of Interview: September – October 2010

1 **Can you please tell me a brief story about your life, how you got to this point?**

My name is Sumaya. I'm 18 years old. I'm a student at CBFS and I want to study accounting but I'm still doing my foundation. My hobbies are swimming and basketball. I'm a happy person and satisfied with my life.

2 **Have you studied English before? If yes, how long?**

Yes I did, but only in school from class 1 then I stopped till class 6 then I learned it again because I was in government school and they didn't use to teach English.

3 **Which skill are you comfortable with, reading/ writing/ listening/ speaking? Why?**

I lived them all but I choose writing. Because I can describe my feelings well.

4 **Why are you interested in learning English?**

Because the world is in English and if you don't know English you'll get lost.

5 **How do you think your life history is related to your attitude towards learning English?**

My family spoke to me English since I was a kid and that helped me a lot.

6 **Do you use the Internet?**

Everybody who is intelligent use Internet.

7 **Do you have a blog, Facebook page or email?**

Yes I have emails and Facebook but don't have blog.

8 **What do you do with your Facebook page?**

Chatting with friends and finding friends.

Second interview: Talk around text interviews

Name of the Participant: Sumaya

Date of interview: February-March 2011

1 **Do you usually use 'I' when talking or writing?**

Depends on the topic. I sometimes use 'I' in blog.

2 **Why have you used 'I' in text 5, 'Stop fighting'?**

Because I like to express my feelings so I use I.

3 **Why have you used 'we' and 'ourselves' in this sentence?**

> Text 5: If anyone saw a fight should stop it not sit and watch as if there's something funny to watch because if one of them past away <u>we</u>'ll feel bad about it and <u>we</u> wont forgive <u>our selves</u>.

Because I mean everybody, all the people. I used anyone because I wanted to attract people and because it's for everybody not one person".

4 **Why have you used modal 'should' and 'could' in these sentences?**

> Text 5: I think they <u>should put</u> him in jail because the other person could of died because of him!
>
> And everybody <u>should solve</u> their problems without a fight!
>
> If anyone saw a fight <u>should stop</u> it not sit and watch as if there's something funny to watch because if one of them past away we'll feel bad about it and we wont forgive our selves.

I used 'should' because I don't know who's going to read what I wrote; so as an advice I used 'should' not 'must' here

5 **Why have you used active sentences (and not passive ones) in your blog-texts?**

Because it is easier to describe my feeling and it's better for others to understand. Here I wrote active because I myself saw the huge fight.

6 **Why have you written Text 7, 'The best family could get!'?**

I was talking about myself and my family in the passage; I wrote to tell people how great my family is and how much I love my family.

7 **How do you feel about it ('The best family could get!')?**

I feel so good because this passage is the best passage I wrote.

8 **Why have you used the first person pronoun 'I' in this text?**

Because it is about me and my family.

9 **Have you received any comments? If yes, what was the reaction of people?**

Yes. People like what I wrote and gave good comments

10 Why have you used the first person pronoun 'I' in this text?

Text 7: Im raised in the best family […] I'm going to stop them […] then here I
come […]I think[…]I love […]I pray […]I'm not exaggerating […] I'm only saying
[…] I've been raised […]I wrote.

Text 8: I want […] I would love to […] I'm satisfied […] the way I live […] I'm
not perfect […]I believe […] I simply couldn't […] I'm sure […]

Because it is about me and my family. it's not likely for Arabs to use I a lot because
they find it rude.

11 Why have you used the second person pronoun, you, in this sentence?

Text 7: What I wrote is noting comparing to what you'll see.

To attract people or the readers

12 Why have you used a question in the middle of this text?

Text 7: Then here I come, and after me, my two young brothers.

Why do I think we are the best?

Because we are raised as Muslims and my parents taught us to respect other
religions and different cultures.Because I want to attract people and make my
writing interesting.

13 Why have you written in bold and added visuals to this text?

Text 7: The Best Family I could Get!

**Im raised in the best house anyone could ever have. Everybody would say that
they have the best family but I'm going to stop them and tell them to come and
have a look at my family.[……]**

what you'll see.

I put pictures to attract the readers.

Third interview: perception and attitude of the participants towards blogs and blog-writing

Name of the Participant : Sumaya

Date of interview: May 2011

1   **What is your blog about? Explain**

This is my blog and about me; because it is easy to talk about myself because I know everything about myself and I guess talking about people might cayse me some problems in writing.

2   **Do you put photos and films in your blog? Why?**

I don't put photos and videos in my blog because I don't have a lot of

photos and I don't like putting my photos anywhere. But never mind I will put

some photos today=)

3   **Why have you chosen this name, colour and template for your blog?**

Because I love bubbles. I feel like it makes people happy and it has a lot of

colours. And my background is so colourful and it makes me feel like I want

to write more and more. and I like to write in different colours because colours

attract people to read it.

4   **Why have you written some words in bold?**

I write in bold to make what I'm writing attractive and beautiful.

5   **Which one do you prefer, writing in a blog or on paper?**

Blog. Because I like writing and blog is relax to write and it's more

comfortable than the paper.

6   **What do you like about your blog best?**

Best comment I got.

7   **Do you think the comments you received in your blog were helpful to improve your writing skill?**

Not sure.

8   **What do you usually write in your blog?**

I write what's in my mind, the only thing I think is about my spelling because it is embarrassing if people read what I write and see that I have spelling mistakes.

9   **Have you written a comment for anybody? Why?**

Yes I wrote some comments but not a lot. I love writing comments but I'm scared to hurt others' feeling.

10 **Have you received any bad comments? If yes, how did you feel about it? Was it helpful? How?**

No. All my comments are OK with me.

11 Do you think blog-writing can help you improve your skills in English?

Yes because in blog I have 10000's of teachers.

12 Do you think blog-writing has improved your writing skills? How?

Yes it did. Because when I write in the blog I make sure I wrote perfectly and I can say about my feeling better. It improves my writing skills and I learned more vocab.

13 Which one do you prefer, writing in your blog or for your assignments? Why?

In blog. I like blog in my assignments I can't express my feelings because it must be formal. I think blog is more comfortable to write in paper. it helps the students to improve their writing I think blog is better in learning because the whole world can correct my grammar but in the paper only certain people can and it might get lost. I think blog is amazing for learning writing and I wish if all teachers use this method in teaching.

14 What do you think of blog-writing in general?

I think the blog is better in learning because can correct my grammar but in the paper only certain people can it might get lost. I think blog is amazing for learning writing and I wish if all teachers use this method in teaching.

15 What was the most interesting post in your blog? Why?

The best family I could get. Because it is about my family and me.

16 Will you continue your blog-writing?

I will write in my blog; I love writing and I love my blog

Kika's interviews

First interview: Students-writers' language background and their experiences with the Internet

Name: Kika

Date of Interview: September – October 2010

1   Can you please tell me a brief story about your life, how you got to this point?

My name is Dakariyat. I'm 18 years old. I live in Muscat and I've graduated from high school last year. I am now CBFS, I want to specialize in business, actually, Human Resources. I love shopping and buying new things. My favorite brands are Gucci, Dior and Dolce & Gabana. I am a movie freak. I like watching movies whenever I am free.

2   Have you studied English before? If yes, how long?

Yes, 14 years.

3   Which skills are you comfortable with, reading/ writing/ listening/ speaking? Why?

Writing. Because I think that it's a way of improving my way in learning new words and spelling in English. In addition, writing also helps to improve speaking.

4   Why are you interested in learning English?

Because it helps me to improve my language and to learn so many now words which can help us in our future.

5   How do you think your life history is related to your attitude towards learning English?

I've been learning English for a long time now, my parents talk to us in English most of the time and going to a private school and other institutions like British Council helped me a lot.

6   Do you use the Internet?

Yes, I do.

7   Do you have a blog, Facebook page or email?

I have no blog but I have a Hotmail and Facebook.

8   What do you do in your Facebook page?

Chat with my friends, put photos and upload music and films

Second interview: Talk around text interviews

Name: Kika

Date of interview: February-March 2011

1   **Why have you written this text, 'Sponge Bob'?**

Because I thought of changing the topic this time and make it more interesting for people to read about it and because its my favourite cartoon character and I liked publishing stuff I like so people can know different sides of my personality.

2   **Why have you chosen this picture for the text about 'Sponge Bob'?**

It's one of the cutest pictures of it and I thought it would suit the way I wrote the text.

3   **What was people's reaction towards what you wrote about Sponge Bob?**

People commented about it and most of them said that sponge Bob is a funny cartoon character and it's fun.

4   **Why have you written this text, 'She went ☹'?**

Because she was one of the closest friend I have and I was a really surprising news when I found out that she had to leave the college.

5   **What do you think of what you wrote in this text, 'She went'?**

Sad obviously; because I'll have to deal with new people and get used to it. I think it's hard to cope, depends on how people would think about me.

6   **Why there is no picture in this text?**

Because I didn't get a perfect picture that can suit this text. It's just about how I feel so I think a picture is not necessary.

7   **How did people advise you?**

They told me to be happy for her if this is what she wants for her future and I shouldn't be sad about it, I just have to stay in touch.

8   **Why have you written the topic of this text in question form, 'If I could be invisible for a day, then??!!'?**

I though it's different and attractive so people can read this text.

9   **Why have you put this picture for this text, 'If I could be invisible for a day, then??!!'?**

IT WAS TAKEN BEFORE I HAD MY HAIRCUT

It shows what 'invisible' means and it's more interesting to read about the topic. I thought it's different and attractive so people can read this text.

10 Do you use 'I' when speaking or writing?

Yes for me it's OK; I think it won't be a big problem if we actually use it when we talk. It 's a way of explaining or writing a topic about myself. In homework and exam papers, if the topic is about my decisions I would probably use 'I' but ifs about something general then it is not supposed to be used.

11 Why have you written your sentences in active and not in passive form?

Because it is more comfortable for me to use. Because I think it's an easier way to describe something or writer a topic

12 Why have you written about your daily routine activities in your blog?

I wrote about my daily routine because I thought maybe I have to change this routine so I share it to get people's opinion

Third interview: Perception and attitude of the participants towards blogs and blog-writing

Name: Kika

Date of interview: May 2011

1   What is your blog about? Explain

Hmm…me or I think what I am interested.

2   Do you put photos and films in your blog? Why?

To make my blog-writings or articles more interesting but I don't put pictures in every writing, it just depends on what the subject is about.

3   Why have you chosen this name, colour and template for your blog?

I didn't actually think of any specific name, it just came to my mind and immediately wrote it. I chose this background because I thought it was bright and nice, kind of girly I guess and I think people will read my blogs more because of the bright colours. I don't change my text colours because most of the time I forget but I guess I did one writing with a coloured text and I liked it.

4   Why have you written some words in bold?

I like keeping it bold italic but not always. Sometimes I write it in a normal way just the same as text which is already there.it actually depends on my ood =P

5   Which one do you prefer, writing in a blog or on paper?

It is a relaxing area to write in any time I feel like it. I just write about anything that pops into my head and publish it. Plus I like receiving comments from others and write to them too.

6   What do you like about your blog best?

My posts.

7   Do you think the comments you received in your blog were helpful to improve your writing skill?

Yes, in a way but I'm not sure how :S maybe it makes me more confident and comfortable to share what I write and makes the people I don't know, read my topics and write comment.

8 What do you usually write in your blog?

Depends, If I have anything interesting to write or if I have a problem and I need help, I would directly open my blog and post whatever I want and publish it to see what advise people can give.

9 What was the most interesting post in your blog? Why?

Sponge Bob (Square pants). Because I thought it would attract more people to read this topic, and adding a picture was more interesting. This post is describing a different side of my personality and I wanted to publish it so I can see what people comment about it.

10 Have you received any bad comments? If yes, how did you feel about it? Was it helpful? How?

No. all the comments I received till now are good so far.

11 Have you written a comment for anybody? Why?

Yes, I like receiving comments from others and write to them.

I've written some comments to people because I like their writing or the topics generally. And to show them they can write more and get so many people to enter their blogs and just read, read, read.

12 Do you think blog-writing can help you improve your skills in English?

Yes, I think blog is a way to improve students writing skills because they can write about any topic they would like about it and give more ideas to improve the way that student writes. And it also makes a person comfortable to just sit and start thinking about anything that pops into his/her mind (the way they feel maybe), they can just write it down on blog and publish it, it helps a lot.

13 Do you think blog-writing has improved your writing skills? How?

Yes of course. It actually gave me different ideas and change the way I write and use new words to express how I feel when I write.

14 Which one do you prefer, writing in your blog or for your assignments? Why?

Blog. In writing assignments it is important to keep it formal and use the words that are useful for formal letter. Blogs helps me express my feelings more, because I can write whatever I want without making it formal.

15 What do you think of blog-writing in general?

I love writing on blog because it makes me write in a better way, I can check my spellings after writing so it makes it easier to learn from my spelling mistake and helps me to improve in a good way.

16 Will you continue your blog-writing?

Yes of course.

The codes of the themes brought up in the interviews

- INW2I: Interview 2, 1st person pronoun and its derivations *I*
- INW2W: Interview 2, 1st person plural pronoun (inclusive) *we*
- INW2Y: Interview 2, 2nd person pronoun *you*
- INW2M: Interview 2, Modality
- INW2AV/PV: Interview 2, Active and passive voice
- INW2I/I: Interview 2, Interrogative or imperative clauses
- INW3p : Interview 3, Purpose of the blog
- INW3au/co: Interview 3, Audience and comments
- INW3v: Interview 3, Visuals
- INW3e: Interview 3, Emoticons
- INW3v: Interview 3, Video/music-bars
- INW3s: Interview 3, Slideshows
- INW3temp: Interview 3, Template
- INW3h/b: interview 3, Highlighted and bold words
- INW3c/f: Interview 3, Colour and font of the texts
- INW3t: Interview 3, Title of the blog

Appendix B Interview questions with the tutors and the writing tutor

Tutors' interview questions

The purpose of this interview is to find out about the tutors' the perception of using technology, web tools and online activities in English language classes in the foundation course at the college. Your answers will be kept confidential and the gathered data will be used for the purpose of research only. Being aware of your tight schedule, I would highly appreciate your kind help.

Designation: ……………

Date: ……………………..

Grammar and Vocabulary ☐   **Writing and listening** ☐   **Speaking** ☐

Reading   ☐   **EAP**   ☐   **IELTS** ☐

1 What do you think are the aims of the writing course at CBFS?
2 What are the students encouraged to do in writing classes? Why?
3 How far do you think the current writing course is successful in achieving those aims?
4 Have you received any training on using computer-based exercises and educational websites in teaching?
5 How do you rate the level of your students' computer literacy?
6 Do you think your usage of online exercises is affected by your perception of your students' level of computer literacy?
7 Do you think computer-assisted learning motivates students more than traditional methods?
8 Do you think your students are motivated enough to use computer assisted learning, online tools and social media such as face-book, Web 2.0 and weblog, on their own?
9 Do you trust computer-assisted learning and web tools as a means of education? Why/ why not?
10 Do you trust the standard of the online exercises found on websites?
11 Have you ever used any websites or online tools in the class?
12 Can you name some of them please?
13 How long have you been using them?
14 What do you look for when choosing a web resource to use in the classroom?

15 Do you think students find online websites and activities useful in regard to preparing for their paper-based exams?

16 Do you think such online exercises improve their final test results?

17 Do you know about all the IT-related resources available to you at your institution?

18 Do you think training lecturers can increase the chance of them using online activities and websites in the classroom?

19 Is using technology and the Internet emphasized in the curriculum? Why/why not?

20 Does your teaching load permit you some spare time to do computer-based and online exercises in the class?

21 Do you receive enough technical support when necessary?

22 Are the available PC labs sufficient to practice online and computer based activities?

23 Do you feel, given the curriculum and load, that web-based learning is a challenging counter-productive or a distraction?

24 Do you have sufficient access to the Internet in your class?

25 How about your students?

26 Do you think the Internet is fast enough to use web tools and do online activities in the class?

27 Do you think safety issues and cultural barriers can be some of the factors which prevent lecturers from using online activities and websites?

28 Do you think lack of supervision of students' online activities is a reason why lecturers hesitate to use online exercises and websites?

29 Do you think online exercises and activities on the websites are relevant to the final exam?

30 Please share your views on using the Internet and web tools in teaching writing skills?

The codes of the themes brought up in the interviews

- INW4AWC: Interview4 Aims of writing classes
- INW4WT: Interview4 Writing tasks presented in the class
- INW4SA: Interview4 Student-writers' achievement
- INW4CSK: Interview4 Computer skills
- INW4CAL: Interview4 Computer assisted learning
- INW4OEA: Interview4 Online environments and activities
- INW4AVR: Interview4 Reasons for avoiding using technology in classes
- INW4IW: Interview4 The Internet and web tools in teaching writing skills

The interview with Tutor 1

Tutors' perception of writing classes

Aims of writing classes (INW4AWC)

Interviewer: What do you think are the aims of the writing course at CBFS?

Interviewee: To be honest, its exam oriented.

Writing tasks presented in the class (INW4WT)

Interviewer: What are the students encouraged to do in writing classes? Why?

Interviewee: They are usually asked to write a type of essay, following just a sample of guided pattern that are tested in examination.

Student-writers' achievement (INW4SA)

Interviewer: How far do you think the current writing course is successful in achieving those aims?

Interviewee: It might support in getting scores but helping students to become confident and effective writers is hypothetical.

Tutors and students' computer literacy

Computer skills (INW4CSK)

Interviewer: Have you received any training on using computer-based exercises and educational websites in teaching?

Interviewee: I haven't gone for any formal training but I've attended a couple of workshops on their significance and usage. In addition, my interest in computer based teaching encourages me to venture more.

Interviewer: How do you rate the level of your students' computer literacy?

Interviewee: It's good. Although they find doing things much easier in Arabic as compared to English.

Interviewer: Do you think your usage of online exercises is affected by your perception of your students' level of computer literacy?

Interviewee: Well, their computer literacy is OK. However, their proficiency in English does hamper their understanding.

Tutors' perception of using technology in classes

Tutors' perception of CALL and web tools (INW4TSP)

Interviewer: Do you think computer-assisted learning motivates students more than traditional methods?

Interviewee: Of course, CALL brings students from passive to active state.

Interviewer: Do you think your students are motivated enough to use computer assisted learning and online educational tools on their own?

Interviewee: Students are definitely very enthusiastic when it comes to working on computers. But, they need guidance to get the appropriate learning sites.

Interviewer: Do you trust computer-assisted learning and web tools as a means of education? Why/ why not?

Interviewee: Personally I'm pro CALL. Computer has become part and parcel of this generation. So, why shouldn't it be used for imparting education?

Interviewer: Do you trust the standard of the online exercises found on websites?

Interviewee: Most of them are good. As teachers we have to choose the ones which match our student's level. As far as errors are concerned, it can appear or say does appear on the in-house material too.

Online environments and activities (INW4OEA)

Interviewer: Have you ever used any websites or online tools in the class?
Interviewee: Very often

Interviewer: Can you name some of them please?
Interviewee: esl.about.com; usingenglish.com   britishcouncil.org; englisch-hilfen.de ; world-english.org; englishmedialab.com; ieltsexam.org etc.

Interviewer: How long have you been using them?

Interviewee: Four to five years

Interviewer: What do you look for when choosing a web resource to use in the classroom?

Interviewee: I mainly look for the exercises that are interesting (games, quizzes), promotes logical thinking, has a variety and which suits the students' level.

Interviewer: Do you think students find online websites and activities useful in regard to preparing for their paper-based exams?
Interviewee: It depends on the individual. There are a few students who are eager to go a few steps further to learn and they seek guidance to it whereas others ask for replica worksheets to practice.

Interviewer: Do you think such online exercises improve their final test results?

Interviewee: They might be able to achieve good marks but I have my doubts in terms of enhancement of language level.

Reasons of avoidance using technology in classes (INW4AVR)

Interviewer: Do you know about all the IT-related resources available to you at your institution?
Interviewee: Yes, almost.

Interviewer: Do you think training lecturers can increase the chance of them using online activities and websites in the classroom?
Interviewee: I don't endorse this, as some of the lecturers are well equipped with it but their reluctance in implementing CALL are other factors. It could be their personal perceptions of learning or rigid syllabus.

Interviewer: Is using technology and the Internet emphasized in the curriculum? Why/why not?
Interviewee: No, it is not at all emphasized. In fact, the lecturer has to spare this time on his/her own risk because of the time allocated to compete the syllabus, specially grammar.

Interviewer: Does your teaching load permit you some spare time to do computer-based and online exercises in the class?
Interviewee: If it's grammar class then it's very difficult. Except a few quizzes I can't afford to do any online exercise in the class but in reading and writing classes I may be able to manage.

Interviewer: Do you receive enough technical support when necessary?

Interviewee: Well, I often have to run around looking for support which is very irritating.

Interviewer: Are the available PC labs sufficient to practice online and computer based activities?
Interviewee: Unfortunately there aren't many labs available all the time. Hence, I have to liaise with IT lectures and plan my lesson accordingly.

Interviewer: Do you feel, given the curriculum and load, that web-based learning is a challenging counter-productive or a distraction?
Interviewee: Learning can never be distractive or a waste irrespective of the source. However, it is definitely a risk when there is a rigid syllabus to complete with no contingency plan.

Interviewer: Do you have sufficient access to the Internet in your class?

Interviewee: The access is fine.

Interviewer: How about your students?

Interviewee: Students can also access Internet from their classrooms. However, as all the students don't have laptops so it's not possible to do any kind of individual quiz.

Interviewer: Do you think the Internet is fast enough to use web tools and do online activities in the class?

Interviewee: Unfortunately the speed is not satisfactory.

Interviewer: Do you think safety issues and cultural barriers can be some of the factors which prevent lecturers from using online activities and websites?

Interviewee: Not, really. As teachers are not the first and the only person to introduce Internet to students. Students are more exposed to thing on Internet through other sources. Yet, a little discretion on the lectures part would save them from embarrassment.

Interviewer: Do you think lack of supervision of students' online activities is a reason why lecturers hesitate to use online exercises and websites?

Interviewee: Students will remain students specially young adults. If they want to explore something, nothing can stop them. However, little vigilance is needed. So this fear doesn't hamper my teaching and usage of online exercises and websites. Moreover, some of the most objectionable sites are blocked by the service providers here.

Interviewer: Do you think online exercises and activities on the websites are relevant to the final exam?

Interviewee: I'm afraid not. Perhaps this is one of the reasons that makes the lectures find it waste of time as it doesn't help students practice exam pattern.

The Internet and web tools (INW4IW)

Interviewer: Please share your views on using the Internet and web tools in teaching writing skills?

Interviewee: Paper based writing or just learning to write an academic essay doesn't fulfill the aim of teaching writing skill. In the computer era, writing e-mails on computer or socializing websites is also a mode of expression. Hence, I believe that this shouldn't be neglected. I have had very exhilarating and productive experiences in teaching writing using Internet as a source. I promote them to write mails to me regarding any doubts or queries or often I ask my students to do some research and gather some information on a certain topic

before I guide them to write an essay on it. This helps them to learn new vocabulary, facts and expressions to talk, discuss and then write on the topic. But of course I have to ensure that they aren't deviated from their exam preparation

The interview with Tutor 2

Tutors' perception of writing classes

Aims of writing classes (INW4AWC)

Interviewer: What do you think are the aims of the writing course at CBFS?
Interviewee: To prepare students for their final exam.

Writing tasks presented in the class (INW4WT)

Interviewer: What are the students encouraged to do in writing classes? Why?
Interviewee: To do the prepared exercises in the in-house materials to be ready for the tests. Each unit is basically focused on teaching grammatical patterns and contains a sample of an essay. They are all based on what will appear in the final exam.

Student-writers' achievement (INW4SA)

Interviewer: How far do you think the current writing course is successful in achieving those aims?
Interviewee: The curriculum persuades students to cram for their exams. In fact it helps students increase their test scores but does not help them be successful writers.

Tutors and students' computer literacy

Computer skills (INW4CSK)

Interviewer: Have you received any training on using computer-based exercises and educational websites in teaching?
Interviewee: Not in this college, yet I have been working with computer for 10 years.

Interviewer: How do you rate the level of your students' computer literacy?

Interviewee: Generally they know how to use a computer except for a few who have no computers at home.

Interviewer: Do you think your usage of online exercises is affected by your perception of your students' level of computer literacy?
Interviewee: No, other issues such as shortage of time and their limited language proficiency are influential factors when doing online exercises.

Tutors' perception of using technology in classes

Tutors' perception of CALL and web tools (INW4TSP)

Interviewer: Do you think computer-assisted learning motivates students more than traditional methods?

Interviewee: Definitely. It is more interactive than the traditional face-to-face classes. I am sure it will be an advantage for all students specially shy and passive one.

Interviewer: Do you think your students are motivated enough to use computer assisted learning and online educational tools on their own?

Interviewee: They love social media specially their face-book. However, I can't imagine using face-book for teaching purposes. It can be very much distractive and I am not sure about Web 2.0 or weblog either unless they limit the students to do their homework and relevant activities to their class agenda.

Interviewer: Do you trust computer-assisted learning and web tools as a means of education? Why/ why not?

Interviewee: Some of the educational websites provide reliable activities and can be used along with the textbooks.

Interviewer: Do you trust the standard of the online exercises found on websites?

Interviewee: Not all of them as there might be spelling or grammatical errors. I always use the reliable sites such as Britishcouncil.org

Online environments and activities (INW4OEA)

Interviewer: Have you ever used any websites or online tools in the class?

Interviewee: Yes, I ask my students to do research about the topic we are going to talk about in the class and sometimes use online dictionaries and YouTube to teach phonetics.

Interviewer: Can you name some of them please?

Interviewee: http://onestopenglish.com; http://eslvideo.com; http://usingenglish.com; http://iteslj.org/questions/, etc.

Interviewer: How long have you been using them?

Interviewee: Four years

Interviewer: What do you look for when choosing a web resource to use in the classroom?

Interviewee: I choose an activity such as an interesting short movie, a picture or a text with the relevant vocabularies, grammatical points and facts about the topic of the speaking

lessons. Online activities make the class fun and help the students interact with one another and me more.

Interviewer: Do you think students find online websites and activities useful in regard to preparing for their paper-based exams?

Interviewee: Most of them find them useful but there are always a few who disagree in the class and it is normal.

Interviewer: Do you think such online exercises improve their final test results?

Interviewee: Suitable online activities can elevate test scores but the threat of roat learning in grammar and writing classes shouldn't be ignored.

Reasons of avoidance using technology in classes (INW4AVR)

Interviewer: Do you know about all the IT-related resources available to you at your institution?

Interviewee: No, not really.

Interviewer: Do you think training lecturers can increase the chance of them using online activities and websites in the classroom?

Interviewee: Can be a way to make them familiarize with suitable websites but practically there is not enough time to do extra activities as we all have limited time to finish the syllabus.

Interviewer: Is using technology and the Internet emphasized in the curriculum? Why/why not?

Interviewee: No, there is nothing about it but some teachers make use of the websites and online activities if they have time.

Interviewer: Does your teaching load permit you some spare time to do computer-based and online exercises in the class?

Interviewee: Not in grammar and reading classes but I can manage to save some time for teaching phonetics online or doing short activities in speaking classes.

Interviewer: Do you receive enough technical support when necessary?

Interviewee: I do but it takes time. Obviously, there is a shortage of IT staff.

Interviewer: Are the available PC labs sufficient to practice online and computer based activities?

Interviewee: No, they are engaged with Math and IT lecturers.

Interviewer: Do you feel, given the curriculum and load, that web-based learning is a challenging counter-productive or a distraction?

Interviewee: If everything is planned and clarified beforehand, I am sure it is productive.

Interviewer: Do you have sufficient access to the Internet in your class?

Interviewee: The speed is awfully low sometimes and some of the computers don't work in the computer clusters either.

Interviewer: How about your students?

Interviewee: If they have their laptops, they can but usually they don't.

Interviewer: Do you think the Internet is fast enough to use web tools and do online activities in the class?

Interviewee: Not always.

Interviewer: Do you think safety issues and cultural barriers can be some of the factors which prevent lecturers from using online activities and websites?

Interviewee: Apart from shortage of time, online safety and ethical issues can be one of the reasons that prevent teachers from using online activities in the class. This country has blocked some of the unethical websites but sometimes issues such as being in contact with the opposite sex are still culturally sensitive. Hence, teachers should be vigilant when students do online activities or explore a website.

Interviewer: Do you think lack of supervision of students' online activities is a reason why lecturers hesitate to use online exercises and websites?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you think online exercises and activities on the websites are relevant to the final exam?

Interviewee: Not completely. I have to choose among them beforehand not to waste the class time.

The Internet and web tools (INW4IW)

Interviewer: Please share your views on using the Internet and web tools in teaching writing skills?

Interviewee: Using the Internet definitely motivates students to be attentive in the class, to participate in the activities and to get engaged with their peers. I've never used webtools myself but students have started writing in weblog 8 months ago, I suppose. I am not teaching writing and I am unaware of the benefits of weblog in teaching writing skills however I observe that students involved in weblog writing are better and more fluent

speakers to compare with others; specially in terms of mind mapping and using better vocabulary when discussing the topic. What is obvious is their speaking fluency (not their accuracy) is improving fast.

The interview with Tutor 3

1. Tutors' perception of writing classes

Aims of writing classes (INW4AWC)

Interviewer: What do you think are the aims of the writing course at CBFS?
Interviewee: The course is aimed at IELTS preparation as well as business communication

Writing tasks presented in the class (INW4WT)

Interviewer: What are the students encouraged to do in writing classes? Why?
Interviewee: teamwork, integrated skills, project based reports , No creative writing sessions; No competitions and reward for best

Student-writers' achievement (INW4SA)

Interviewer: How far do you think the current writing course is successful in achieving those aims?
Interviewee: there is a need to overhaul the writing course by referencing to standard course books; it is advisable that the curriculum should be based on an acceptable course among at IELTS standard

Tutors and students' computer literacy

Computer skills (INW4CSK)

Interviewer: Have you received any training on using computer-based exercises and educational websites in teaching?
Interviewee: Although I don't have any special training I have studying and attending conferences on CALL programs.

Interviewer: How do you rate the level of your students' computer literacy?

Interviewee: To some extent I found students of lower level has a problem with English version of programs.

Interviewer: Do you think your usage of online exercises is affected by your perception of your students' level of computer literacy?

Interviewee: to some extent

Tutors' perception of using technology in classes

Tutors' perception of CALL and web tools (INW4TSP)

Interviewer: Do you think computer-assisted learning motivates students more than traditional methods?

Interviewee: certainly I have always found CALL and e-learning activities more stimulating than conventional chalk and talk sessions. Only very few students found to have checked out IELTS online practice test even after I have taken them to the PC lab and showed the relevant links.

Interviewer: Do you think your students are motivated enough to use computer assisted learning, online educational websites on their own?

Interviewee: Majority of them are not interested in educational websites (but are kin on social networking sites).

Interviewer: Do you trust computer-assisted learning and web tools as a means of education? Why/ why not?

Interviewee: Definitely I can rely on a scientifically CALL program provided there is strong administrative and academic support

Interviewer: Do you trust the standard of the online exercises found on websites?

Interviewee: not all the sites maintain standard; need to check before administrating them to the students

Online environments and activities (INW4OEA)

Interviewer: Have you ever used any websites or online tools in the class?

Interviewee: Some websites

Interviewer: Can you name some of them please?

Interviewee: IELTS: www.ielts-exam.net; www.examenglish.com; www.eslcafé.com (Dave'seslcafe), Britishcouncil-learnenglish

Interviewer: How long have you been using them?

Interviewee: for the last 7 years

Interviewer: What do you look for when choosing a web resource to use in the classroom?

Interviewee: Level of language/ standard and authenticity of websites (no errors) easy to navigate (specially by students); Instant feedback/ answer.

Interviewer: Do you think students find online websites and activities useful in regard to preparing for their paper-based exams?

Interviewee: online exercises help them in learning the concepts of language (grammar and vocab) and its usage.

Interviewer: Do you think such online exercises improve their final test results?

Interviewee: I am not sure if this improves the results I think it should theoretically.

Reasons of avoidance using technology in classes (INW4AVR)

Interviewer: Do you know about all the IT-related resources available to you at your institution?

Interviewee: through my personal knowledge

Interviewer: Do you think training lecturers can increase the chance of them using online activities and websites in the classroom?

Interviewee: I certainly believe that training lecturers improves their awareness of the importance of computers

Interviewer: Is using technology and the Internet emphasized in the curriculum? Why/why not?

Interviewee: It is not emphasized in the curriculum. There is strong trust on traditional approaches to language learning

Interviewer: Does your teaching load permit you some spare time to do computer-based and online exercises in the class?

Interviewee: certainly not the conventional method of teaching restricts exploring modern methods

Interviewer: Do you receive enough technical support when necessary?

Interviewee: Technical support is way too limited so I usually depend on my personal skills

Interviewer: Are the available PC labs sufficient to practice online and computer based activities?

Interviewee: Non-working PCs in labs have been a permanent problem technical knowledge is too little

Interviewer: Do you feel, given the curriculum and load, that web-based learning is a challenging counter-productive or a distraction?

Interviewee: Unless there is institutional policy and focus on curriculum, web based learning is seen as a deviation from the tried and tested method, although it is not a distraction with the right attitude.

Interviewer: Do you have sufficient access to the Internet in your class?
Interviewee: In general classrooms Internet access is available with your laptop

Interviewer: How about your students?
Interviewee: Students do not have the Internet access in classrooms

Interviewer: Do you think the Internet is fast enough to use web tools and do online activities in the class?
Interviewee: Sometimes yes.

Interviewer: Do you think safety issues and cultural barriers can be some of the factors which prevent lecturers from using online activities and websites?
Interviewee: I don't think so

Interviewer: Do you think lack of supervision of students' online activities is a reason why lecturers hesitate to use online exercises and websites?

Interviewee: Yes to a great extent. I found using online exercises can be taxing for the lecturers as much of the time is wasted on controlling students' access to other sites (besides technical factors).

Interviewer: Do you think online exercises and activities on the websites are relevant to the final exam?
Interviewee: Yes if you can follow a pattern of full exercises using a standard online courseware

The Internet and web tools (INW4IW)

Interviewer: Please share your views on using the Internet and web tools in teaching writing skills?
Interviewee: it can help shy and inhibited students to learn better in the privacy of their rooms at their own pace. Sometimes in writing classes many students can't type in English well. This can be misinterpreted as low speed in writing; many students however I found increasingly creative and innovative in their ideas; they had a feeling that testing mode doesn't match with online practices; unless there is a mature crowd the Internet can be viewed as a distraction; Some students used informal expressions /usages /abbreviations in formal writing

The interview with Tutor 4

Tutors' perception of writing classes

Aims of writing classes (INW4AWC)

Interviewer: What do you think are the aims of the writing course at CBFS?

Interviewee: to get students to write for general purposes (letters + emails) and academic writing

Writing tasks presented in the class (INW4WT)

Interviewer: What are the students encouraged to do in writing classes? Why?

Interviewee: I am not sure. In my classes, I encouraged paragraph development in essays. There should be more sentence structure teaching as thus is a big problem.

Student-writers' achievement (INW4SA)

Interviewer: How far do you think the current writing course is successful in achieving those aims?

Interviewee: too little weighting is given to writing exam. This undervalues writing. There isn't enough teaching of writing also as a result of the poor weighting and yet 100% of the their assessment in specializations is done through written work.

Tutors and students' computer literacy

Computer skills (INW4CSK)

Interviewer: Have you received any training on using computer-based exercises and educational websites in teaching?

Interviewee: No, I haven't.

Interviewer: How do you rate the level of your students' computer literacy?

Interviewee: they seem to be reasonably computer literate- more so than me

Interviewer: Do you think your usage of online exercises is affected by your perception of your students' level of computer literacy?

Interviewee: I haven't used online exercises

Tutors' perception of using technology in classes

Tutors' perception of CALL and web tools (INW4TSP)

Interviewer: Do you think computer-assisted learning motivates students more than traditional methods?

Interviewee: I think a combination of the 2 is good. Online exercises can be visually interesting + tap into visual learners

Interviewer: Do you think your students are motivated enough to use computer assisted learning, online educational websites on their own?

Interviewee: some students are reasonably self-motivated.

Interviewer: Do you trust computer-assisted learning and web tools as a means of education? Why/ why not?

Interviewee: yes-it's another tool for a teacher.

Interviewer: Do you trust the standard of the online exercises found on websites?

Interviewee: I would rather make my own as the one's I've seen are sometimes poor quality or a bit easy. The games are fun.

Online environments and activities (INW4OEA)

Interviewer: Have you ever used any websites or online tools in the class?

Interviewee: No

Interviewer: Can you name some of them please?

Interviewee: N/A

Interviewer: How long have you been using them?

Interviewee: N/A

Interviewer: What do you look for when choosing a web resource to use in the classroom?

Interviewee: N/A

Interviewer: Do you think students find online websites and activities useful in regard to preparing for their paper-based exams?

Interviewee: Not sure.

Interviewer: Do you think such online exercises improve their final test results?

Interviewee: I'm sure they are useful. They are another form of teaching material.

Reasons of avoidance using technology in classes (INW4AVR)

Interviewer: Do you know about all the IT-related resources available to you at your institution?

Interviewee: No

Interviewer: Do you think training lecturers can increase the chance of them using online activities and websites in the classroom?

Interviewee: Yes

Interviewer: Is using technology and the Internet emphasized in the curriculum? Why/why not?

Interviewee: No

Interviewer: Does your teaching load permit you some spare time to do computer-based and online exercises in the class?

Interviewee: In some classes but not in grammar/core classes where the curriculum is too packed

Interviewer: Do you receive enough technical support when necessary?

Interviewee: It's patchy. When I use power point or Internet in classroom, I get help from colleagues when they are available.

Interviewer: Are the available PC labs sufficient to practice online and computer based activities?

Interviewee: Yes but there're not enough computers to put a whole class in a lab.

Interviewer: Do you feel, given the curriculum and load, that web-based learning is a challenging counter-productive or a distraction?

Interviewee: N/A

Interviewer: Do you have sufficient access to the Internet in your class?

Interviewee: No

Interviewer: How about your students?

Interviewee: No. Facilities are poor. The existing labs are also used nearly 100% of the time for IT classes.

Interviewer: Do you think the Internet is fast enough to use web tools and do online activities in the class?

Interviewee: No

Interviewer: Do you think safety issues and cultural barriers can be some of the factors which prevent lecturers from using online activities and websites?

Interviewee: No certainly not from my point

Interviewer: Do you think lack of supervision of students' online activities is a reason why lecturers hesitate to use online exercises and websites?

Interviewee: Maybe. But I would feel good as any thing that empowers students as independent learners.

Interviewer: Do you think online exercises and activities on the websites are relevant to the final exam?

Interviewee: they could be as they are multiple layers of practice. The interactive exercises are particularly good.

The Internet and web tools (INW4IW)

Interviewer: Please share your views on using the Internet and web tools in teaching writing skills?

Interviewee: I've never done it but I can imagine it being exciting. It could be used for editing writing, paragraph development etc. and etc. Also interactive exercises would be good.

The interview with Tutor 5

Tutors' perception of writing classes

Aims of writing classes (INW4AWC)

Interviewer: What do you think are the aims of the writing course at CBFS?

Interviewee: To enable basic business/ academic writing.

Writing tasks presented in the class (INW4WT)

Interviewer: What are the students encouraged to do in writing classes? Why?

Interviewee: to follow templates so they can pass.

Student-writers' achievement (INW4SA)

Interviewer: How far do you think the current writing course is successful in achieving those aims?

Interviewee: As long as it only aims for basic abilities and doesn't emphasize understanding/ non-formal writing.

Tutors and students' computer literacy

Computer skills (INW4CSK)

Interviewer: Have you received any training on using computer-based exercises and educational websites in teaching?

Interviewee: No

Interviewer: How do you rate the level of your students' computer literacy?
Interviewee: Average.

Interviewer: Do you think your usage of online exercises is affected by your perception of your students' level of computer literacy?
Interviewee: No. I assume that they know the basics. But I also tend to only use computer activities that do not require much on their part.

Tutors' perception of using technology in classes

Tutors' perception of CALL and web tools (INW4TSP)

Interviewer: Do you think computer-assisted learning motivates students more than traditional methods?
Interviewee: They could do I think, depending on format/design.

Interviewer: Do you think your students are motivated enough to use computer assisted learning, online educational websites on their own?
Interviewee: I'm not sure if computer-based learning will make much of a difference to my students' motivation.

Interviewer: Do you trust computer-assisted learning and web tools as a means of education? Why/ why not?
Interviewee: Not fully.

Interviewer: Do you trust the standard of the online exercises found on websites?
Interviewee: Not always.

Online environments and activities (INW4OEA)

Interviewer: Have you ever used any websites or online tools in the class?
Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Can you name some of them please?
Interviewee: I don't remember.

Interviewer: How long have you been using them?
Interviewee: I don't use them very often and have only made use of them in the past couple of months.

Interviewer: What do you look for when choosing a web resource to use in the classroom?

Interviewee: I look for something accessible and clear and something that doesn't require a lot of technical expertise.

Interviewer: Do you think students find online websites and activities useful in regard to preparing for their paper-based exams?
Interviewee: Only if the means of testing are similar.

Interviewer: Do you think such online exercises improve their final test results?
Interviewee: I don't see why computer exercises wouldn't help students perform better in paper based exams.

Reasons of avoidance using technology in classes (INW4AVR)

Interviewer: Do you know about all the IT-related resources available to you at your institution?
Interviewee: No

Interviewer: Do you think training lecturers can increase the chance of them using online activities and websites in the classroom?
Interviewee: Yes. As long as the training is specially tailored to teachers' needs.

Interviewer: Is using technology and the Internet emphasized in the curriculum? Why/why not?
Interviewee: No. Because of logistics and because those who design the curriculum and exams know little on this

Interviewer: Does your teaching load permit you some spare time to do computer-based and online exercises in the class?
Interviewee: No

Interviewer: Do you receive enough technical support when necessary?
Interviewee: No

Interviewer: Are the available PC labs sufficient to practice online and computer based activities?
Interviewee: No. I understand that labs are often double booked.

Interviewer: Do you feel, given the curriculum and load, that web-based learning is a challenging counter-productive or a distraction?
Interviewee: I think that if it is nor aligned with the curriculum and uses similar modes of assessment to the exams, them it can be a distraction.

Interviewer: Do you have sufficient access to the Internet in your class?

Interviewee: No

Interviewer: How about your students?

Interviewee: Maybe. Internet access alone is not enough if there is no projection facility or when it requires a cable that is in short supply.

Interviewer: Do you think the Internet is fast enough to use web tools and do online activities in the class?

Interviewee: No

Interviewer: Do you think safety issues and cultural barriers can be some of the factors which prevent lecturers from using online activities and websites?

Interviewee: Yes

Interviewer: Do you think lack of supervision of students' online activities is a reason why lecturers hesitate to use online exercises and websites?

Interviewee: Perhaps.

Interviewer: Do you think online exercises and activities on the websites are relevant to the final exam?

Interviewee: Not especially.

The Internet and web tools (INW4IW)

Interviewer: Please share your views on using the Internet and web tools in teaching writing skills?

Interviewee: I've not used it for teaching writing skills. Good for examples.

The interview with Tutor 6

Tutors' perception of writing classes

Aims of writing classes (INW4AWC)

Interviewer: What do you think are the aims of the writing course at CBFS?

Interviewee: by the end of the course students should be able to produce a well organized, cohesive and error free essays ranging from general, formal and academic.

Writing tasks presented in the class (INW4WT)

Interviewer: What are the students encouraged to do in writing classes? Why?

Interviewee: independent brain-storming/ thinking; planning/organizing; encouraged "how to write" Not "what to write".

Student-writers' achievement (INW4SA)

Interviewer: How far do you think the current writing course is successful in achieving those aims?

Interviewee: both teachers and students struggle to get desire outcome. Current writing syllabus is not exactly in line with the writing aims.

Tutors and students' computer literacy

Computer skills (INW4CSK)

Interviewer: Have you received any training on using computer-based exercises and educational websites in teaching?

Interviewee: Smart board and CALL courses have been conducted.

Interviewer: How do you rate the level of your students' computer literacy?

Interviewee: Average

Interviewer: Do you think your usage of online exercises is affected by your perception of your students' level of computer literacy?

Interviewee: No time to pursue online activities.

Tutors' perception of using technology in classes

Tutors' perception of CALL and web tools (INW4TSP)

Interviewer: Do you think computer-assisted learning motivates students more than traditional methods?

Interviewee: Not sure.

Interviewer: Do you think your students are motivated enough to use computer assisted learning, online educational websites on their own?

Interviewee: Find lack of motivation in students. Their aim is to only pass the exam.

Interviewer: Do you trust computer-assisted learning and web tools as a means of education? Why/ why not?

Interviewee: Depends on the level of the students and their usage of computer as a learning tool.

Interviewer: Do you trust the standard of the online exercises found on websites?

Interviewee: Not, all kinds of resources found on net. Users has to be able to find the relevant materials.

Online environments and activities (INW4OEA)

Interviewer: Have you ever used any websites or online tools in the class?
Interviewee: Due to lack if time and deadline, haven't been able to use online activities.

Interviewer: Can you name some of them please?
Interviewee: N/A

Interviewer: How long have you been using them?
Interviewee: N/A

Interviewer: What do you look for when choosing a web resource to use in the classroom?
Interviewee: N/A

Interviewer: Do you think students find online websites and activities useful in regard to preparing for their paper-based exams?
Interviewee: Not sure

Interviewer: Do you think such online exercises improve their final test results?
Interviewee: The exercises may/ can help, but students hardly take help of online material.

Reasons of avoidance using technology in classes (INW4AVR)

Interviewer: Do you know about all the IT-related resources available to you at your institution?
Interviewee: No

Interviewer: Do you think training lecturers can increase the chance of them using online activities and websites in the classroom?
Interviewee: Can be.

Interviewer: Is using technology and the Internet emphasized in the curriculum? Why/why not?
Interviewee: It is emphasized but due to the reasons above cannot be practiced.

Interviewer: Does your teaching load permit you some spare time to do computer-based and online exercises in the class?
Interviewee: With full teaching load there is no spare time for such activities.

Interviewer: Do you receive enough technical support when necessary?

Interviewee: No

Interviewer: Are the available PC labs sufficient to practice online and computer based activities?
Interviewee: No

Interviewer: Do you feel, given the curriculum and load, that web-based learning is a challenging counter-productive or a distraction?
Interviewee: There is no spare time for such activities.

Interviewer: Do you have sufficient access to the Internet in your class?
Interviewee: No the classrooms are not well equipped.

Interviewer: How about your students?

Interviewee: Students can access Internet in labs.

Interviewer: Do you think the Internet is fast enough to use web tools and do online activities in the class?
Interviewee: No

Interviewer: Do you think safety issues and cultural barriers can be some of the factors which prevent lecturers from using online activities and websites?
Interviewee: No I don't think so.

Interviewer: Do you think lack of supervision of students' online activities is a reason why lecturers hesitate to use online exercises and websites?
Interviewee: Physically it can be challenging to supervise each and every student. Having said the activities can be such that student is left with no choice but to work productively.

Interviewer: Do you think online exercises and activities on the websites are relevant to the final exam?
Interviewee: The resources are a lot and may be relevant too, but students do not make use of them.

The Internet and web tools (INW4IW)

Interviewer: Please share your views on using the Internet and web tools in teaching writing skills?
Interviewee: A very effective tool in an ideal situation and condition.

The interview with Tutor 7

Tutors' perception of writing classes

Aims of writing classes (INW4AWC)

Interviewer: What do you think are the aims of the writing course at CBFS?

Interviewee: To teach students various basic formats and types of writing (e.g. letter, descriptive essay, discursive essay, describing a process etc.) but with emphasis on to pass the exam.

Writing tasks presented in the class (INW4WT)

Interviewer: What are the students encouraged to do in writing classes? Why?

Interviewee: Do lead-up exercises in preparation for the task and study some examples e.g. for topic sentences, planning, introductions, conclusions, formats, linking words, write the task.

Student-writers' achievement (INW4SA)

Interviewer: How far do you think the current writing course is successful in achieving those aims?

Interviewee: It is successful in a the sense that some students who are drilled produce a formulaic response which they have learned off by heart receive a fairy high score in the exam but in my opinion it is not successful in encouraging creative thought ad confidence in expressing their own ideas, as soon as they have to write something they have never done before they cannot apply the skills they have learned and the language level drops dramatically.

Tutors and students' computer literacy

Computer skills (INW4CSK)

Interviewer: Have you received any training on using computer-based exercises and educational websites in teaching?

Interviewee: very little (1 or 2 workshops)

Interviewer: How do you rate the level of your students' computer literacy?

Interviewee: I am not sure if this as I have little exposure to their skills. Bu I would rate it as fair.

Interviewer: Do you think your usage of online exercises is affected by your perception of your students' level of computer literacy?

Interviewee: No

Tutors' perception of using technology in classes

Tutors' perception of CALL and web tools (INW4TSP)

Interviewer: Do you think computer-assisted learning motivates students more than traditional methods?

Interviewee: It depends on the skills of the teacher to a large extent. I think visual and active (physical) learners would be more motived by it.

Interviewer: Do you think your students are motivated enough to use computer assisted learning, online educational websites on their own?

Interviewee: Some of them (probably a minority). Those who have clear goals and have developed disciplined study habits.

Interviewer: Do you trust computer-assisted learning and web tools as a means of education? Why/ why not?

Interviewee: Not completely. Partly because of my ignorance of it and partly because I think interaction between student and teacher is vital, students especially FL students need to practice conversing to become confident speakers and pronunciation corrected and need to listen to teachers conversing. Also to practice gestures. Expression etc. (but teachers need to be fluent and proficient in the language)

Interviewer: Do you trust the standard of the online exercises found on websites?

Interviewee: Not at all.

Online environments and activities (INW4OEA)

Interviewer: Have you ever used any websites or online tools in the class?

Interviewee: Not in foundation but a few in EAP

Interviewer: Can you name some of them please?

Interviewee: Google search for research; YouTube clips

Interviewer: How long have you been using them?

Interviewee: 2 months

Interviewer: What do you look for when choosing a web resource to use in the classroom?

Interviewee: Resources should be appropriate to the culture I am teaching (nit too culturally biased so students could not relate to it or would find offensive); a variety of question types (must have open-ended questions where students have to write sentences); appropriate content for the age level being taught; should encourage thinking skills; instructions should be clear and user friendly (both in terms of wording and layout e.g. Font, spacing, text size)

Interviewer: Do you think students find online websites and activities useful in regard to preparing for their paper-based exams?

Interviewee: Have no knowledge of this in foundation course but I suspect this is the case for IELTS.

Interviewer: Do you think such online exercises improve their final test results?

Interviewee: Yes, as long as question types are varied in the online exercises and they don't get used to only one style of questioning (which may vary in the exam).

Reasons of avoidance using technology in classes (INW4AVR)

Interviewer: Do you know about all the IT-related resources available to you at your institution?

Interviewee: No

Interviewer: Do you think training lecturers can increase the chance of them using online activities and websites in the classroom?

Interviewee: Yes

Interviewer: Is using technology and the Internet emphasized in the curriculum? Why/why not?

Interviewee: No. The foundation course is done over too short a time and therefore it is barely possible to get through the required textbook exercises. (Lack of training of teachers and accessibility of computers.) It is emphasized in EAP for research projects and presentations.

Interviewer: Does your teaching load permit you some spare time to do computer-based and online exercises in the class?

Interviewee: very little time to prepare for it. It probably could if the resources were more easily available in the classroom (labs often fully booked) and time not wasted.

Interviewer: Do you receive enough technical support when necessary?

Interviewee: No

Interviewer: Are the available PC labs sufficient to practice online and computer based activities?

Interviewee: don't know but there seems to be no easy centralized booking system or catalogue of materials/ resources.

Interviewer: Do you feel, given the curriculum and load, that web-based learning is a challenging counter-productive or a distraction?

Interviewee: Cannot answer as have no experience.

Interviewer: Do you have sufficient access to the Internet in your class?
Interviewee: No

Interviewer: How about your students?
Interviewee: Only if they bring their own laptop.

Interviewer: Do you think the Internet is fast enough to use web tools and do online activities in the class?
Interviewee: Don't really know.

Interviewer: Do you think safety issues and cultural barriers can be some of the factors which prevent lecturers from using online activities and websites?
Interviewee: Yes. But probably more to do with their age and lack of knowledge.

Interviewer: Do you think lack of supervision of students' online activities is a reason why lecturers hesitate to use online exercises and websites?
Interviewee: Quite possibly and probably there is not enough time to supervise in the classroom because course is so rushed.

Interviewer: Do you think online exercises and activities on the websites are relevant to the final exam?
Interviewee: Have not had enough first-hand experience of them to judge.

The Internet and web tools (INW4IW)

Interviewer: Please share your views on using the Internet and web tools in teaching writing skills?
Interviewee: Although I don't have experience in it, so am nor sure what is available, I suspect this one area where it could be used more productively. Shorter writing exercises? Seeing examples of different kinds of and good writing. Stimulus material? Editing devices? (but possibly things like spellcheck have the danger of making students lazy and not thing about how to spell a word. I would also be a little worried that different countries have different formatting styles and rules. Again teacher would need to prepare and check it out in advance which involves time.

The interview with Tutor 8

Tutors' perception of writing classes

Aims of writing classes (INW4AWC)

Interviewer: What do you think are the aims of the writing course at CBFS?

Interviewee: Test –preparation

Writing tasks presented in the class (INW4WT)

Interviewer: What are the students encouraged to do in writing classes? Why?

Interviewee: Copying the samples in the in-house material.

Student-writers' achievement (INW4SA)

Interviewer: How far do you think the current writing course is successful in achieving those aims?

Interviewee: Not much.

Tutors and students' computer literacy

Computer skills (INW4CSK)

Interviewer: Have you received any training on using computer-based exercises and educational websites in teaching?

Interviewee: No

Interviewer: How do you rate the level of your students' computer literacy?

Interviewee: Unsure

Interviewer: Do you think your usage of online exercises is affected by your perception of your students' level of computer literacy?

Interviewee: No

Tutors' perception of using technology in classes

Tutors' perception of CALL and web tools (INW4TSP)

Interviewer: Do you think computer-assisted learning motivates students more than traditional methods?

Interviewee: Yes

Interviewer: Do you think your students are motivated enough to use computer assisted learning, online educational websites on their own?

Interviewee: No. Most of them are unaware of the possibilities. They need a proper introduction but time in class is limited.

Interviewer: Do you trust computer-assisted learning and web tools as a means of education? Why/ why not?

Interviewee: It's not a replacement but a very useful tool in language learning.

Interviewer: Do you trust the standard of the online exercises found on websites?

Interviewee: Some sites are dodgy but then again the additional material here has its own shortcomings.

Online environments and activities (INW4OEA)

Interviewer: Have you ever used any websites or online tools in the class?

Interviewee: In CBFS- No.

Interviewer: Can you name some of them please?

Interviewee: N/A

Interviewer: How long have you been using them?

Interviewee: In Bahrain yes, often. 3 years

Interviewer: What do you look for when choosing a web resource to use in the classroom?

Interviewee: simplicity- easy to read instructions and fonts; I prefer multiple choice type answers and drag + drop activities; mustn't be too "childlike"

Interviewer: Do you think students find online websites and activities useful in regard to preparing for their paper-based exams?

Interviewee: Yes

Interviewer: Do you think such online exercises improve their final test results?

Interviewee: Yes

Reasons of avoidance using technology in classes (INW4AVR)

Interviewer: Do you know about all the IT-related resources available to you at your institution?

Interviewee: No ☹

Interviewer: Do you think training lecturers can increase the chance of them using online activities and websites in the classroom?

Interviewee: For sure

Interviewer: Is using technology and the Internet emphasized in the curriculum? Why/ why not?

Interviewee: No, inherit resistance to change I suppose.

Interviewer: Does your teaching load permit you some spare time to do computer-based and online exercises in the class?

Interviewee: No!

Interviewer: Do you receive enough technical support when necessary?

Interviewee: No

Interviewer: Are the available PC labs sufficient to practice online and computer based activities?

Interviewee: No ☹

Interviewer: Do you feel, given the curriculum and load, that web-based learning is a challenging counter-productive or a distraction?

Interviewee: Yes

Interviewer: Do you have sufficient access to the Internet in your class?

Interviewee: No, use personal modem.

Interviewer: How about your students?

Interviewee: unsure

Interviewer: Do you think the Internet is fast enough to use web tools and do online activities in the class?

Interviewee: unsure

Interviewer: Do you think safety issues and cultural barriers can be some of the factors which prevent lecturers from using online activities and websites?

Interviewee: No, I think it is merely too much trouble.

Interviewer: Do you think lack of supervision of students' online activities is a reason why lecturers hesitate to use online exercises and websites?

Interviewee: No

Interviewer: Do you think online exercises and activities on the websites are relevant to the final exam?

Interviewee: No

The Internet and web tools (INW4IW)

Interviewer: Please share your views on using the Internet and web tools in teaching writing skills?

Interviewee: Can be useful if it's planned and organized to help students pass their exams and improve their writing skills.

The interview with Tutor 9

Tutors' perception of writing classes

Aims of writing classes (INW4AWC)

Interviewer: What do you think are the aims of the writing course at CBFS?

Interviewee: the student being capable of producing independent writing that is both general and academics with the correct language structures, cohesive devices and different writing style.

Writing tasks presented in the class (INW4WT)

Interviewer: What are the students encouraged to do in writing classes? Why?

Interviewee: In upper levels independent thinking; planning their writing; brainstorming for ideas; structuring of ideas; use of cohesive devices, organizing the drafts

Student-writers' achievement (INW4SA)

Interviewer: How far do you think the current writing course is successful in achieving those aims?

Interviewee: Both students and lecturers struggle a great deal to get the desired outcome. Current writing syllabus doesn't match the writing objectives.

Tutors and students' computer literacy

Computer skills (INW4CSK)

Interviewer: Have you received any training on using computer-based exercises and educational websites in teaching?

Interviewee: Not in CBFS. Regular courses/ training in CALL/ smart board etc.

Interviewer: How do you rate the level of your students' computer literacy?

Interviewee: Limited. Some of them are interested in I.T. but on the whole very limited. This can be a major hindrance in the use of any kind of e-teaching.

Interviewer: Do you think your usage of online exercises is affected by your perception of your students' level of computer literacy?

Interviewee: Yes

Tutors' perception of using technology in classes

Tutors' perception of CALL and web tools (INW4TSP)

Interviewer: Do you think computer-assisted learning motivates students more than traditional methods?

Interviewee: Yes

Interviewer: Do you think your students are motivated enough to use computer assisted learning, online educational websites on their own?

Interviewee: No. Total lack of motivation and interest in most students, except for a few.

Interviewer: Do you trust computer-assisted learning and web tools as a means of education? Why/ why not?

Interviewee: A lot, depends on the level of the students and the usage. Independent learning done by students can be a very effective tool.

Interviewer: Do you trust the standard of the online exercises found on websites?

Interviewee: No

Online environments and activities (INW4OEA)

Interviewer: Have you ever used any websites or online tools in the class?

Interviewee: yes for speaking and writing classes

Interviewer: Can you name some of them please?

Interviewee: images.google.com; onestopenglish.com; about.com; writefix.com; esolcourses.com

Interviewer: How long have you been using them?

Interviewee: 2 years

Interviewer: What do you look for when choosing a web resource to use in the classroom?

Interviewee: being matched to the level of students and their relevance to the lessons.

Interviewer: Do you think students find online websites and activities useful in regard to preparing for their paper-based exams?

Interviewee: May be

Interviewer: Do you think such online exercises improve their final test results?

Interviewer: Can definitely be very helpful if they try doing them but most od them do not.

Reasons of avoidance using technology in classes (INW4AVR)

Interviewer: Do you know about all the IT-related resources available to you at your institution?

Interviewee: No

Interviewer: Do you think training lecturers can increase the chance of them using online activities and websites in the classroom?

Interviewee: Yes. Most definitely it can.

Interviewer: Is using technology and the Internet emphasized in the curriculum? Why/ why not?

Interviewee: It is definitely emphasized in theory but not done in practice. (Level 6 only, the last level, does have some projects/ presentations which are done with the help of the net).

Interviewer: Does your teaching load permit you some spare time to do computer-based and online exercises in the class?

Interviewee: No. With a teaching load of 20 hours (some weeks 25) it becomes very difficult to do any other activity. Particularly no time left for anything else.

Interviewer: Do you receive enough technical support when necessary?

Interviewee: Average

Interviewer: Are the available PC labs sufficient to practice online and computer based activities?

Interviewee: No-most labs are not equipped to carry out any kind of research.

Interviewer: Do you feel, given the curriculum and load, that web-based learning is a challenging counter-productive or a distraction?

Interviewee: A distraction

Interviewer: Do you have sufficient access to the Internet in your class?

Interviewee: Lecturers have access to the Internet.

Interviewer: How about your students?

Interviewee: students (they need to use the library or bring their own laptop).

Interviewer: Do you think the Internet is fast enough to use web tools and do online activities in the class?

Interviewee: no very very slow

Interviewer: Do you think safety issues and cultural barriers can be some of the factors which prevent lecturers from using online activities and websites?

Interviewee: No; my personal opinion being that it all depends on how the lecturer can handle it.

Interviewer: Do you think lack of supervision of students' online activities is a reason why lecturers hesitate to use online exercises and websites?

Interviewee: Can pose a problem- but again, it all depends on how the lecturer handles an e-teaching class.

Interviewer: Do you think online exercises and activities on the websites are relevant to the final exam?

Interviewee: A lot of online resources are available but students need to make use of the same-which they so not.

The Internet and web tools (INW4IW)

Interviewer: Please share your views on using the Internet and web tools in teaching writing skills?

Interviewee: Definitely a very effective tool.

Interview questions with the writing tutor

Name ……………………………..

Date………………………………..

Location and time ……………….

1   What is your experience of teaching writing? What do you find challenging or rewarding?

2   What do you think is the purpose of asking students to write assignments in writing classes?

3   Do you think blog-writing can be a way of writing that is respected by the CBFS College? If yes, what is your students' attitude towards weblog-writing? If yes, what is your students 'attitude towards blog-writing?

4   How comfortable do you think students felt writing in this way? Why?

5   Do you think weblog-writing can influence students' academic writing? How?

6   Did you follow your students' weblog? How?

7   Did you write any comments for them? Were they for teaching purposes?

Thank you for your time and cooperation

The Interview with the writing tutor

Name: F. H.

Date: 28th June 2011

Location and time: CBFS, Muscat; 14:00

1 **Interviewer: What is your experience of teaching writing? What do you find challenging or rewarding?**

   Interviewee: It's great! It's one of the most needed skills for any college going student doing any kinds of course. However, it's challenging or it won't be wrong to say very difficult at times to teach academic writing skills, when the students are not clear with basic Language structures.

2 **Interviewer: What do you think is the purpose of asking students to write assignments in writing classes?**

   Interviewee: The purpose is to make them able to transfer their other learnt skills on the paper or computer through writing. They learned grammar, vocabulary, gather information through reading. Then they have or form their own analysis or opinions. All of this can be judged or summarised through their speaking or writing. Writing assignments give them more time and opportunity to research, organize and produce their learning. Hence, I find writing to be very conductive to judge a student's language and his/her understanding of the topic.

3 **Interviewer: Do you think blog-writing can be a way of writing that is respected by the college? If yes, what is your students' attitude towards weblog-writing?**

   Interviewee: Well, Colleges, especially in Eastern Countries are still apprehensive with weblog to be introduced formally in their curriculum for various reasons. One of them is infrastructure. They are not well equipped to facilitate this kind of learning. Secondly, the courses being offered in most of the colleges are Academic, which needs the required skills to be taught in a formal setup. However, colleges can encourage and accept weblog writing to be an important tool in enhancing basic language skills and confidence of students. Moreover, it can promote self-study skills.

   Students find this to be very interesting. But they consider it to be a personal communicative tool where they get to make more friends, share their emotions etc. they are yet to believe that it could be an excellent tool for education.

4 **Interviewer: How comfortable do you think students felt writing in this way? Why?**

Interviewee: They are very comfortable and enthusiastic about being introduced to weblog provided that not many of their teachers have an access to it. They prefer to be connected to friends of their age group and people of similar interest.

5 **Interviewer: Do you think weblog-writing can affect on students' academic writing? How?**

Interviewee: Definitely, it will equip students with confidence, better expression and correct grammar. This will limit the teachers' job to guide students on the right procedures of producing academic writing instead of reiterating basic structures.

6 **Interviewer: Did you follow your students' weblog? How?**

Interviewee: Yes, I did follow their writing. However, this was done by joining there with a fictitious name to avoid any kind of hesitation, which students may encounter if they get to know that they were monitored by a teacher or may feel their privacy being encroached.

7 **Interviewer: Did you write any comments for them? Were they for teaching purposes?**

Interviewee: I did write comments, though it was less intended on correcting their grammatical errors. I expressed my opinions on their thoughts to encourage their expression, which in turn motivated them to venture better vocabulary to express their thoughts.

Appendix C Tables of register analysis of the blog-texts in Blog 1

Table 44: Process types in the blog-texts in Blog 1

	Feature	Material	Mental	Behavioural	Relational	Verbal	Existential
Text 1	%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
	N=2	0	0	0	2	0	0
Text 2	%	5.30%	31.60%	0%	47.40%	5.30%	10.50%
	N=19	1	6	0	9	1	2
Text 3	%	51.10%	6.40%	4.30%	31.90%	4.30%	2.10%
	N=47	24	3	2	15	2	1
Text 4	%	34.80%	21.70%	4.30%	39.10%	0%	0%
	N=23	8	5	1	9	0	0
Text 5	%	48.30%	20.70%	6.90%	17.20%	3.40%	3.40%
	N=29	14	6	2	5	1	1
Text 6	%	25%	21.40%	3.60%	35.70%	10.70%	3.60%
	N=28	7	6	1	10	3	1
Text 7	%	29.60%	13%	0%	31.50%	22.20%	3.70%
	N=54	16	7	0	17	12	2
Text 8	%	37.50%	12.50%	0%	45.80%	4.20%	0%
	N=24	9	3	0	11	1	0

N= Number of verbal group

Table 45: Participant types in the blog-texts in Blog 1

	Text 1	Text 2	Text 3	Text 4	Text 5	Text 6	Text 7	Text 8
Actor	0%	3.20%	21.10%	13.50%	22.70%	11.50%	16%	25%
Goal	0%	0%	15.80%	10.80%	15.90%	13.50%	6.40%	5.60%
Scope	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1.90%	2.10%	0%
Senser	0%	16.10%	3.90%	8.10%	13.60%	13.50%	6.40%	8.30%
Phenomenon	0%	9.70%	1.30%	10.80%	13.60%	9.60%	7.40%	2.80%
Carrier	25%	6.50%	10.50%	13.50%	6.80%	11.50%	5.30%	16.70%
Attribute	25%	6.50%	10.50%	16.20%	6.80%	9.60%	5.30%	16.70%
Identified	25%	12.90%	2.60%	2.70%	4.50%	3.80%	9.60%	8.30%
Identifier	25%	12.90%	2.60%	2.70%	4.50%	3.80%	9.60%	8.30%
Possessor	0%	3.20%	3.90%	2.70%	0%	3.80%	2.10%	2.80%
Possession	0%	3.20%	3.90%	2.70%	0%	3.80%	2.10%	2.80%
Token	0%	3.20%	2.60%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Value	0%	3.20%	2.60%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Behaver	0%	0%	2.60%	2.70%	2.30%	0%	0%	0%
Sayer	0%	3.20%	2.60%	0%	2.30%	5.80%	10.60%	0%
Target	0%	3.20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4.30%	2.80%
Receiver	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1.10%	0%
Verbiage	0%	3.20%	0%	0%	0%	3.80%	5.30%	0%
Existent	0%	6.50%	1.30%	0%	2.30%	1.90%	3.20%	0%
omitted-participant	0%	3.20%	11.80%	13.50%	4.50%	1.90%	3.20%	0%

Table 46: Circumstances in the blog-texts in Blog 1

Feature	Text 1		Text 2		Text 3		Text 4		Text 5		Text 6		Text 7		Text 8	
	%	N=1	%	N=9	%	N=32	%	N=6	%	N=15	%	N=8	%	N=27	%	N=2
Extent	0%	0	0%	0	3.10%	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Manner	0%	0	0%	0	6.20%	2	0%	0	6.70%	1	12.50%	1	14.80%	4	0%	0
Cause	100%	1	11.10%	1	0%	0	0%	0	13.30%	2	0%	0	11.10%	3	0%	0
Contingency	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Accompaniment	0%	0	11.10%	1	9.40%	3	0%	0	13.30%	2	0%	0	7.40%	2	50%	1
Role	0%	0	0%	0	3.10%	1	0%	0	13.30%	2	0%	0	11.10%	3	50%	1
Matter	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	16.70%	1	13.30%	2	50%	4	7.40%	2	0%	0
Angle	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Location-type	%	N=0	%	N=7	%	N=25	%	N=5	%	N=6	%	N=3	%	N=13	%	N=0
Place	0%	0	71.40%	5	16%	4	40%	2	83.30%	5	100%	3	61.50%	8	0%	0
Time	0%	0	28.60%	2	84%	21	60%	3	16.70%	1	0%	0	38.50%	5	0%	0

Table 47: Clause types in the blog-texts in Blog 1

	Text 1		Text 2		Text 3		Text 4		Text 5		Text 6		Text 7		Text 8	
Independent clauses	%	N=2	%	N=15	%	N=35	%	N=14	%	N=21	%	N=18	%	N=41	%	N=18
Indicative	100%	2	93.30%	14	100%	35	92.90%	13	100.00%	21	100%	18	97.60%	40	100%	18
Imperative	0%	0	6.70%	1	0%	0	7.10%	1	0.00%	0	0%	0	2.40%	1	0%	0
Indicative types	%	N=2	%	N=14	%	N=35	%	N=13	%	N=21	%	N=18	%	N=40	%	N=18
Declarative	100%	2	100%	14	100%	35	100%	13	100%	21	100%	18	97.50%	39	100%	18
Interrogative	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	2.50%	1	0%	0
Interrogative	%	N=0	%	N=0	%	N=0	%	N=0	%	N=0	%	N=0	%	N=1	%	N=0
Yes/No-q	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
WH-q	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	100%	1	0%	0

Table 48: Subjects in the blog-texts in Blog 1

Subj. type	Text 1 %	N=2	Text 2 %	N=16	Text 3 %	N=36	Text 4 %	N=13	Text 5 %	N=19	Text 6 %	N=18	Text 7 %	N=38	Text 8 %	N=15
I/my	100%	2	12.50%	2	58.30%	21	61.50%	8	17.65%	3	27.80%	5	34.20%	13	60%	9
You /your	0%	0	6.20%	1	2.80%	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
We /our	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	11.76%	2	0%	0	2.60%	1	0%	0
Others	0%	0	62.50%	10	16.70%	6	15.40%	2	58.82%	10	66.70%	12	55.30%	21	40%	6
Omitted	0%	0	18.80%	3	22.20%	8	23.10%	3	11.76%	4	5.60%	1	7.90%	3	0%	0

Table 49: Finite types in the blog-texts in Blog 1

Finite types	Text 1 %	N=2	Text 2 %	N=15	Text 3 %	N=35	Text 4 %	N=14	Text 5 %	N=19	Text 6 %	N=18	Text 7 %	N=37	Text 8 %	N=15
Tense	50%	1	73.30%	11	97.10%	34	64.30%	9	73.70%	14	88.90%	16	91.90%	34	80%	12
Modal	0%	1	13.30%	2	2.90%	1	7.10%	1	26.30%	5	11.10%	2	8.10%	3	20%	3
Omitted Finite operators	0%	0	13.30%	2	0%	0	28.60%	4	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Modal types	%	N=1	%	N=2	%	N=1	%	N=1	%	N=5	%	N=2	%	N=3	%	N=3
Modal-probability	100%	1	0%	0	100%	1	100%	1	40%	2	0%	0	100%	3	0%	0
Modal-usuality	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Modal-obligation	0%	0	100%	2	0%	0	0%	0	60%	3	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Modal-readiness: Inclination/ Ability	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	100%	2	0%	0	100%	3

Table 50: THEME types in the blog-texts in Blog 1

	Text 1		Text 2		Text 3		Text 4		Text 5		Text 6		Text 7		Text 8	
THEMEs	%	N=2	%	N=21	%	N=73	%	N=36	%	N=45	%	N=46	%	N=79	%	N=35
Textual	0%	0	14.30%	3	37%	27	41.70%	15	40%	18	41.30%	19	32.90%	26	40%	14
Interpersonal	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	2.20%	1	0%	0	2.50%	2	5.70%	2
Topical	100%	2	85.70%	18	63%	46	58.30%	21	57.80%	26	58.70%	27	64.60%	51	54.30%	19
Topical types	%	N=2	%	N=18	%	N=46	%	N=21	%	N=26	%	N=27	%	N=51	%	N=19
Marked	0%	0	16.70%	3	10.90%	5	19%	4	3.80%	1	3.70%	1	7.80%	4	5.30%	1
Unmarked	100%	2	77.80%	14	71.70%	33	71.40%	15	96.20%	25	92.60%	25	84.30%	43	94.70%	18
Omitted	0%	0	5.60%	1	17.40%	8	9.50%	2	0%	0	3.70%	1	7.80%	4	0%	0

Appendix D Tables of genre analysis of the blog-texts in Blog 1

Table 51: Text 1 Blog 1

Genre	Purpose	Stages	Text
Self -introduction	Introduction		
		Salutation	Hi
		Self identification	my name is Asma
		Impressions	i will be glad to have a lot of friends

Table 52: Text 2 Blog 1

GENRE	PURPOSE	STAGES	TEXT
Exposition	Arguing for a point of view	Title	Al-Qurum Natural Park
		Thesis Position	I think everybody who's coming to Oman for a tour or who's already in Oman should go to Al-Qurum Natural Park because it is one of the best places to enjoy the view and relax.
		Preview	Al-Qurum Natural Park is the largest park in Oman with more than 1,715,000 square meters of greenery and beauty.
		Argument Claim	Speaking of beauty, this has to be the most beautiful place in Oman and the desire of my eyes! It is the best place to walk in. I'm telling every body to visit this gorgeous area!
		Evidence	A great place to bring the kids with family to have a family activities., there is a lot of beautiful flowers and benches to siton andgreen grass to have a picnic on. it is one of the very popular places Omanies take their families at the weekends. Even the toilets are gorgeous and clean!.
		Claim	I love the place there its really amazing and the water falls make the person feels soooo good looking at it.
		Reiteration Exhortation	I thinkQurum National Park should not be overlooked on any tourist trip to Muscat. hope u all get a chance to visit it.

Table 53: Text 3 Blog 1

Genre	Purpose	Stages	Text
Recount	Recounting events	Title	my dailey routine
		Orientation	I'm a usual person i have the same routine everyday or in a different way you can say I'm a boring person but its OK with me because in the weekend i change my routine.
		Record of events	i usually wake up at 6:30 and get ready then go to college. I start my first class at 8 and I hate attending early classes because i feel my mind is closed and I'm stillsleeping!

I have only 1 hour break i don't really do a lot in it because its short i only eat in it, sometimes i wish to leave college and go out then come back to attend the second class but its hard because the break is short. my second class starts at 11 , the time is OK with me because its not really early! fnish college at 1 but my mum get late sometime so, i reach home at 2 .i pray then wait for the hole family to gather and have lunch together then i have a nap for only one hour. at 4 i go walking with my dad around my neighbourhood till 6.30 then i go back home have a shower and have dinner i usually eat my dinner early like 8 so i can do my home works n study little till 10
after that i sit with my family little but at this time my young brother are sleeping because they have school the next day so there is nobody to talk to so i go to bed at 11 |
| | | Reorientation | that's my usual routine i think its nothing interesting. |

Table 54: Text 4 Blog 1

Genre	Purpose	Stages	Text
Narrative	Resolving a complication	Title	Speaking Test
		Orientation	After one hour exactly I have a speaking test,
		Complication	well I'm really nervous about it and worried because I'm not good in communicating with TEACHERS because I always don't pick the right words. In real world I'm good in speaking *but* when I come to know its a test I get scared and nervous and I don't know what to say and screw up.
		Resolution	sometimes it get to a point I want to scream and get out!
		Evaluation	But in the end its my markes and if I ran away I will fail
		Resolution	so i better be calm and take a deep breath and let it out and be sooo confertable and confident.
		Coda	I'm going to take my test now wish me luck!!

Table 55: Text 5 Blog 1

GENRE	PURPOSE	STAGES	TEXT
Exemplum	Judging a character or behaviour in a story	Title	STOP FIGHTING!!!
		Orientation	Yesterday I saw a huge fight between two guys it was soooo scary and the fight was about a ridicules thing.
		Incident 1	They started hitting each other and the blood was everywhere.
		Interpretation 1	i don't know why guys like fighting for stupid resone and its not necessary. They should talk in logically and solve it without any fight and everyone leave satisfied.
		Incident 2	The place was crowded and people are watching instead of stopping till one of the guys fall of and the police came to stop them. the guy who fall went to the hospital but the other one went to the police station.
		Interpretation 2	I think they should put him in jail because the other person could of died because of him! And everybody should solve their problems without a fight!
		Evaluation	If anyone saw a fight should stop it not sit and watch as if there's something funny to watch because if one of them past away we'll feel bad about it and we wont forgive our selves.

Table 56: Text 6 Blog 1

Genre	Purpose	Stages	Text
Argument: Discussion	Discussing two or more points of view		pros and cons of the blogspot
		Thesis	Blog is a very useful in education and as a diary. every student in the world knows about blog and it is an easy way to connect with writing teachers. The blog has advantages even well disadvanteges. In this essay i would love to write about the pros and cons of blog. I would love to start with the adventeges.
		Argument 1(for) Claim Evidence	Firstly, blog is one of the best ways of improving my writing skills *because* I write continualy and I receive comments that i learn from so I dont need any tutore in writing!
		Argument 2 (for) Claim Evidence	And I enjoy reading others blog *because* some people write about their problems and I love helping people in solving them and its a easy way form me to express my feeling.
		Argument 3 (for) Claim Evidence	Moreover, its atrative *because* you can uplod music and pictures and other things.
		Argument 1 (against) Claim Evidence	In every plus there is a minuse. First of all some pople get addicted *so* it can isolate you and reduse the commnication with your family members what can be really bad.

Table 57: Text 7 Blog 1

Genre	Purpose	Stages	Embedded genre	Purpose of the embedded genre	Fragmented stages	Text
Exposition	Arguing for a point of view	Title				The Best Family I could Get!
		Thesis				Im raised in the best house anyone could ever have.
		Argument claim				Everybody would say that they have the best family but I'm going to stop them and tell them to come and have a look at my family.I'm not saying we are perfect but I'm sure we are one of the best!
			self-introduction	Giving personal information	Biodata	First let me introduce my family. The king of the house of course is my dad, then here comes his only queen; my mum. My older brother who is the family consultant comes next. Then here I come, and after me, my two young brothers
		Argument prompt				Why do I think we are the best?
		Reasoning				Because we are raised as Muslims and my parents taught us to respect other religions and different cultures
		Reasoning				We are also taught to love and care about everybody especially our family

		Evidence				My parents wouldn't do anything without asking our opinion first before doing anything, and if we didn't like it, they would ask us for the reason behind that. They discuss the issue with us and try to convince us!
		Evidence				My dad respects us all, especially my mum. My dad doesn't treat her as a maid but a queen in the house
		Expansion of the argument				The best thing I love about my family is that we have to meet every night to talk about our day and what we did in it
		Evidence				We also have a family meal together. Dinner is not our only meal together; we have all meals together unless someone is busy so he or she is excused to leave
		Evidence				My older brother is studying abroad, so every Sunday we all talk to him in the Internet. It's something we all have to do even the housemaid
		Evidence				Our housemaid even loves staying in my house because we respect her and treat her very well. That's why she never complains about us
		Evaluation				That is how my parents raised us; to help each other and take care of each other and "I pray to god to never separate us
		Evidence				Every weekend we do lots of family activities together. We go for a picnic or we go out for dinner or anything.

				Sometimes we go with my cousins all of us together and that's really fun!
Reiteration				Im not exaggerating I'm only saying the truth and that what I've been raised for and what I wrote is nothing comparing to what you'll see.

Table 58: Text 8 Blog 1

Genre	Purpose	Stages	Embedded genre	Purpose of the embedded genre	Fragmented stages	Text
Exposition	Arguing for a point of view (Rose and Martin 2013, p.130)					My life
		Thesis				If anybody came and asked me who I want to be for sure I would love to be myself.
		Argument Claim				I'm satsfaid of my life and the way I live. Nobody is perfect and
		Evidence				I'm not perfect and I made mistakes but all human being make mistakes thats our nature and *i believe that no life without problems is a boring life.*
		Claim				I think that problems make life more interesting and thats true for me.
		Evidence	Exemplum	Judging character or behaviour in a story	Incident Interpretation	I tryed to live my life without problems but I simply couldn't and no one can no matter how they try to avoid it. well this is my opinion but I'm sure that everyone have they're opinion:)

Appendices E, F, G and H

The Appendices E, F, G and H are presented in the supplementary CD:

- Appendix E contains the tables of Register analysis of Blog 2.
- Appendix F contains the tables of Genre analysis of Blog 2.
- Appendix G contains the figures of the linguistic patterns in Blog 1.
- Appendix H contains the figures of the linguistic patterns in Blog 2.