

Stancetaking in discourse

An introduction

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1. Introduction

During the initial few years of the twenty-first century, scholarship in linguistics and related disciplines has witnessed a notable upsurge of interest in stance. Several published monographs explicitly reference stance in their titles (Gardner 2001; Hunston and Thompson 2000; Kärkkäinen 2003; Mushin 2001; Wu 2004), special issues of journals have focused on this topic (Berman 2005; Macken-Horarik and Martin 2003), panels and symposia have been devoted to various perspectives on stance (Englebretson 2004; Jaffe 2004; Shoaps and Kockelman 2002), and numerous journal articles have dealt with this topic either directly or indirectly. This broad array of research represents a convergence; an intersection of subdisciplines within linguistics (among e.g., corpus linguistics, systemic-functional linguistics, discourse-functional linguistics, cognitive linguistics, sociocultural linguistics, and interactional linguistics), and it highlights a set of overlapping interests with closely-allied fields such as anthropology, social psychology, education, and sociology. As this heterogeneous range of research implies, and as I will argue throughout this chapter, stance is by no means a monolithic concept. Definitions and conceptions of stance are as broad and varied as the individual backgrounds and interests of the researchers themselves. But what is noteworthy about the focus on stance from all of these different perspectives, is that it marks an orientation toward conceiving of language in terms of the functions for which it is used, based on the contexts within which it occurs. Research on stance, however this term is defined, represents an ongoing trend toward understanding the full social and pragmatic nature of language, as it is used by actual speakers or writers to act and interact in the real world. The present volume joins this burgeoning field, offering new insights into the sociocultural, interactional,

and performative nature of language by addressing stancetaking from a range of perspectives in natural discourse.

A critical observer of the recent preponderance of work on stance may wonder what, exactly, the term *stance* refers to in the first place, and to what extent these various approaches may converge with each other overall.¹ There are at least two ways in which the use of this term can be problematic. First, while individual researchers do tend to operationalize *stance* within their own work, definitions and understandings are not necessarily shared as common ground from one scholar to the next. Thus two authors may use *stance* to encompass two seemingly disparate types of phenomena. Secondly, the converse situation is also true; researchers who appear to be working on similar issues may in fact use different terminology to cover what appears to be the same types of phenomena. For example, one scholar may use *stance* to encompass what other scholars refer to as *subjectivity*, while other language researchers may prefer the term *evaluation* and may wish to eschew the label *stance* altogether.

The lack of a consistent definition of *stance* poses a conundrum for anyone wishing to summarize the state of the field in an introduction such as the present chapter. Such a writer is faced with essentially two possibilities. One approach would be to present a clearly operationalized definition of *stance*, and consequently to exclude from the purview of stance research anything which does not meet this definition. Such an approach would border on academic imperialism, and would likely end up excluding much of what has been published under the rubric of stance research, including many of the papers in the present volume. Prescribing a narrow definition would needlessly fragment and limit this interdisciplinary field of research at a time when it has only just begun to emerge and take shape. A second, more inclusive approach would be to adopt a broader, ethnographically-informed conception of *stance*; to seek to understand how stance researchers conceive of *stance* in their own work, and to begin to develop a model which recognizes the heterogeneous and multifaceted nature of stancetaking. This inclusive approach has the advantage of promoting dialogue among stance researchers and encouraging interplay among ideas, and this is the approach I have chosen to adopt here, both in this introductory chapter and in the volume as a whole. A reader of this volume who wishes a clear-cut, operationalized definition of *stance* will no doubt find it challenging to follow the disparate threads of ideas as they coalesce throughout the various approaches represented here. However, I believe this is the most realistic and fruitful way to approach the current, burgeoning state of stance research. The overall purpose of this volume is to explore how it is that speakers (and writers) actively engage in taking stances in natural discourse. The understanding of *stance* that emerges is indeed heterogeneous and variegated, but always intimately bound up with the pragmatic and social aspects

of human conduct, while highlighting the situated, pragmatic, and interactional character of stancetaking. We offer the present volume as an exploratory work in stance research, and we hope the ideas and claims in the papers will spark further inquiry and new directions in investigating and refining this field.

The remainder of this introductory chapter is organized as follows. Section 2 steps back from academically-oriented approaches to stance, to discuss the semantics and pragmatics of the term *stance* from a metalinguistic perspective. Based on two corpora of present-day English, I outline trends in the meaning of *stance*, as observed from how people actually use it in their speaking and writing. I suggest that the diverse nature of how stance is conceptualized in everyday language use impacts and informs how language researchers have conceptualized and appropriated it in academic contexts as well. Section 3 returns to the question of how stance has been approached within language research. I survey recent work relevant to stance, and thereby seek to contextualize the present volume within the current intellectual climate of stance-related scholarship. Section 4 briefly introduces each of the contributions to this volume.

2. *Stance in discourse*

The title of the present volume, *Stancetaking in Discourse*, entails several propositions. It presupposes first that there is a conceptual entity known as *stance*, which we can observe, investigate, research, and write about. Secondly, it suggests that stances are something that people actively engage in (i.e., *stancetaking* is a gerund, based on an object-incorporation of *stance* and the active verb *take*). Finally, it claims that stancetaking happens in discourse – in language in its natural habitat – and is thus best studied within this context. The present section takes up the first proposition just mentioned – the question of the conceptual entity known as *stance* – by investigating the meaning of the word *stance* in order to more fully come to terms with stance as an object of research. In order to come to an understanding of what stance may be understood to be, this section approaches the topic from an ethnographic perspective in everyday language. In other words, setting aside for now the case of academic language-related stance research to which we shall return in Section 3, when speakers and writers use the term *stance* in their naturally-occurring speaking and writing, what do they mean? This section seeks an answer to this question by presenting a brief quantitative and qualitative overview of the term *stance* as observed in two corpora of present-day English. This approach takes seriously Hunston's (this volume) call for both quantitative and qualitative methodologies in the investigation of stance, and it also serves to prefigure the kinds of analyses undertaken throughout the rest of this volume.

A metalinguistic analysis of *stance* in everyday language is crucial in coming to terms with the kinds of activities implicated in stancetaking. Since there is no agreed-upon definition of *stance* from an academic perspective, the question naturally arises as to why it is that stance researchers have adopted this term to refer to such a broad and variegated set of phenomena. I would suggest that these conceptions of stance are based directly on the wide range of meanings and activities associated with this lexeme in everyday language use. In other words, there is a reflexive relationship between stance as a concept in language research, and *stance* as a word in English more generally; the everyday conceptions of stance serve as a window into how this term has been appropriated by linguistic, social, and interactional research. The rather obvious fact that stance researchers are also language users suggests that questions of how often, in what situations, and in what kinds of interactional and collocational contexts *stance* is used are all highly relevant in understanding how stance is conceptualized more specifically in research contexts as well. This is firmly in keeping with a usage-based perspective on language (cf. Barlow and Kemmer 2000; Bybee 2006; *inter alia*), which takes as its starting point the idea that language use shapes language form and meaning. As I will demonstrate in the present section, the heterogeneity of stance as an object of research, and the varying uses of this term by scholars, are clearly signified in the quantitative and qualitative analyses of *stance* in language use.

The data for this section come from two corpora: the four volumes of the Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English (SBCSAE) (Du Bois et al. 2000; Du Bois et al. 2003; Du Bois and Englebretson 2004, 2005) and the British National Corpus, World Edition (BNC) (BNC 2001).² All SBCSAE examples in this section are excerpted from the corpus directly. For the BNC data presented in this section, all concordance counts and collocations were obtained by using VIEW (Variation in English Words and Phrases), the BNC online search tool provided by Mark Davies at Brigham Young University: <http://view.byu.edu>.³ In addition to representing the English of the United States versus the English of the United Kingdom, these two corpora are vastly different from each other in terms of size, scope of genre, and transcription detail. The SBCSAE contains approximately 249,000 words at present;⁴ the BNC is over 400 times larger, comprising approximately 100 million words.⁵ The SBCSAE focuses entirely on spoken language, primarily (but not exclusively) on face-to-face conversation; the BNC consists of a written component (90% of the corpus) and a spoken component (10% of the corpus). The SBCSAE is transcribed using the intonation unit-based discourse transcription system proposed by Du Bois et al. (1993), and contains time-aligned audio for each transcript; the spoken component of the BNC uses an undifferentiated orthographic transcription system with minimal attention to interactional or intonational details, and the audio files are neither included nor time-aligned

with the transcripts.⁶ Finally, while the SBCSAE is untagged, the BNC is tagged for parts-of-speech and sentences, and can thus be used with parsers and other automated tools. Obviously, each corpus is more suitable for some types of research purposes than it is for others. Because of its close focus on interactional detail and the availability of the audio files, the SBCSAE is especially useful for interactional, ethnographic, acoustic-phonetic, and conversation-analytic research (and for traditional corpus work too, of course, if the research does not require data from written English, and if large-scale frequency counts are not a focus of concern). Due to its massive size, tags, and genre-based orientation, the BNC is an especially useful resource for large-scale quantitative computational and text work (as long as the researcher is not seeking interactional detail, prosodic information, or audio files in the spoken component). Given the somewhat complementary natures of these corpora, the two together provide an excellent vehicle for qualitative and quantitative analyses of *stance*. I will begin this discussion in Section 2.1 by presenting a broad quantitative overview of the rate of occurrence of *stance* in both corpora, and in sub-genres within the BNC. Then, in Section 2.2, I will move to a qualitative investigation of the occurrences of *stance* in the SBCSAE. Section 2.3 discusses the adjectives in the BNC that most frequently collocate with *stance*, in order to analyze the semantic prosodies (cf. Hunston this volume) that are most typically associated with this term. Section 2.4 summarizes the findings of this investigation and outlines what it has to contribute to our understanding of the term *stance* specifically, as well as to our general conception of stance in language research, which is the topic of Section 3.

2.1 Quantitative findings

This section addresses the quantitative distribution of *stance* in both corpora. We observe that tokens of *stance* are quite rare in both speech and writing, but occur more frequently in writing than in speech. We also find that *stance* shows skewed distribution across registers of the BNC. Table 1 below, presents the overall occurrence of tokens of the lemma *stance* (i.e., the singular form *stance* and the plural form *stances* combined) in both corpora.

Table 1 shows two important quantitative findings about *stance*. First, it is a fairly infrequent word in both corpora. It occurs only three times in the SBCSAE, giving a rate of occurrence of 1 token per every 83,000 words of talk (and making further quantitative analysis of this lexeme impossible in this corpus).⁷ The lemma *stance* occurs a total of 1,835 times in the combined written and spoken components of the BNC, with a rate of occurrence of roughly 1 token per every 53,198 words of text – also relatively rare, although more frequent than in the SBCSAE.

Table 1. Tokens of *stance* in the SBCSAE and BNC

Corpus	Tokens	Total words	Rate of occurrence
SBCSAE	3	249,000	1 per 83,000 words
BNC (Spoken Component)	42	10,334,947	1 per 246,070 words
BNC (Written Component)	1,793	87,284,364	1 per 48,681 words
BNC (Total)	1,835	97,619,311	1 per 53,198 words

Secondly, this table shows that *stance* occurs far more frequently in writing than it does in speech, at a greater-than five to one ratio. When the BNC is broken down by written versus spoken texts, the rate of occurrence of *stance* in the written component is 1 token per every 48,681 words of text, as contrasted with roughly 1 token per every 246,070 words in the spoken component.⁸ Thus *stance* occurs over five times more frequently in writing than it does in speaking.

Furthermore, when *stance* does occur in the BNC, it is broadly correlated with formal registers. The three text types with the highest rate of occurrence of *stance* in the BNC are university essays, newspaper writing on science, and non-academic writings on law, politics, and education. In the spoken component of the BNC, the two text-types with the highest rate of occurrence of *stance* are scripted speeches and social science lectures. Interestingly, there is not a single token of *stance* in the entire 4-million word BNC sample of conversation. I shall return to the question of what exactly these distributional factors tell us about *stance* in Section 3.4 below, but it is necessary to first address this term from a qualitative and interactional perspective.

2.2 Qualitative analyses

As shown in Table 1 in the previous section, the SBCSAE contains only three tokens of *stance*. The present section provides a qualitative analysis of each of these tokens within their interactional contexts-of-use. These analyses bring to light five key conceptual principles of stance as follows: (1) stancetaking occurs on three (often overlapping) levels – stance is physical action, stance is personal attitude/belief/evaluation, and stance is social morality; (2) stance is public, and is perceivable, interpretable, and available for inspection by others (cf. Du Bois this volume); (3) stance is interactional in nature – it is collaboratively constructed among participants, and with respect to other stances (Scheibman, this volume, makes a similar point about the “relational” nature of stance in discourse); (4) stance is indexical (cf. Haviland 1989; Silverstein 1976), evoking aspects of the broader sociocultural framework or physical contexts in which it occurs; (5) stance is consequential – i.e., taking a stance leads to real consequences for the persons or institutions in-

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volved (cf. Du Bois, this volume, for the relationship between stancetaking and responsibility). In the remainder of this section, I will demonstrate how each of the three SBCSAE excerpts illustrates these five principles. In Section 2.3, I will present quantitative collocational evidence from the BNC which support these qualitative findings. Overall, I suggest that a qualitative understanding of what *stance* means in talk-in-interaction serves as a window into the academic concept of stance – both in the papers in this volume, and in language-related research on stance more generally. As we examine *stance* from a qualitative perspective in everyday talk, the reflexive relationship between these uses and the conceptualization of this term in academic stance research becomes apparent. We now turn to an analysis of each of the three *stance* tokens in the SBCSAE.

Example (1) comes from a recording of a judo class. In this speech event (SBC057, entitled *Throw Me*) the sensei, Nick, is teaching and demonstrating Hane-Makikomi (springing wraparound throw). This excerpt begins as Nick is explaining the kinds of situations in which Hane-Makikomi would be useful.⁹

(1) (*Throw Me* SBC057: 948.362-966.593)

- 1 NICK: ... But I like the Hane-Makikomi,
- 2 ... (H) when it's used on a player (Hx),
- 3 ... who's fighting you in that,
- 4 → ... extre=me (Hx) defensive stance.
- 5 ... (H) While he's down in a deep jigo.
- 6 .. Preferably,
- 7 ... with his left foot forward.
- 8 ... Pressing against you with that left hand.
- 9 ... Keeping you out.

The term *stance* appears at the arrow in line 4 of this example, *extreme defensive stance*. This excerpt presents a hypothetical example – a description of when Hane-Makikomi would be a desirable throw. The interactants are *you* (the judo practitioner who will be using Hane-Makikomi) and *he* (the opponent who *is fighting you in that extreme defensive stance*).

The textual and physical contexts of *stance* in this excerpt illustrate each of the five principles outlined above. First, in this case, the use of *stance* here is clearly a physical act. As described in Nick's subsequent explanation, this *extreme defensive stance* refers literally to a physical way in which the opponent is positioning his body, *down in a deep jigo* (line 5) (*jigo* is a judo term referring to 'self-defensive posture'), *with his left foot forward* (line 7), *Pressing against you with that left hand* (line 8). All of these descriptions refer to the opponent's stance, i.e., body posture. Secondly, the physical stance of this hypothetical opponent is public,

and is indeed being inspected and interpreted. In this case, Nick observes and inspects the hypothetical opponent's stance and describes it in detail. This kind of overt inspection of stance is, after all, part of assessing one's opponent during a judo match. He then interprets the stance as *Keeping you out* (line 9). Thirdly, this excerpt represents the interactionality inherent in taking a stance. On one level, the physical details of this particular stance require two individuals: *you* and *he* (your opponent). *You* must be there in order for the opponent to be *pressing against you with that left hand* (line 8). Similarly, it is *your* previous offensive moves that have led to the opponent's current *extreme defensive stance*, and it is the opponent's *extreme defensive stance* that will lead to *your* subsequent use of Hane-Makikomi. Fourthly, stance is indexical. Here, the physical stance points to (indexes) something beyond the textual and physical context: namely, it indexes the specific knowledge systems of judo, as well as the sociocultural background in which this martial art is embedded. This stance of a *deep jigo* has specific meaning within the practice of judo; i.e., seeing the opponent in this physical stance calls up a host of understandings about the opponents intentions, the opponent's probable next actions, and *your* best move. Finally, stance has consequences. In this case, the opponent's stance has the direct and physical consequence of eliciting Hane-Makikomi. And this relationship between stance and consequence is indeed the upshot of Nick's instruction in this excerpt. To roughly paraphrase: if your opponent takes a physical stance like this, then you respond with Hane-Makikomi.

While example (1) illustrates physical stance, the following two examples illustrate personal and moral stance. These remaining two tokens of *stance* in the SBCSAE both come from the same speech event (SBC035 entitled *Hold my Breath*). The relevant background information for understanding these excerpts is as follows. Stephanie (Steph) is a senior in high school and is presently applying to colleges. Gail is Stephanie's older cousin, who is currently a college student. Patty is Stephanie's mother, and Maureen (Maur) is Gail's mother.¹⁰ The conversation is taking place at a family get-together. In example (2), Gail is describing an event from the past, her application interview to attend a private Catholic college in the northeast – a college to which she was not admitted.

(2) (*Hold my Breath* SBC035: 285.730-303.681)

- 1 GAIL: .. You know what,
 2 they asked me some really weird [questions] though.
 3 MAUR: [I know].
 4 I know[2=2].
 5 PATTY: [2They2] [3did3],
 6 GAIL: [3Like3] they --

- 7 I expected to go in there= and talk about,
 8 you know my li=fe,
 9 and what I wanted out of a schoo=l,
 10 and what I expected from [the=m and,
 11 PATTY: [So what did they ask you].
 12 → GAIL: (H)] They asked me .. what my stance was abou- on abortion?
 13 .. [2(H)2]
 14 PATTY: [2Boy that2] was a dumb question,
 15 [3that's one --
 16 GAIL: [3Boom.
 17 I was like .. (TSCH)3],
 18 PATTY: That's a contro3]versial question,

In this excerpt, the *stance* token occurs in line 12 at the arrow, *They asked me what my stance was on abortion*. Unlike in example (1), this stance does not concern physical body posture, but rather the speaker's beliefs about, attitudes toward, and evaluation of a *controversial* (line 18) and *very personal* (as cited later in the transcript – not shown here) moral issue. Because of the similarities between this and the next example, I will discuss them both together after presenting example (3), which picks up 25 seconds later in the speech event from the end of example (2). Prompted by Gail's story of not being admitted to a college after an interview, Stephanie recounts the following experience of her friend Lee who was waitlisted under similar circumstances at a different college.

(3) (*Hold my Breath* SBC035: 328.955-365.521)

- 1 STEPH: (H) Lee applied to Williams.
 2 And she got waitlisted.
 3 .. (H) And Williams used to be real=ly lib- --
 4 ... (H) liberal whatever.
 5 .. But lately,
 6 .. the= information they're sending out is,
 7 (H) <VOX a ni=ce value= community uh,
 8 → (H) moral stance,
 9 da-da-da-da-da [I mean VOX>,
 10 PATTY: [There's nothing wrong with that,
 11 STEPH: (H) Well no,
 12 but what they're do- --
 13 PATTY: that's important].
 14 STEPH: But],
 15 but m- Mom,

- 16 what I'm [saying is],
 17 PATTY: [I'm listening].
 18 STEPH: (H) ... They had,
 19 ... years ago,
 20 .. they had <VOX the sit-ins VOX>,
 21 .. everything you know,
 22 (H) real liberal,
 23 .. now they're going to conservative,
 24 and when she was interviewed for it,
 25 (H) they= .. took her answers .. very .. slowly,
 26 and they waitlisted her,
 27 (H) she had the grades,
 28 .. but she didn't have the political views.

The *stance* token in this excerpt occurs in line 8 at the arrow, *moral stance*. As in the previous example, this use of *stance* refers to beliefs, attitudes, and values. However, unlike in the previous example, the stance here in example (3) is attributed to a general institution (Williams), rather than to a specific person (Gail) as in example (2).

Taken together, examples (2)–(3) illustrate the five principles of stancetaking described earlier. First, stance in these examples is depicted as a personal belief or attitude, and likewise as a social value – e.g., *moral stance* in line 8 of example (3). Secondly, the observable, interpretable, and public nature of stance is highlighted in both cases. In example (2), Gail's stance was specifically elicited in the context of an interview. By the very nature of an interview, her stance is presumably being scrutinized, evaluated, and interpreted by the interviewer(s), for purposes of making a decision on her admission to the college. Similarly, in example (3), Stephanie is observing and criticizing the conservative *moral stance* of the college, at the same time that her mother is defending it. Stephanie's criticism of the college's stance is suggested by the mocking-sounding prosody in lines 7–9, and by the overall negative tone of her claim that the college has shifted from liberal to conservative. But the most important evidence that Stephanie is criticizing the college's stance is displayed in the uptake by her mother. Patty likewise interprets Stephanie's comments as criticism, and in turn seeks to defend the college's stance, *There's nothing wrong with that* (line 10). Subsequently, Patty herself evaluates the college's stance, *that's important* (line 13). The criticism, defense, and evaluation displayed in this sequence illustrates that stance is indeed observable and available for interpretation. Thirdly, both excerpts illustrate the interactional nature of stance. In example (2), the upshot of Gail's story is the juxtaposition of her stance on abortion with the (implied) stance of the private Catholic college. In example

(3), Stephanie's point is that the institution's stance was apparently at odds with the stance of her friend Lee. In both cases, it is the dialectic of conflict between the stances of the individual and the stances of the institution that lead to the overall realization of the stance more generally – just as in the case of the physical stance discussed in example (1), where the *extreme defensive stance* is described in terms of the positioning of two bodies with respect to one another. Fourthly, both excerpts demonstrate the indexical nature of stance. In example (2), Gail's stance on abortion, which is never overtly stated here, is seen as indexing wider social morals and values; a so-called “anti-abortion” or “pro-life” stance would stereotypically index Gail as likely being a person who supports more conservative political views and agendas, while a so-called “pro-abortion” or “pro-choice” stance would stereotypically index and imply that she holds a wider array of more liberal political views. In example (3), the college's “moral stance” likewise indexes a range of other stances, *a nice value community* (line 7) and an unspecified list of other conservative views insinuated by Stephanie's *da-da-da-da-da* (line 9). Finally, in both excerpts, stance is consequential. The implications of example (2) are that Gail's stance on abortion may have led her to not gain admission to this particular school, while in example (3), Stephanie suggests that the lack of alignment between Lee's views with the stance of the college may have led to Lee being waitlisted, *she had the grades, but she didn't have the political views* (lines 27–28).

The qualitative analyses of these three excerpts from the SBCSAE have illustrated five general principles of stancetaking in discourse. In the following section, we will return to the BNC and examine how collocational evidence supports these qualitative findings as well.

2.3 Collocational evidence

The previous section has illustrated five general themes observed in stancetaking in discourse: stance is physical/personal/moral, stance is public and interpretable, stance is interactional, stance is indexical, and stance is consequential. This section provides a brief overview of the adjectives in the BNC that are immediate collocates with (i.e., occur one word to the left of) *stance*. An analysis of the kinds of adjectives that typically occur with *stance* leads to a richer understanding of the meaning of this term, and supplements the quantitative and qualitative findings presented in the previous two sections.

The following table shows the 20 adjectives in the BNC that collocate with *stance* more than five times in the corpus.

Table 2. Adjectives in the BNC collocating with *stance* (frequency > 5)

Adjective	Number of tokens
political	37
aggressive	20
moral	16
upright	15
tough	13
critical	12
neutral	10
positive	10
forward	10
public	10
negative	9
basic	9
particular	8
left	8
ideological	7
conservative	7
anti-abortion	6
previous	6
different	6
right	6

This table shows that there are only 20 adjectives in the BNC that serve as immediate collocates of *stance* with a frequency greater-than five tokens apiece. These adjectives are illustrative of how *stance* is conceptualized in naturally-occurring speech and writing, and I will now turn to a summary of these findings with respect to the qualitative observations from the previous section.

First, collocates of *stance* reflect the physical, evaluative, personal, and moral dimensions of *stance*, and these categories often overlap. A close inspection of the larger co-text shows that there are four adjectives in this list that refer to physical *stance* only: *upright*, *forward*, *left*, and *right* (with the exception of one token of *right* meaning ‘morally correct’). For example: “Fair-haired, tall and with a distinctive *upright stance*, Geoff’s powerful running, strength, and cultured style...” (B2H); “For the evolving herbivores the advantage of an *upright stance* was soon complemented by the ability to rear up...” (C9A); “From this position the beginner steps into the *forward stance*, in which about 60 per cent of the body weight is on...” (GVF); “You take up a *left stance* and line yourself up so that your left foot is in front of the opponent...” (A0M); “The attacker steps forward into the *right stance* to deliver a right lunge punch.” (GVF). One token of *right* is evaluative in nature and reflects moral *stance*: “...exotic religious sect. He was both eager to

adopt the *right stance* and unnerved by the strangeness of it.” (FAJ). Other evaluative *stance* collocates include *critical*, *positive*, *neutral*, and *negative*. For example: “...loss of support for the Greens was attributed to their *critical stance* on unification...” (HL2); “Clearly, this kind of legislation reflects a more *positive stance* towards older workers and their role in the labour market.” (B01); “I have to report a very *negative stance* by the British Mountaineering Council to our association...” (ECG). Adjectives that highlight the personal and moral nature of stance include: *moral*, *ideological*, *conservative*, and *anti-abortion*. For example: “But this does not mean that it takes the *conservative stance* of necessarily accepting existing definitions of crime.” (CRX); “...the anti-abortion lobby had apparently been indicating the ‘weak’ *moral stance* of protestants on the issue.” (A07); “...at a time when Bush adopted an *anti-abortion stance*. And many American women see Hillary Clinton as much more...” (CEK). Two collocates, *tough* and *aggressive*, suggest that stance may often imply a high degree of severity or strength, and this applies to both physical and personal/moral stance. For example, physical stance: “Therefore, Piaroa boys are not constrained into learning the *aggressive stance* of young warriors to fight men of this world...” (CJ1); personal/moral: “...men are useful but disposable. The victims of their *aggressive stance* are their children.” (CH1); and “it was necessary for the Soviet Union to adopt a more *aggressive stance* if it were to maintain credibility as a rival to Washington...” (G1R).

The second principle observed in the previous section, namely that stance is public, is overtly supported by the collocational evidence as well – in particular by the adjectives *political* (the most frequent adjective collocate of *stance* in the BNC) and the adjective *public* itself. Consider for example: “...the group have attracted most attention for their confrontational *political stance*, most pertinently summed up on their recent mail order-only single and the LP’s strongest track, ‘Fuck The Right To Vote.’” (CGB). Here, the music group’s *political stance* is apparently sufficiently well-known as to attract attention, and is summed up (publicly) on a single from a record album. Similarly, in “A new Archbishop of Canterbury was selected who took a *public stance* against clergy in gay and lesbian relationships...” (C9S), the public nature of the stance is highlighted by the very adjective itself.

The third principle, namely the interactional nature of stance, is difficult to assess in terms of the collocational evidence alone. However, it does receive support from the collocates *basic*, *particular*, *previous*, and *different*. Each of these adjectives implies some sort of comparison with other stances: *basic* as opposed to more complicated, *particular* as opposed to general, *previous* as opposed to current and future, and *different*, which, by virtue of its very meaning, sets two stances in opposition to one another. Consider the use of *different stance* in the following BNC excerpt: “Geraldine Pederson-Krag, in a paper written in 1951, took a *different stance* from her psychoanalytic contemporaries when she ana-

lysed the system of mass production.” (CBH). In this sentence, two stances are clearly being pitted against one another: the stance of “Geraldine Pederson-Krag” and the opposing stances of her contemporaries. From this brief extract, we again glimpse the interactional and collaborative nature of stance, as one stance here is being juxtaposed against another – just as in examples (1)–(3) in the previous section. The final two principles, indexicality and consequentiality, would require more than a brief window of textual context. These both necessitate a broader understanding of the sociocultural and interactional nature of the stances being taken, which would be virtually impossible to achieve by using collocational evidence alone (cf. Hunston, this volume, in terms of the interplay between quantitative and qualitative analyses).

2.4 Summary

The previous three subsections have offered a quantitative and qualitative overview of how speakers and writers use the term *stance*. Approaching the meaning of *stance* from a usage-based perspective recognizes that frequency of use, the types of language it occurs in, and the broader interactional and collocational contexts all play a role in how stance is conceptualized.

In terms of frequency of use, Section 2.1 demonstrates that *stance* is an infrequent lexeme, occurs far more often in written discourse than in spoken discourse, and shows skewed distribution across the sub-genres of language recognized in the BNC. These distributional facts, especially the lack of a single token of *stance* in the 4-million-word conversational component of the BNC, suggest that *stance* is a term that tends to occur in quite specialized genre contexts. Even the three tokens of *stance* found in the SBCSAE illustrate the restricted contexts of use: one is a specific reference to posture in a judo class, and the other two are specific to a conversation about academic institutions – one referring to a college admissions interview, and the second referring to the institutional views of another school. It is no wonder, then, that *stance* has been appropriated for language-related research; this is in keeping with its formally-skewed distribution and prevalence in specialized genres.

The qualitative analyses of the three tokens in the SBCSAE brings to light five general principles about stancetaking that can be inferred from the use of the term *stance* in the context of interaction; and these same principles in fact will appear as themes, to varying degrees, in the subsequent papers in this volume. First, stance refers to physical embodied action, as in example (1), personal belief/attitude/evaluation, as in example (2), and/or the social morality espoused at the institutional level, as in example (3). Secondly, stance is a public act, which is rec-

ognizable, interpretable, and subject to evaluation by others (cf. Du Bois this volume). Thirdly, stance is a relational notion (cf. Scheibman this volume); stance is interactional in nature, collaboratively coming into being among the participants in an exchange and/or by virtue of opposition to other stances. Fourthly, specific stances are indexical, evoking larger aspects of the physical context or the socio-cultural systems in which they are embedded. Finally, stancetaking is consequential (cf. Du Bois this volume; Keisanen this volume); i.e., taking a stance has real consequences for the persons or institutions involved. Section 2.3 demonstrates that the adjectives that tend to collocate with *stance* provide further support for these five themes as observed qualitatively in the interactional data.

Our analysis of *stance* in discourse suggests overwhelmingly that it is by no means referring to a monolithic concept. Given the diverse nature of stance itself, as conceptualized in natural discourse, it is no wonder that the representation of stance in language-related research is also broad and multifaceted. Approaches to stance from an academic perspective tend to focus to varying degrees on any number of these five principles, although often this focus is only implicit. For this reason, stance has been operationalized differently from one researcher to the next, and a fair amount of work exists that deals with stance-related themes but that uses other terminology. The following section summarizes a few relevant approaches to stance from the perspective of language-related research, and serves to contextualize the present volume within this broader intellectual climate.

3. Research on stance: Subjectivity, evaluation, interaction

As suggested by the subtitle of the present volume – *Subjectivity, evaluation, interaction* – these three terms have each been widely associated with stance. In fact, most stance literature makes explicit reference to one or more of these categories. This section provides a cursory overview to contextualize the papers in the present volume. This review is not intended to be exhaustive or comprehensive, and interested readers should of course consult the cited works for more information and specific details.

Lyons, who has long championed the recognition of subjectivity in language, defines subjectivity as follows:

We can say that locutionary subjectivity is the locutionary agent's (the speaker's or writer's, the utterer's) expression of himself or herself in the act of utterance: locutionary subjectivity is, quite simply, self-expression in the use of language. (1994: 13)

Subjectivity, broadly construed, is seen as an essential quality of language. As Benveniste famously speculates: “language is marked so deeply by the expression of subjectivity that one might ask if it could still function and be called language if it were constructed otherwise” (1971: 225). However, until the mid 1980s, subjectivity remained out of the scope of interest for most linguists. Lyons (1981: Chap. 10) explores the complex nature of subjectivity and its central role in language use, and laments that approaches to semantics and pragmatics that fail to fully embrace subjectivity are inherently flawed. Within the past quarter century after Lyons’ claim, subjectivity has indeed taken on a more central role in linguistics – especially in cognitive linguistics and other functionalist paradigms. Langacker (1985) notes the inherent role of subjectivity in construing a scene and profiling various aspects of it. The subjective nature of point-of-view and scene construal is central to cognitive grammar, and has been more fully fleshed out over the intervening years (Langacker 1999, *inter alia*). Athanasiadou et al. (2006) provides a recent and thorough overview of subjectivity from a variety of linguistic perspectives.

Evaluation has been operationalized by Thompson and Hunston as follows:

evaluation is the broad cover term for the expression of the speaker or writer’s attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about. That attitude may relate to certainty or obligation or desirability or any of a number of other sets of values. (2000: 5)

Thus, evaluation can be roughly summed up as subjectivity with a focus. In other words, while subjectivity refers broadly to “self-expression” (Lyons 1994: 13), evaluation implies self-expression that is focused toward a narrow purview – self-expression about the “entities or propositions” (Thompson and Hunston 2000: 5) present in the very language that the speaker or writer is currently producing. Research in evaluation therefore seeks to explicate the range of lexical, grammatical, textual, and intertextual means by which speakers and writers laminate their language with their attitudes and points-of-view about its content. Hunston and Thompson (2000) present work on evaluation from a variety of perspectives (see Thompson and Hunston (2000) for a comprehensive overview). Evaluation figures prominently both in corpus linguistics and in systemic-functional linguistics. For the latter, Martin and White (2005) provide a thorough examination of evaluation from an appraisal framework. Other work on evaluation has focused on elucidating its features within specific types of language – e.g., Bednarek (2006) provides a book-length study of evaluation in newspaper discourse.

Both subjectivity and evaluation are strongly implicated in the following two definitions of stance. Biber et al. define stance as: “personal feelings, attitudes, value judgments, or assessments” (1999: 966). Similarly, in earlier work, Biber and

Finegan define stance as “the lexical and grammatical expression of attitudes, feelings, judgments, or commitment concerning the propositional content of a message” (1989: 92). Both definitions strongly assert the subjective and evaluative nature of stance. Given the categories proposed in these two definitions, we observe that stance can be subdivided into evaluation (“value judgments,” “assessments,” and “attitudes”), affect (“personal feelings”) (cf. Ochs 1989), and epistemicity (“commitment”). Researching stance, then, according to the two definitions cited above, entails a clear form/meaning relationship; stance is located in form, i.e., in “the lexical and grammatical expression” (Biber and Finegan 1989: 92). It is the goal of the stance researcher, then, according to this approach, to investigate how lexicon and grammar both encode and reflect the various categories of stance. Stubbs (1986) has called for a similar research agenda:

whenever speakers (or writers) say anything, they encode their point of view towards it ... The expression of such speakers’ attitudes is pervasive in all uses of language. All sentences encode such a point of view, ... and the description of the markers of such points of view and their meanings should therefore be a central topic for linguistics. (1986: 1)

Researchers in both corpus linguistics and systemic-functional linguistics have contributed to the identification and description of lexis and grammar that serve as markers of stance. In particular, adverbials have proven to be a rich source of various types of epistemic, attitudinal, and style stances (Biber and Finegan 1988, 1989; Conrad and Biber 2000; Downing 2002). The grammar of English modals has also been well documented and investigated (cf. review and discussion in Thompson and Hunston 2000: 20–21), as have evaluative adjectives and nouns (Hunston and Sinclair 2000). With regard to epistemic stance, or the degree of commitment/certainty of the speaker/writer, research on complement clauses and complement-taking predicates has also been fruitful. Field (1997) outlines the role of factive constructions to index epistemic stance. Kärkkäinen (2003) similarly approaches epistemic stance by analyzing certain kinds of complement-taking predicates such as *I think* – which, following Thompson and Mulac (1991), have grammaticized into epistemic fragments. See also Kärkkäinen (this volume) for an analysis of *I guess*, and Rauniomaa (this volume) for an analysis of two similar epistemic constructions in Finnish, *minun mielestä* (‘in my opinion’) and *minusta* (‘I think’). Hyland and Tse (2005) provide an overview of what they term “evaluative that constructions” in academic writing, demonstrating how writers use these types of complement clauses to display their own stance toward the information they are presenting.

Other recent studies have focused on stance and subjectivity in naturally-occurring conversation. Scheibman (2002) provides an overview of frequent

combinations of subjects, verb types, and tenses in American English, arguing that grammatical and lexical patterns are shaped by subjectivity and the speakers' needs to personalize their contributions to the discourse. Kärkkäinen (2003), as already discussed, analyzes subject-verb combinations that serve as epistemic fragments to index subjectivity and stance in American English conversation. Wu (2004) analyzes clause-final particles in Mandarin conversation and describes their use in marking epistemic stance.

Another trend in recent research entails a recognition of, and orientation to, the sociocultural dimensions of stancetaking. Ochs (1996) writes:

linguistic structures that index epistemic and affective stances are the basic linguistic resources for constructing/realizing social acts and social identities. Epistemic and affective stance has, then, an especially privileged role in the constitution of social life. This role may account in part for why stance is elaborately encoded in the grammars of many languages. (1996: 420)

Examples of recent work exploring the construction and realization of “social acts and social identities” (Ochs 1996: 420) through stance include Matoesian, who provides an analysis of a focus group meeting of police officers and demonstrates that stance serves to “index broader forms of socio-cultural knowledge embedded in the professional division of labor between academic trainers and police trainees” (2005: 169). Matoesian's work is also fairly unique among stance research, as it explicitly addresses the role of physical stance and embodied action. Shoaps (2004) analyzes Zacapultec ritual wedding councils and explores the various culturally-situated practices of stancetaking. Sheibman (this volume) addresses the interplay between stance, and the wider social discourses and stereotypes that those stances may evoke. On a more micro-level of identity, papers by Johnstone (this volume) and Englebretson (this volume) similarly deal with how speakers may use stancetaking to index social identities. (See also Bucholtz and Hall (2005) and Benwell and Stokoe (2006) on identity.)

Other recent approaches have begun to address the cross-cultural, cross-linguistic, historical, and developmental nature of stance marking. Precht (2003) provides a statistical analysis of stance-related lexemes and grammatical constructions in various genres of British and American English, noting cross-cultural differences in the expression of stance. Berman et al. (2002), and papers in Berman (2005) investigate what they term “discourse stance”:

We consider the notion ‘discourse stance’ as referring to three interrelated dimensions of text-construction: Orientation (Sender, Text, Recipient); Attitude (Epistemic, Deontic, Affective); and Generality (of reference and quantification – specific vs. general). These are functional dimensions which apply across texts...” (Berman et al. 2002: 258)

Scholars working in this approach have focused on analyzing and comparing a carefully-collected sample of written language from school children, of various ages and in various countries, to assess the development of “discourse stance” from a cross-linguistic perspective. Fitzmaurice (2004) presents a historical perspective on the development of stance markers in English, illustrating that many have shifted from a subjective to an intersubjective orientation.

The final trend that I will address in this section concerns the interactional nature of stancetaking, which takes as a startingpoint the intersubjectivity of language. Recent work, especially in cognitive linguistics, has begun to take such a focus. Verhagen (2005) presents one such notable in-depth study of this topic. Work on stance, specifically from an intersubjective approach, includes White, who views stance as an inherently dialogic activity, and investigates the textual resources that

provide the means for speakers/writers to take a stance towards the various points-of-view or social positionings being referenced by the text and thereby to position themselves with respect to the other social subjects who hold those positions. (2003: 259)

Yet, for researchers whose work is either based in or informed by conversation analysis (CA), as is the case with many (but not all) of the contributions to the present volume, intersubjectivity is nothing new. As Edwards (1999) observes, the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of CA take intersubjectivity as a given:

In CA, intersubjectivity is not so much a special domain of study, nor something carried by a special range of devices but, rather, it is a pervasive feature of talk, of the entire machinery of turn-taking for instance, of uptakes and recipient design, where every word we use is indexical. Furthermore, intersubjective understandings are part of talk’s business, part of what a stretch of talk is doing or accomplishing or proposing. (1999: 131)

Thus, any interactional sequence (such as adjacency pairs, assessment sequences, and so on) is inherently intersubjective – as implied from the *interactional* in the category label *interactional sequence*. Stance, then, from this perspective, takes its place among the aspects of language that are jointly constructed, negotiated, and realized in and through interaction. Heritage and Raymond (2005) provide one recent study along these lines. Several of the papers in the current volume, especially the contributions by Keisanen and Haddington, also deal with this aspect of stance head-on. However, the interactional nature of stance is not just evident in conversation, but is widely recognized in research on stance in writing as well. Written texts are broadly understood as interactive and interpersonal, and studies

of stance in writing focus both on how the author engages the readers, as well as how the readers engage with the text. (Hyland 2005; Hyland and Tse 2005; White 2003; *inter alia*).

In conclusion, this section has provided a brief overview of trends in stance research that, broadly construed, include subjectivity, evaluation, and interaction. This research background provides the intellectual context in which the papers in this volume have come into being.

4. Conclusion

The previous sections of this introduction have contextualized this volume within the broader discourse-based and academic notions of stance. The current and final section briefly introduces each of the contributions to this volume in turn. Before getting to the specific papers, however, a note on transcription is in order. Throughout this volume, the reader will notice a variety of transcription systems and conventions. In the interests of being true to the authors' intentions, and in preserving the data as originally transcribed, we have chosen not to pursue a unified approach to transcription for the volume as a whole. Rather, we have chosen to allow each author to use the transcription system that best suits his or her purposes, and to include an appendix of transcription symbols at the end of each paper as relevant.

Each of the first four papers in the volume (after the introduction) addresses stance from within a specific approach to linguistics: corpus linguistics, sociolinguistics, field linguistics/grammatical description, and discourse linguistics. This group of papers begins with Hunston's contribution, a discussion of stance in large electronic corpora. Hunston demonstrates the essential role of both quantitative and qualitative analyses, and shows how these methods can profitably be used together in the identification and description of stance across and within various text types. In the next paper, Johnstone offers a sociolinguistic perspective on stance, exploring the relationship between dialect, local identity, and epistemic-stance moves. Through an analysis of a sociolinguistic interview with two residents of Pittsburgh, Johnstone explores the discursive construction of local identity, and the ways in which speakers use epistemic stance to support or undermine each others' claims about local-sounding speech. In the subsequent paper, Englebretson presents an overview of three aspects of stancetaking in colloquial Indonesian, and argues that grammatical descriptions of particular languages need to pay attention to how grammar functions in the service of stancetaking. Englebretson presents an overview of three aspects of colloquial Indonesian grammar (first-person-singular reference, the *-nya* clitic, and voice

alternation) and illustrates that in addition to the traditional functions ascribed to these three grammatical resources, speakers are actively using them to construct their social worlds through stancetaking. This group of four papers concludes with Scheibman's contribution, a study of generalizations in American English conversation. Scheibman describes the grammatical forms and discursive use of a set of generalizations in her corpus, demonstrating that generalizations are both subjective and intersubjective within the context of interactive discourse. Participants in conversation use generalizations primarily to index solidarity with one another, and generalizations themselves often index commonly held beliefs and broader cultural values. Through this analysis of generalizations, Scheibman highlights the interactive and collaborative nature of stancetaking.

The contribution by Du Bois presents a unified conceptual framework and model of stancetaking, known as the *stance triangle*, and serves to some degree as background for each of the remaining four papers in the volume. Du Bois argues that stance is a social action that is characterized in terms of the interrelated dimensions of objective, subjective, and intersubjective orientations. These three dimensions relate to the act of taking a stance, in which the stance-taker evaluates an object, positions the subject, and aligns with other subjects. These three facets of stancetaking are mutually constitutive, and, Du Bois shows, are regularly oriented to in naturally-occurring talk.

Each of the remaining four papers in the volume offers a unique perspective on stance in talk-in-interaction – informed by Du Bois's *stance triangle* model, as well as by methods of conversation analysis. These four papers are also grouped together because the authors themselves were members of the stance research group at the University of Oulu, Finland, under the direction of Elise Kärkkäinen, and each paper in this group represents significant research based on that project. In the first paper in this group, Kärkkäinen provides a description and account of the epistemic fragment *I guess* in American English conversation. Kärkkäinen argues that this expression serves to organize stancetaking among co-participants in talk, and is intimately bound up with the sequential organization and interpersonal projections in the conversation. In the following paper, Rauniomaa continues the theme of epistemic fragments in conversation, providing an analysis of two stance markers in Finnish, *minun mielestä* ('in my opinion') and *minusta* ('I think'). Rauniomaa observes the role of these epistemic fragments within assessment sequences, and explicates their function in the interactive projection of sequence organization. In the subsequent paper, Keisanen takes up the theme of stance in the sequential organization of talk, as she analyzes challenges that are formatted as negative interrogatives. Keisanen demonstrates the collaborative nature of stancetaking, in that the act of taking and challenging a stance relies on at least two participants. She demonstrates the consequential nature of stancetak-

ing, in that once a speaker has taken a stance, this stance is open for challenge by another participant. The volume concludes with Haddington's contribution on stancetaking in news interviews. Haddington observes ways in which interviewers position interviewees with regard to stance, and how interviewees in turn dialogically align or disalign with that positioning. Haddington shows that stance in news interviews is both collaborative and consequential.

To conclude, just as stancetaking itself is interactive and emergent in discourse, the understanding of stance that emerges out of the papers in this volume is likewise collaboratively constructed. Each of the authors brings to bear a particular approach, a certain perspective, and a range of data and questions. Each contribution highlights key facets of language as used in actual discourse, by real people, in their full sociocultural environments. Taken together, the papers in this volume offer a rich overview of this important aspect of sociocultural life and language use, and provide a starting point from which to pursue further exploration and refinement of the burgeoning field of stance research.

Notes

1. Throughout this chapter, italics serve to differentiate mention versus use of the term *stance*. When italicized, *stance* indicates a mention of this English lexical item, in order to focus on it as a specific term and to scrutinize its meaning and use. When not italicized, no such specific lexical focus is intended, and it should be understood as a use of this term in the full context of stance research.
2. All data cited from the BNC in this chapter have been extracted from the British National Corpus, distributed by Oxford University Computing Services on behalf of the BNC Consortium. All rights in the texts cited are reserved.
3. I wish to gratefully acknowledge Mark Davies for creating such a wonderfully accessible and user-friendly search tool for the BNC, and for making it publicly available online for language research purposes.
4. The figure of 249,000 words for the four volumes of the SBCSAE was arrived at after excluding non-word tokens such as speaker labels, pauses, and non-vocal noises such as table thumps; this figure also excludes non-lexical vocal noises such as laughter, coughing, and throat-clearing. This word-count is thus an accurate reflection of the number of spoken words (including truncated words and so-called filled pauses) in the SBCSAE to date.
5. The figure of 100 million words is generally cited as the size of the BNC. However, the number of W-Units (tagged words) in this corpus is actually around 97.6 million (officially 97,619,934 W-Units according to <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/corpus/index.xml.ID=numbers>, although this number is slightly less when using the VIEW search interface). Because concordances and queries operate on W-Units, all tables in this section will use the actual word-count generated by the concordance: 97,619,311 words according to the VIEW search tool.

6. According to the BNC FAQ at <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/faq.xml>. ID=corpus most of the audio recordings are stored in the National Sound Archive at the British Library where they can be accessed for research purposes.
7. A reviewer has raised the interesting question as to whether *stance* is used differently in American versus British English. Because of the vastly different nature of these two corpora, this is not a question I can answer here.
8. There is some slight variation in the exact word-count of the written and spoken components, depending on whether one uses the official BNC numbers or the numbers arrived at using VIEW. All numbers in this section refer to those calculated by the VIEW search tool. VIEW is based on David Lee's indexing work of the BNC: http://personal.cityu.edu.hk/~davidlee/devotedtocorpora/home/BNC_WORLD_INDEX.ZIP which claims to have corrected a number of errors and inconsistencies in the genre classification found in the publication version.
9. The transcription conventions used in the SBCSAE are outlined in Du Bois et al. (1993), and also appear in this volume as appendices to the papers by Scheibman and Kärkkäinen.
10. Due to space considerations, two of the speaker labels have been shortened from those presented in the published SBCSAE transcript. The actual speaker labels appearing in the published corpus read "STEPHANIE," "GAIL," "PATTY," and "MAUREEN."

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