Ideologies of Violence:

A Corpus and Discourse Analytic Approach to Stance in Threatening Communications

by

TAMMY ANGELA GALES

B.A. (Iowa State University) 1995

M.A. (Northern Arizona University) 1998

M.A. (University of California, Davis) 2007

DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Linguistics

in the

OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

of the

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

DAVIS

Approved:

Janet S. Shibamoto Smith, Chair

M. Cecilia Colombi, Member

Robert Leonard, Member

Committee in Charge

2010

i

ABSTRACT

If you change the hours of service on
January 4,2004 I will turn D.C. into a ghost town
The powder on the letter is RICIN
have a nice day

Fallen Angel

This authentic threat asserts impending fatal injury. Because of the dangerous nature of

threats, investigators must immediately ask: Is the intent real? Is the threatener likely to

act? With real lives at risk, using the *linguistic* information available to answer these

questions quickly and accurately is of great importance. Yet, because most scholarship on

threats has focused on behavioral characteristics, there is still a substantial lack of

understanding of the discursive nature of threatening language and a lack of agreement,

even, as to how threateners successfully threaten.

For this research, I created a corpus of 470 threat letters, collected over one year

at the Academy Group, a behavioral analysis firm of former F.B.I. Supervisory Special

Agents. Approaching these threats through the construct of 'stance,' an author's

culturally-organized feelings, value judgements, or assessments about a recipient or

proposition (Biber *et al.*, 1999), I utilize a triangulation of methods to uncover patterns of

epistemic and affective meaning within the genre.

First, through a survey of language ideologies, I synthesize how three

communities of practice view stance in threats; our ideologies overwhelmingly construct

a genre committed to violence and threatener control. Second, through a corpus-based

analysis, I outline how grammatical markers of stance are actually distributed,

uncovering an unexpected set of interpersonal functions—ones that ultimately *weaken* the

threatener's stance. This finding is contradictory to the surveyed impressions about threatening language, which focus, rather, on functions that *strengthen* the threatener's stance. Finally, I present the discourse analytic findings from two threat cases; one of which supports and enhances the form-based functions previously identified, while the other challenges them, demonstrating how language, when viewed from a functional perspective rather than from one based strictly on patterns of form, can reveal more intimate ways in which interpersonal meaning is conveyed in this socially-deviant genre. This multifaceted approach offers a more comprehensive understanding of the theoretical construct of stance and the performative nature of threatening.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

George Eliot once wrote: "It is never too late to be what you might have been.[1]" Her sentiment and the support of countless others have inspired me along this journey.

First, I would like to offer my sincere thanks to my dissertation advisor, Janet S. Shibamoto Smith, without whom this work would not have been possible. She has constantly challenged, encouraged, and guided me throughout this lengthy process, which, because of her support, has been incredibly rewarding. Janet, you have been a true mentor in *every* capacity.

Second, I would like to thank my committee members, Cecilia Colombi and Robert Leonard. Cecilia, thank you for introducing me to the intricate world of SFL. The wisdom you have imparted has sparked my intellect and set the foundation for much of my current and future research. Rob, under your mentorship and expertise, I not only expanded my theoretical knowledge of the field, but also applied it to authentic forensic linguistic cases. Thank you for aiding my way into a field where the interplay of theory and practice is so vital for *all* involved.

Third, I would like to acknowledge the generous contribution of Doug Biber, my former professor turned father-in-law, who served as an advisor on the corpus portion of my research. Thank you, Doug, for all of your patience, guidance, and endless support. The knowledge you have shared has been invaluable.

Additionally, Vineeta Chand has, on countless occasions over the past two years, served as an additional mentor for my research. Vineeta, I cannot thank you enough for

---

[1] Since I want to start off my research on an empirically-sound note, I would like to acknowledge the fact that there is some debate as to the actual authorship of this quote. This may provide an interesting study for those working on the authorship attribution side of forensic linguistics.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF TEXTS

1.1: Fallen Angel

1.2: School bomb

1.3: Anthrax

1.4: NFL stadium bomber

1.5: FDIC

1.6: Hired killer

1.7: Abacus slashes pay

2.1: Stop the madness

2.2a: We are Silverton (paralinguistic markers of stance)

2.2b: We are Silverton (lexical markers of stance)

2.2c: We are Silverton (grammatical markers of stance)

2.2d: We are Silverton (all markers of stance)

3.1a: Bernard (Untagged)

3.1b: Bernard (CLAWS4 Tagger)

3.1c: Bernard (Biber Tagger)

3.2: Goldman Sachs

3.3: We are Silverton (personalization)

3.4: You are MINE

5.1a: I have just a crush (grammatical markers of stance)

5.1b: I have just a crush (markers of Attitude)

5.1c: I have just a crush (markers of Engagement)

5.1d: I have just a crush (markers of Graduation)

LIST OF CASES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In October, 2003, the following letter regarding an upcoming change in interstate

trucking regulations, which was addressed to the Department of Transportation, was sent

to the White House:

> Text 1.1: Fallen Angel[2]
> If you change the hours of service on
> January 4,2004[3] I will turn D.C. into a ghost town
> The powder on the letter is RICIN
> have a nice day
>
> Fallen Angel

In 2007, the following bomb threat was handwritten on the wall of a public high school in

the U.S.:

> Text 1.2: School bomb[4]
> IM
> GONNA
> BOMB
> this School
> @ 2/23/07

1.1: THE LINGUISTIC NATURE OF THREATS

The above threats are authentic examples that assert impending fatal injury and severe

property destruction. Because of the dangerous nature of the threats, investigators must

immediately ask: Is the intent real or is someone playing a prank? Is the threat urgent? Is

the threatener likely to act? With real lives on the line and valuable property to protect,

---

[2] The Fallen Angel threat is publically available through the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) website: www.fbi.gov.
[3] All non-standard language use (e.g. misspellings, incorrect lexical choice, unusual syntax, spacing, and punctuation) has been left intact in all of the example texts herein.
[4] Unless otherwise noted, all threat texts and cases herein are the property of the Academy Group, Inc. and are used with their permission.

using the linguistic information available—as it is oftentimes the *only* element available for assessment (Smith, 2006)—to answer these questions about authorial intent and veracity in a timely and accurate manner is a matter of great urgency and importance. Yet, because the wealth of scholarship that aims to establish valid and reliable measurements of authorial intent and dangerousness has been primarily based on the behavioral characteristics of the threatener (e.g., Dietz *et al.*, 1991a, 1991b; Smith, 2006, 2008; Meloy and Hoffman, 2008; Meloy *et al.*, 2008), there is still a complete lack of understanding of the discursive nature of threatening language and a lack of agreement, even, as to how threateners successfully threaten.

At their core, threats are socially-construed linguistic acts of power between two parties—the threatener and the threatened. Specifically, the act of threatening is, in a Bourdieuian sense, an institution, which can be seen as a "relatively durable set of social relations" that "endows" an individual "with power" (1991: 8). And, like all forms of communication, threats are *socially* conditioned in that they are the manifestation of personal feelings, emotions, and intentions that have been shaped, influenced, and even encouraged by the larger social structure (Bourdieu, 1991; Eggins and Martin, 1997). Threats, then, are a social phenomenon—not an individual one. Threats cannot be defined outside of their context, i.e., they are created from and situated within the socio-historic period in which they are composed (Bourdieu, 1991; Storey, 1995). As such, they need to be investigated through a linguistic construct that views language as a part of the larger social semiotic system of meaning, at the very core of which are an author's culturally-

organized "personal feelings, attitudes, value judgements[5], or assessments" about the theme, recipient, or proposition being presented (Biber *et al.*, 1999: 966). This primary layer of meaning in all socially-situated communications, observed implicitly in those of a threatening nature, is referred to in corpus linguistics as an author's 'stance.'

Stance is a theoretical construct of ever-increasing interest, as it has come to be understood that a speaker or writer's internal thoughts, opinions, and attitudes about a topic being conveyed can be expressed subtly or boldly through the lexico-grammatical choices he or she makes (Biber, 2006). When viewed across a text, particular linguistic indexes of stance can greatly influence or affect the intended audience. As such a powerful construct, researchers have sought to reveal the mechanisms by which speakers or writers communicate their personal attitudes, judgements, or assessments in order to create intended effects (Biber, 2006). Stance has been widely studied across the disciplines of linguistics, anthropology, and psychology in such subfields as systemic functional linguistics, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, pragmatics, linguistic anthropology, sociocultural anthropology, and social psychology. However, like the concept of genre, stance has been broadly defined and idiosyncratically applied across these fields (Englebretson, 2007). At its core, stance is a difficult object of study—"it is a meaning, a type of meaning, or several types of meaning, rather than a form" (Hunston, 2007: 27), and this difficulty in identifying markers of stance has led to a theoretical understanding that is "heterogeneous and variegated," leaving cross-disciplinary

---

[5] Due to the fact that the Appraisal framework, one of the primary methods of analysis used in this research, possesses a category called 'Judgement,' this spelling will be utilized throughout my research as opposed to the American English spelling 'judgment' for the sake of consistency.

researchers with a concept that requires further investigation and refinement (Englebretson, 2007: 2-3), one of the main goals of this research.

Recently, foundational work done by corpus linguists on the notion of stance in easily accessible registers such as university lectures and academic essays has started to create an explicit framework that outlines some of the core lexical and grammatical features of stance and delineates how they function within these various registers and within the larger genre of university language (see e.g., Biber *et al.*, 1999; Biber, 2006). Yet, language, as a multifaceted social semiotic system, functions differently across the array of culturally-situated genres (Bakhtin, 1981; Martin, 1997; Biber *et al.*, 1999); thus, more genre-specific work needs to be done in order to further refine and shape the cross-disciplinary concept of stance, ultimately providing a more comprehensive description of those very features that reveal an author's underlying attitudes, judgements, or assessments about a topic, an intended audience, or, in this case, a threatened victim.

Threats, as socially-conditioned performative acts, are a social problem and only by viewing them as part of the larger social semiotic system of language can we begin to understand and interpret the meaning inherent within them. The purpose of this dissertation, then, is to explore the intersection of linguistic theory and legal practice where they relate to linguistic manifestations of stance in the discourse of threatening communications—an oftentimes dangerous genre that will greatly benefit from such research in applied work as well as offer theoretical expansion of our understanding of the formal expression of stance. Specifically, this dissertation seeks to answer the following research questions:

- How does stance manifest and function within threatening language? Which forms and functions are significant or salient to the genre? Which functional patterns occur more frequently in threats that have been realized vs. those that have not (i.e., threats that have been carried out vs. those that have not been carried out)? How do the results inform our understanding of the pragmatic act of threatening, i.e. how do threateners threaten? Are any interpersonal functions of stance reliable in helping to determine the level of intent in a threat?

- What can the study of stance on a lexical, clausal, and intra-textual level reveal? Specifically, how can a discourse analytic approach such as Appraisal[6] analysis be utilized to uncover additional layers of interpersonal meaning in threats?

- How are these findings of authorial stance in authentic threats reflected by our ideologies of threatening language? What effect do these ideologies ultimately have on the ways in which we organize, interpret, and reify threatening language and threatening language practices in society?

- How can the triangulation of methods used herein contribute to the cross-disciplinary understanding of stance as a theoretical construct? In particular, can the study of threats as a socially-defined genre contribute to the creation of a reliable and *unified* description of the lexical and grammatical features marking stance and the ways in which they function within and across genres?

Situating the study of stance within the genre of threatening communications is a particularly fruitful and, indeed, urgent project, since what we learn about an author's basic attitudes, judgements, and intentions can mean the difference between someone's

---

[6] Appraisal (Martin and Rose, 2003; Martin and White, 2005) is a discourse analysis framework within Systemic Functional Linguistics, discussed further in Chapters 3 and 5.

personal safety and his or her peril. Within this contextualization, then, the primary goal of this project is twofold. First, through the use of corpus analysis on a collection of 470 authentic threat texts, this project will provide a more reliable and comprehensive vision of authorial stance, and thereby the underlying meaning or pragmatic intent, in threatening communications. Furthermore, with the additional tools of Appraisal analysis, the features of stance identified in the corpus can be supplemented and integrated into a more cohesive, methodologically-rigorous system of assessing authorial stance in threats. Second, because corpus analysis has only been used to investigate more academic and communicative genres, this project will enrich current theoretical notions of stance, pointing out limitations and recalibrating the definition to include the results revealed by the analysis of this more covert genre. Ultimately, each step of this project aims to extend the theoretical concept of stance into new, unexplored territory and to test its practical role in threat assessment as an increasingly scientifically-grounded component of forensic linguistics, which will be discussed in more detail below.

1.2: SPEECH ACTS

At the heart of speech act theory (Austin 1962) are three primary levels of performance[7]: the locutionary act, the illocutionary force, and the perlocutionary effect. The locutionary act is simply the act of saying something. The locution revolves around the words uttered. The illocutionary force refers to the intent of the speaker, or the specific purpose the speaker had in uttering the words. Examples of various illocutionary acts include

---

[7] The majority of previous work on threatening language focuses on spoken discourse. However, because threats can be spoken *and* written, for the purposes of this research, the terms: speaker/hearer and writer/recipient, respectively, will be used interchangeably.

greeting, inviting, and refusing. Finally, the perlocutionary effect is the effect of the speaker's utterance on the hearer, i.e., the reaction of the hearer to the utterance. The hearer may return the speaker's greeting, for example, or she may accept or decline an invitation to dinner. Under Austin's (1962) framework, in order for acts such as promising, inviting, and warning to be performatives, they needed to be said in the proper context or environment, proffered by someone authorized to do so, and uttered in a performative manner. However, even though the old adage states, 'say what you mean and mean what you say,' it has been posited that "no such thing as naked literalness may actually exist" (Bauman, 1977: 10), especially when politeness factors come into play (Searle, 1969). To account for the fact that it is possible to perform an act without directly invoking the literal performative verb (i.e., the direct request: 'I hereby request you to close the door' vs. the indirect request: 'It is rather loud in here, isn't it?'), Searle (1969) distinguished between direct speech acts, where there is a direct relationship between the form and function of an utterance, and indirect speech acts, where that relationship is implied rather than direct. In the case of the former, the utterance, "I've never been unhappy," made by Andrei Taganov in Ayn Rand's (1936/1996) *We the Living*, is a simple declarative about Andrei's emotional state. However, when put in the context of the question posed by Kira Argounov, "Andrei, have you ever been happy?," it becomes an indirect speech act wherein Andrei uses the opposite adjective to *imply* that he has never actually been happy. Similarly, a remark about the 'glorious weather' made by the polite Mr. Bingley to Jane Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* (Austen, 1813/1981) would be taken as an invitation for a stroll through the garden, while the same utterance made by Mr. Collins, a very pragmatic man, would be simply interpreted as his feelings about the

weather. In the former two cases, "the speaker utters a sentence, means what he says, but also means something more" (Searle, 1975/1998: 617). Pragmatically-speaking, then, speech acts, especially indirect ones, are context dependent since much depends on the interpretation of the act by the hearer (Cutting, 2008). But despite Searle's (1969) felicity conditions, which state, among other criteria, that a hearer must hear and *understand* the speech act, it can be argued that a promise is still a promise so long as the speaker intends it to be. Little depends on the hearer's understanding of the promise. Likewise, an invitation, by definition, is still the performative act of inviting someone to do something regardless of the hearer's successful understanding or interpretation of that act. However, threatening—or the "uncooperative illocutionary verb" 'threaten' (Fraser, 1975)—by nature, problematizes this framework, i.e., if a hearer does not interpret an utterance as a threat, is it still, by definition, a threat? To date, there is not a consensus as to the definition of what constitutes a threat.

1.3: THREATS AS SPEECH ACTS

According to Fraser (1998), threats are intentional acts that use "language to send a message" and "bring about a desired transfer of information" (160), but at their core, threats are a very simple concept; they are, in fact, "a way of life" (Storey, 1995: 74)—a child threatens to take away his sister's favorite blanket if a toy is not immediately handed over; a mother threatens to take away her teenage daughter's driving privileges if she breaks curfew one more time; a customer threatens to sue an auto parts store for knowingly selling faulty merchandise. Threats are made in a variety of ways—they can be direct, as in the utterance 'I'm going to kill you tomorrow;' threats can be directly or

indirectly conditional, as in 'She'll die if you don't pay me $1 million dollars' or 'If you don't leave town, no one knows what might happen,' respectively; and threats can be veiled, or indirect, as in 'you'd better watch your back' (Napier and Mardigian, 2003; Yamanaka, 1995)[8]. Threats can be made for a wide variety of reasons—to vent anger, to instill fear, to cause a desired result, to challenge authority, to attract attention, to save face, to show intent of purpose, to further negotiations, or to provide humor (Milburn and Watman, 1981; Fraser, 1998). And, like many other speech acts such as invitations and promises, threats are dependent on the illocutionary force, or the intent, with which they are uttered (Fraser, 1998).

It has been argued that there is a fine line between threats and promises. So much so that Milburn and Watman (1981) state that "a threat is implicit in every promise: 'I will not do B if you do not do A.' Likewise, there is a promise in every threat assuming the threat to be truly contingent" (3). But while they define one speech act by defining the other, they do differentiate them by demonstrating that in the utterance: "'If you do A, I will do B,' …'A' is beneficial to the threatener and 'B' is beneficial to the target (*ibid.*). Shuy (1993) and Fraser (1998) further the delineation of speech acts by maintaining, each in a slightly different manner, that what differentiates a threat from its closest speech

---

[8] Some scholars/practitioners separate threats into four distinct categories: direct, conditional, indirect, and implied (e.g., Meloy *et al.*, 2008). In this paradigm, an indirect threat is as exemplified above, whereas an implied threat would be, for example, the act of a stalker sending roses to a celebrity's home address *after* she had filed a restraining order against him (*ibid.*). Verbally, an implied threat could be a seemingly innocuous utterance such as 'how is your son feeling today?' asked by the stalker to his victim, knowing it will cause her to fear for her son's safety. For the purposes here, 'indirect' will be used to refer to both nuanced types of threats.

acts—promises and warnings[9]—is a matter of perspective, benefit, and control. Table 1.1

summarizes Shuy's delineations between the three speech acts.

Table 1.1: Contrasts among Threatening, Warning, and Promising (Shuy, 1993: 98)

	Threatening	Warning	Promising
To the speaker's benefit	X		
To the hearer's benefit		X	X
To the hearer's detriment	X		
From speaker's perspective	X	X	X
Speaker controls outcome	X		X
Hearer controls outcome		X	

In this model, the main distinction between threats and the other two speech acts

is seen in the benefit, or alternatively, the detriment, produced by the utterance. A threat,

as opposed to a warning or a promise, is clearly made to the detriment of the hearer,

which is why it is "one of the most negatively received of all speech acts" (Shuy, 1993:

97). Conversely, while not explicitly stated by Shuy, it can be argued that the act of

threatening tilts the scale of power in favor of the speaker, thus benefiting the speaker.

According to Bourdieu (1991), a "linguistic exchange," such as proffering a threat, is "an

economic exchange which is established within a particular symbolic relation of power

between a producer, endowed with a certain linguistic capital, and a consumer…, and

which is capable of procuring a certain material or symbolic profit" (66). In other words,

utterances are "signs of wealth" and "signs of authority" on the part of the speaker, which

endow him or her with a level of linguistic capital. In the case of a threat, the speaker

remains in the position of power over the hearer, thereby benefitting from the exchange.

Fraser, however, does not interpret the act of threatening to be beneficial to the speaker.

---

[9] Shuy (1993) includes 'advising' in his list of similar speech acts; however, since he found that advising and threatening do not include any of the same characteristics (i.e., perspective, benefit, or control), it will not be included in the discussion here.

Rather, emphasis is placed on the detriment of the act to the hearer, as seen in Table 1.2 below.

Table 1.2: Contrasts among Threatening, Warning, and Promising (Fraser, 1998: 166, reformatted here for consistency with Table 1.1)

	Threatening	Warning	Promising
To the speaker's benefit			
To the hearer's benefit		X	X
To the speaker's detriment			
From hearer's detriment	X		
Speaker controls outcome	X	?	X
Hearer controls outcome	?	?	?
Speaker committed to act			X

Furthermore, Fraser differs in his interpretation of who controls the outcome, leaving it open-ended on the part of the hearer in situations where a conditional threat is proffered. In this situation, he surmises that if the hearer adheres to the threatener's demands, he or she may control the outcome. However, it must be pointed out that even in cases of conditional threats, the speaker, as the holder of the power in the relationship (Bourdieu, 1991), may still choose to abide by the conditions of the threat or not. Like other speech acts viewed through the "ethnocentric prescriptivism" of Grice's (1975) conversational implicatures (Hanks, 1996: 101), the maxim of quality, which requires the speaker to tell the truth and the hearer to assume the truth is being told, is not always adhered to in the case of threats (Storey, 1995). Finally, Fraser adds that only in the case of promising must the speaker commit to the act.

Therefore, Fraser (1998) states threats, as opposed to promises or warnings, only occur when the following three conditions are met: when the author of a communication expresses 1) his intent to commit or be responsible for commissioning an act, 2) his

"belief that this act will result in an unfavourable state of the world for the addressee," and 3) his intent "to intimidate the addressee through the addressee's awareness of the intention" (Fraser, 1998: 161). And while the addressee's awareness is mentioned in the final criterion, the most important aspect, according to Fraser, lies in the *intent* of the threatener—the intent to intimidate and instill fear in the addressee, which ultimately differentiates a threat from a joke, a simple promise, or even a stern warning. The act of threatening, here, is not dependent on the perlocutionary effect, i.e., an utterance, so long as it meets the aforementioned three criteria, is still defined as a successful threat even if the hearer does not interpret it as such (*ibid*.).

Storey (1995), however, moves beyond the notion that a threat can be defined by the intent of the speaker alone. In her terms, two further components need to exist in order to define a threat—the perlocutionary effect and the context. According to Storey, threats are intrinsically "two-way by nature;" in order for a threat to have meaning, i.e., in order for a threat to be a threat, "a threat must be accepted, or at least acknowledged, by the person being threatened" (75). The perlocutionary effect must be accepted or acknowledged by the recipient of that threat. For example, the threat, 'I'll kick your ass, if you don't apologize' uttered by a teenage girl to her boyfriend with whom she just fought, would not, in most cases, be taken seriously. It would not be accepted by the boyfriend as a threat, but rather a joke meant to lighten the mood. Yet, the same phrase uttered to the same boy in the context of a school yard brawl would most likely be accepted by the boy as a serious threat, highlighting the fact that, in addition to the illocutionary force of the utterance, the perlocutionary effect of the utterance also plays a part in the creation of a threat.

Furthermore, as threats are two-way performative acts, individuals must understand the psychological (Bateson, 1954/1972), cultural (Hymes, 1974), or social (Goffman, 1974, 1981) 'frame' in which they are participating (e.g., is the activity in which participants are involved understood as joking, inviting, warning, etc.?). These 'frames,' or the basic "principles of organization" which govern social events and a person's "subjective involvement in them" (Goffman, 1974: 10-11), allow individuals to organize their experiences, understand events, and negotiate meaning within a particular context. Similarly, Bartlett's (1932) concept of 'schema,' when referring to memory, states that one's past experiences function holistically to actively construct our current understanding and representation of events. Likewise, Fillmore (1975) offers that a 'prototype,' or frame, refers to "an expectation about the world, based on prior experience, against which new experiences are measured and interpreted" (Tannen, 1993: 17). And while each term refers to distinctly nuanced concepts, the underlying meaning is perfectly captured (Tannen, 1993) in what Ross (1975) called 'structures of expectations.' According to Ross (1975), "on the basis of one's experience of the world in a given culture (or combination of cultures), one organizes knowledge about the world and uses this knowledge to predict interpretations and relationships regarding new information, events, and experiences (in Tannen, 1993: 16).

Threats, therefore, are a social phenomenon—they are what Bourdieu (1991) refers to as "acts of institution" that signify a relationship of unequal power between the participants (73). Indeed, the "magical efficacy" of these performative utterances cannot be separated from their social context, which defines the conditions "which have to be fulfilled for the magic of words to operate" (*ibid*.). This concept is clearly exemplified in

the first of the three Anthrax threats, seen below in Text 1.3, which was sent to Tom

Brokaw at NBC within the month following the tragic events of September 11, 2001.

> Text 1.3: Anthrax[10]
> 09-11-01
> YOU CAN NOT STOP US.
> WE HAVE THIS ANTHRAX.
> YOU DIE NOW.
> ARE YOU AFRAID?
> DEATH TO AMERICA.
> DEATH TO ISRAEL.
> ALLAH IS GREAT.

In this direct threat, the significance of the date and the juxtaposition between

Allah as 'good' and America and Israel as 'bad' are intimately tied to the socio-cultural

time in which the threat was written. The author, building upon the inflamed post-9/11

cultural conflict, conveyed this message of harm to the public via this culturally-

dependent understanding of the threat's context. Dating the threat one month earlier,

substituting another country for Israel, or using a different form of spiritual praise would

have changed the culturally-mediated understanding of the threat, altering its intended

effect on the American people. Therefore, since context is "inherently and ultimately

unpredictable," it is difficult, if not impossible, "to construct a context-independent

definition of 'threat'" (Storey, 1995: 74). Thus, the context in which a threat is made

cannot be excluded from a threat's core definition.

For the purposes of this research, then, threats are defined as communicated

(written or spoken) speech acts, that are proffered for the benefit of the speaker and to the

detriment of the hearer, that are in the control of the speaker, and that are intended to and

have the effect of instilling fear in or intimidating a recipient. Similarly, threatening,

---

[10] The Amerithrax threat is publically available through the FBI website: www.fbi.gov.

herein, is a performative act (Searle, 1969), or a performative frame in its own right (Goffman, 1974; Bauman, 1977), whose most basic communicative aim is "to victimize others through terror and pain or the threat of terror and pain" (Olsson, 2004: 158). Finally, because the act of threatening is a social practice performed by social actors (van Leeuwen, 1993, 1996) wherein the act endows one actor with power over the other (Bourdieu, 1991), threats are defined herein as a socially-construed genre, which, on a contextual level, represents "the system of staged, goal-oriented social processes through which social subjects in a given culture live their lives" (Martin, 1997: 13).

1.4: THREATS AND THE LAW

When examining threats of a dangerous or intimidating nature, there is variability in their status within the law; i.e., threats, even of a dangerous nature, can be legal or illegal. To differentiate the manner of intent in threats deemed to be of a contextually-dangerous nature, Storey (1995) classifies them into three categories: warning threats, such as 'beware of dog' signs; pure threats, such as those made in cases of extortion or kidnapping; and frightening threats, such as those uttered to cause fear and intimidation (Storey, 1995). Threats of the first kind, warning threats, are typically legal. A 'beware of dog' sign should be taken as a real threat to potential trespassers[11], yet it is very legal for a homeowner to post such a sign. Likewise, a sign stating, 'Danger! Bear Country,' is legally (and appreciably) posted for the benefit of those hiking and camping in the area. Threats of the second two categories, however, most oftentimes cross the legal line, but

---

[11] There are, of course, those who post 'beware of dog' signs in order to give the *impression* that there is an impending threat to trespassers. However, even in this case, according to Storey's definition, if the intent is meant to keep trespassers at bay and potential trespassers believe the sign, then it is still a real threat regardless of the presence or absence of a vicious dog.

what happens at that point, somewhat mirrors the vagueness with which threats have been

defined.

According to Black's Law Dictionary, a threat is legally defined as "a

communicated intent to inflict physical or other harm on any person or on property… A

declaration of intention or determination to inflict punishment, loss, or pain on another, or

to injure another or his property by the commission of some unlawful act" (Black *et al.,*

1990: 1480). Moreover, it declares a threat to be "a menace; especially, any menace of

such a nature and extent as to unsettle the mind of the person on whom it operates, and to

take away from his acts that free and voluntary action…" (*ibid.*). Interestingly, the entry

refers to the multi-faceted nature of threats discussed above, and states that "the

prosecution must establish a 'true threat,' which means a serious threat as distinguished

from words uttered as mere political argument, idle talk or jest. In determining whether

words were uttered as a threat the context in which they were spoken must be

considered;" any kind of pure or frightening threat to the President of the United States,

for example, is a federal offense (*ibid.*). Within this legal definition, then, emphasis is

placed on all three aspects of threatening language—the illocutionary force of the speech

act, the perlocutionary effect the act has on the mind of the recipient, and the context in

which the threat was uttered. Yet, even with all three aspects legally defined, not all

threats are equal under the law. For example, in October of 1996, the following "pure"

threat in Text 1.4 was publically posted on the U.S.-based website: www.4chan.com.

> Text 1.4: NFL stadium bomber[12]
> On Sunday, October 22nd, 2006, there will be seven "dirty" explosive
> devices detonated in seven different U.S. cities; Miami, New York,
> Atlanta, Seattle, Houston, Oakland, and Cleveland. The death toll will

---

[12] The U.S. v. Jake J. Brahm threat is publically available through www.FindLaw.com.

approach 100,000 from the initial blasts and countless other fatalities will later occur as a result from radioactive fallout.

The bombs themselves will be delivered via trucks. These trucks will pull up to stadiums hosting NFL games in each respective city. All stadiums targeted are open air arenas, excluding Atlanta's Georgia Dome, the only enclosed stadium to be hit. Due to the open air, the radiological fallout will destroy those not killed in the initial explosion. The explosions will be near simultaneous, with the cities specifically chosen in different time zones to allow for multiple attacks at the same time.

The 22nd of October will mark the final day of Ramadan as it would fall in Mecca. Al-Qaida will be blamed for the attacks. Later, through Al-Jazeera, Osama bin Laden will issue a video message claiming responsibility for what he dubs "America's Hiroshima".

In the aftermath civil wars will erupt across the world, both in the Middle East and within the United States. Global economies will screech to a halt. General chaos will rule.

20-year-old Jake Brahm, who, in reality, was participating in a kind of writing contest, was arrested and charged with making a terrorist threat under U.S. Code Title 18, section 1038A, which makes it criminal to engage in acts of false information and hoaxes (U.S. Code, 2008). In 2008, due to the 'terrorist' nature of the threat, he was sentenced to six months in prison and six months of house arrest and he was ordered to pay $26,750 in restitution to two of the affected stadiums for the cost of extra security (FindLaw, 2006; National Terror Alert, 2008). In this case, the threat was clearly defined and therefore punishable. However, in contexts where stalking occurs, which falls under the "frightening" category of threats, the line between legal and illegal can be more difficult to determine, making it problematic for investigators and prosecutors alike.

Under Title 18, section 2261A, an offender is guilty of stalking if he or she intentionally causes another person to feel intimidation, fear, or "substantial emotional distress" (U.S. Code, 2008). In the U.S. alone, approximately one million women and

371,000 men report being stalked annually (Tjaden and Thoennes, 1998; Burgess and

Marchetti, 2009), and in the majority of cases, the threat is emotionally tangible and

greatly affects the victim. Studies have demonstrated that victims often feel compelled to

make drastic changes in their lifestyles from giving up social activities to moving, and it

has been reported that the "psychological terrorism" described by victims of stalking

created a change in 83% of surveyed victims' personalities (Spitzberg *et al.*, 1998;

Burgess and Marchetti, 2009). However, while demonstrating this emotional distress

appears to be an easy demarcation to make for the victim of stalking, as the burden of

proof falls on the prosecution in the U.S. judicial system, without the addition of a

physical crime such as property damage or rape, the *intent* to intimidate on the part of the

stalker is not so easily proven. In fact, Black's Law Dictionary (Black *et al.*, 1990) does

not even have a definition of stalking included as an entry. Rather, depending on the

nature of the stalking, the potential crime would fall under the definition of 'threat' above

or under 'harassment,' which is "a course of conduct directed at a specific person that

causes substantial emotional distress in such person and serves no legitimate purpose"

(*ibid.*: 717). Furthermore, as police officers are required to fulfill a variety of duties in the

course of their daily work, they have to prioritize which cases receive immediate

attention based on the potential for danger and violence (Smerick, 2009, personal

communication[13]). Unfortunately, reported stalking cases, which only appear to cause an

"unsettled mind" or "substantial emotion distress," often fall on the non-imminent side of

the threat scale as they are not as immediately dangerous as a kidnapping or a robbery

---

[13] Personal communication citations will hereafter be abbreviated as "p.c."

(*ibid.*). Thus, cases of stalking, such as that in Case 1.1 below, are not often investigated or prosecuted—until it is too late.

Case 1.1: Long Island stalking

On Long Island, NY in February 2004, Jane Anderson[14] ended her relationship with Mark Jones. Mark would not accept this fact and, over the next six months, Mark stalked Jane constantly. He repeatedly called Jane at home and at work; he confronted her while she was on her way to work and attempted to persuade her, by showing her the gun that was tucked into the front of his pants, to get into his car; he showed up at her place of employment and got verbally abusive and angry when he was not allowed to speak with her; he grabbed her in the street; and he verbally threatened Jane on numerous occasions with threats such as "You can run, but you can't hide." On numerous occasions, Jane called the local police department and eventually obtained a restraining order against Mark. However, despite all of these emotionally unsettling events, other than the imaginary legal boundary line drawn between Jane and Mark by the restraining order, no extra security precautions were implemented by Jane's brother, who was the building superintendent where she lived, and no extra effort was made by the local police department to offer further protection for Jane or her family. On July 5, 2004, Mark was seen leaving his place of employment with a full gasoline can in his trunk, driving his own car to Jane's house, and setting fire to her apartment. He specifically chose a time when he knew she and her entire family would be at home. Because there were bars on

---

[14] In order to protect the identities of those involved in threats that are *not* available through a public source, all identifying language (e.g., personal, corporate, and place names) has been removed from the example texts and cases herein. Generic pseudonyms have been used in their place.

the windows of Jane's sub-level dwelling, her sister was trapped in the apartment and died due to cardiac/respiratory arrest.

An expert testifying in this case stated that despite the threatening pattern of stalking displayed by Mark, no one was able to predict the violent action that occurred on July 5th. This strongly suggests that "an armed, obsessed, jealous individual, who is willing to commit multiple murders…" and who demonstrates "a complete disregard for the consequences of his actions" will not always be deterred from his "revenge" (Smerick, 2009, p.c.)[15].

Therefore, in stalking cases where the threat falls on the less imminent side of the scale, the "frightening" nature of the threat is still very real to the victim. And, in many cases, such as that above, when not properly dealt with through legal channels, the outcome can be just as detrimental to the victim and her family as in the case of "pure" threats. As these previous examples demonstrate, even after a threat is transmitted by the author and the recipient acknowledges it as such, there are still many factors that problematize the notion of 'threat' within the legal system—an endemic problem which this research aims to help clarify.

1.5: THREAT ASSESSMENT

Each year, countless numbers of threats are received at public and private law enforcement agencies for assessment. In 2003 alone, over 400 individual threats were investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), which handles only those cases that are deemed to be the most dangerous to national security and safety, and the number

---

[15] In addition to the information obtained through the noted practitioner who analyzed this case, excerpts were taken from the original case file at AGI and are used with their permission.

has steadily increased each year (Fitzgerald, 2007). This underlying and potentially imminent threat of violence requires those in the field of threat assessment to follow a generic protocol when analyzing a threat, which includes posing questions such as 'Is this indeed a threat?' 'If so, how dangerous is the threat?' and 'How plausible is the threat?' These primary questions asked in the first stage of threat assessment[16] (Napier and Mardigian, 2003) must depend on a solid linguistic foundation for answers in that they require the analyst first, to examine the contextual and linguistic cues[17] that can aid in differentiating between and defining pure, threatening, and warning threats and second, to analyze the linguistic manifestations of stance that can possibly provide further understanding of authorial intent and veracity inherent in the communication.

The FBI defines a threatening communication as a "verbalized, written, or electronically transmitted statement that states or suggests that some event will occur that will negatively affect the recipient, someone or something associated with him/her, or specified or non-specified others" (Fitzgerald, 2005: 2). Thus, using the aforementioned categorizations of threats, assessors determine if an utterance or communication poses a

---

[16] There are additional questions asked at this stage of assessment concerning the number of people in jeopardy, the sex of the letter writer, the native language of the writer, and the writer's level of criminal sophistication (Napier and Mardigian, 2003); these also require evaluation on the basis of linguistic cues, but are secondary to the central questions addressed in this project.

[17] This raises an interesting issue that is larger than the scope of this project, but will be mentioned here as it is highly relevant for future research. There is currently a debate between threat assessment practitioners about the most appropriate way to approach a threat assessment case. On the one hand, there are those who prefer to take a holistic approach, i.e., in addition to performing an examination of the language in the threat text, they gather as much background information about the case and the recipient of the threat as possible. They inquire about the victim's status at work and at home, they ask about odd events that may have 'triggered' the threat, and they consider as many contextual clues as possible. Those on the latter side, however, prefer to have *no* knowledge of outside contextual factors; their sole focus is on the language of the threat, claiming that knowledge of outside factors may have the potential to influence (subconsciously, of course) the analysis (Smerick, 2010, p.c.). As of yet, there is no empirical evidence supporting one method more strongly than the other; thus, this is an area rich for further research.

threat, and if so, if that threat is direct, indirect, or conditional, as each designation carries

with it various levels of assessed threat.

A direct threat, seen in Text 1.5 below, is thought to be the most imminently

serious as the language used clearly identifies a target, a time, the mode of threat (e.g.,

personal injury, defamation, murder), and/or a method that will be used to carry out the

threat (e.g., by planting a bomb, by divulging company secrets to the press, by sending a

poisonous chemical through the mail) (Napier and Mardigian, 2003). Sixty-five copies of

the following letter, which included a white powdery substance, were sent by U.S. postal

service from Amarillo, TX to various branches of Chase Bank, the Federal Deposit

Insurance Corporation (FDIC), and the Office of Thrift Supervision on October 18, 2008

(FBI, 2009).

> Text 1.5: FDIC
> STEAL TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE'S MONEY AND NOT
> EXPECT REPRERCUSSIONS. IT'S PAYBACK TIME. WHAT YOU
> JUST BREATHED IN WILL KILL YOU WITHIN 10 DAYS. THANK
> JOHN SMITH AND THE FDIC FOR YOUR DEMISE.

A conditional threat, exemplified by Text 1.6 below, which was received by a

senior-level officer at an international software company in 2007, is usually "presented as

an either/or proposition," which is contingent upon the recipient carrying out a requested

action (Napier and Mardigian, 2003: 17). Depending on the plausibility of the threat, the

depth of planning, and the detail specified in the language, among other factors,

conditional threats can be assessed to be more or less serious (*ibid.*).

> Text 1.6: Hired killer
> A am very Very sorry for you, is a pity that this is how your life is going
> to end is a pity but I will like to give you some chance to help your self if
> you will like to. As you can see there is no need of introducing my self to
> you because I don't have any business with you, My work as I am talking

to you now is just to kill you and I have to do it as I have already been
paid for that.

Some one that I will not like to tell you the name now but a friend
of yours came to us and told me that he want you dead… I sent my boys to
track you down cary on some invastigation on you and they have done that
but I told them not to kill you that I will like to contact you and see if your
life is Important to you or not… So I will like to know if you will Like to
live or die as some one has paid for us to kill you. I am given you just two
days to get back to me if you are ready to pay $20,000 or I will carry on
with my job.

WARNING: DO NOT CONTACT POLICE OR TELL ANY
ONE, FOR I DO THAT I WILL KNOW AND I WILL EXTEND IT TO
YOUR FAMILY.

DO NOT COME OUT ONCE IT IS 7:PM UNTILL I MAKE OUT
TIME TO SEE YOU AND GIVE YOU THE VEDIO TAPE OF MY
DISCOUSION WITH THE PERSON WHO WHANT YOU DEAD
THEN YOU CAN USE IT TO TAKE ANY LEGAL ACTION ON HIM.

GOOD LUCK AS I AWAIT YOUR REPLY.

Finally, an indirect threat, displayed in Text 1.7 below, which was posted on a

software company's internal blog site in 2008, is the most difficult threat type to identify

and assess as the language is frequently vague and opaque and the threatened action is

not dependent on whether or not another action is carried out. Indirect threats often take

the tone of a warning or a complaint with the threat being left for the recipient to interpret

(Napier and Mardigian, 2003).

Text 1.7: Abacus slashes pay
#27 – Update Abacus slashes pay in North Templeton, Springfield
It looks like it's time to start sprinkling iron filings and carbon dust around
the power supplies. A few well placed magnets also add to the fun. Acme
should brace itself for a rough ride! …

The second step, once it is decided that a threat exists, is to determine how likely the

author is to act on the threat.

For assessment purposes, there are currently three broad designations for threats:

high, moderate, and low; these categories are assigned based on how likely a threat is to

be fulfilled (Rugala and Fitzgerald, 2003). In general, threat assessors consider a low-

level threat as one that appears to pose little risk to the recipient and/or others. This can

be signified by lexically-mitigated language, conditional phrases (e.g., 'perhaps I

might…'), implausible actions (e.g., 'I will blow up every building on campus at the

same time…'), and a lack of detail as to the time, place, or person targeted (e.g., 'You

better watch out or else…') (Napier and Mardigian, 2003). A medium- or moderate-level

threat is one that, in general, is more realistic and believable, but still suggests some

aspect of doubt in terms of the person or place targeted or the plausibility of it being able

to be fulfilled. Threats in this category usually demonstrate a certain level of pre-planning

and forethought in their description of how the threat will be carried out and provide

more concrete and descriptive language about the target of the threat. They will

oftentimes, however, include language that tries to bolster the validity of the intent (e.g.,

'This is no joke…') (*ibid.*). Finally, a high level threat is one that is highly credible and

whose stated facts can be readily identified and verified. These threats typically contain

detailed descriptions of how the threat will be carried out, who or what is targeted, and

how the threatener will reach that target. Furthermore, when the threat level is high, the

timeframe in which the threat will occur is often included (*ibid.*). These categorizations

are summarized in Table 1.3 below.

Table 1.3: Features of Threat Level Categories (Napier and Mardigian, 2003: 18)

Threat Level Category	Features	Source Examples
Low	conditional phrases; lexically-mitigated language or weakening phrases; implausible actions for the grievance; vague, non-specific language with a lack of detail of time, place, or target; language	"If Tahiti…" "I may get… and perhaps we will." ('may,' 'perhaps') "Build a fertilizer bomb for the casino, like was used in Oklahoma City."

Moderate	that tries to bolster the seriousness of intent plausible action; evidence of preplanning; language with more detail of time, place, or target; evidence of knowledge; language that tries to bolster the seriousness of intent	"I have collected black powder and a fuse." "I know which east side pillar near that store provides the support anchor…" "Take me serious, I mean it."
High	direct threat; factual data included that can be verified; target of threat is identified; specific detail about time or place; threat is credible; evidence of preplanning and specific knowledge; specific detail about the intended action	"Jones is a man of no morals. …he will die this Tuesday, before noon." "I have acquired a scoped deer rifle with a five-shot clip." "If I can't find him at the casino, I will find him at his residence on Townsend Ave." "I will shoot him between the eyes."

But even though the use of these three labels is fairly consistent across the field, each law enforcement agency maintains its own system of threat categorization and assessment based on this vague collection of rather open-ended markers. The current system for evaluating a threat's level of intent at the FBI's National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC), for example, examines seven equally-weighted factors such as the amount and degree of anger expressed, evidence of personalization, the amount of detail included about the intended action, the estimated level of technical expertise possessed by the anonymous author to carry out the threat, the potential commitment level of the author, the occurrence of ancillary events, and the actual escalation of intensity of a threat (Rugala and Fitzgerald, 2003). Linguistically, these factors can manifest themselves to varying degrees through the use of profanity or other emotionally intensified language; second person pronouns, proper names, and home addresses; verbs or nouns that explicitly describe the action to be taken; general time frames in which the

threat is to occur; and modals of intent such as 'must,' 'have to,' or 'will' (Mardigian, 2008, p.c.). And while experience and intuition admittedly play a vital role in the ability of law enforcement officers to assess and mitigate the danger of threats (*ibid.*; Smerick, 2009, p.c.), the 'structures of expectations' (Ross, 1975; Tannen 1993) or 'frames' (Bateson, 1954/1972; Goffman, 1974, 1981; Hymes, 1974) upon which law enforcement base these assessments will not always mirror those of the threatener, which can lead to a false assessment of a potentially volatile situation.

Over the past two decades, great strides have been made in the area of threat assessment with the introduction of the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP) in 1992 and the establishment of the *Journal of Threat Assessment*, [18] which was first published in 2001 (Smith, 2006). But while researchers continue to challenge the aforementioned criteria in a search for a more methodologically-grounded system of threat categorization and assessment, the studies have mostly focused on high profile victims such as celebrities, Congress members, Presidents, or federal judges (e.g., Dietz *et al.*, 1991a, 1991b; Fein and Vossekuil, 1999, 2000; Vossekuil *et al.*, 2001; Meloy and Hoffman, 2008; Meloy *et al.*, 2008) and on behavioral features associated with the threatener[19]. These *behavioral* studies, for example, examined the relationship between the occurrence of violence and a threatener's history with substance abuse (Rosenfeld and Harmon, 2002; Smith, 2006; Meloy *et al.*, 2008), prior criminal record (Scalora *et al.*, 2002), marital status (Smith, 2006), gender, education level, age, mental state (Fein and Vossekuil, 1999), and personality disorder (Berman *et al.*, 1998; Turner and Gelles,

---

[18] Unfortunately, as of 2003, this journal is no longer being published.
[19] For a more complete review of the literature on behavioral features associated with threats, see Smith, 2006 and Meloy *et al.*, 2008.

2003). Furthermore, Smith (2006, 2008) correlated a threatener's behavior with the type

of action committed or attempted as well as who or what was targeted. On the *textual*

side, both physical "document features," such as the mode of communication (e.g., email

vs. telephone), the method through which the communication was created (e.g.,

handwriting vs. computer), and the inclusion of an authentic return address; and what

have been called "language features," such as "a polite tone," the repeated mention of

themes of "love, marriage, or romance" (Smith, 2006: 81), and the thematic content of

grammatical clauses (Gottschalk, 1995) have also been investigated to determine the

level of intent to approach and/or harm an intended victim. Unfortunately, these studies,

which have largely focused on behavioral, stylistic, and thematic features of the genre,

have produced somewhat contradictory findings as to how successful any one category is

in accurately measuring the level of intent or danger in a threatening communication. The

fact that the grammatical features and functions of language, such as nominalizations,

adverbials, complement clauses, and modals that function as markers of an author's

stance towards the threatened action and victim, have largely been ignored is highly

problematic, as the majority of threats received are anonymous (Fitzgerald, 2007),

effectively leaving *language* as the primary evidence for assessment (Smith, 2006).

1.6: THREATENING LANGUAGE

While limited in nature and oftentimes indirectly mentioned in the literature, research on

the linguistic features associated with threatening communications as a genre has

primarily come from work based in sociology and behavioral psychology, which has

focused on the social role of threats (Milburn and Watman, 1981), bargaining situations

(Kent, 1967), leadership traits of national leaders (e.g., Weintraub, 1981, 1989, 2003; Hermann, 2003), and workplace violence (e.g., Davis, 1997; Turner and Gelles, 2003). What is covered here is an overview of how those scholars view threatening language *per se*, rather than as a measurement of intent to harm (e.g., Smith 2006, 2008; Meloy *et al.*, 2008), which has been the main focus of the majority of the aforementioned and, in some cases, following studies. What is summarized here takes from these studies only that which is suggested to be more or less inherent in all threatening communications, as it is from the combination of the linguistic structure and social context of a genre that we construct our impressions, interpretations, and expectations of its use (Christie and Martin, 1997; Martin, 1997).

Some of the earliest known research that examines the overall language of threats is Kent's (1967) work on verbal bargaining situations, wherein he measures the effect of conditional threats on the outcome of the situation. Specifically, he states that conditionality, whether implicit or explicit, is a defining feature of threats. For example, the utterance "'I will hit you' is not a threat, unless of course there is some additional 'if' clause which is supposed to be implicit" (31). What he determined is that explicitness of conditional clauses, as opposed to implicitness, minimizes the possibility of misunderstanding between the two participants and therefore enhances the force of the threat. Thus, the more linguistically complete a conditional threat is (e.g., *if* you don't do X, *then* I will do Y), the more believable it will be to the recipient and the more likely the recipient is to agree to the condition (*ibid.*). The explicitly stated version of a threat is referred to by Milburn and Watman (1981), discussed below, as the classic form of a threat, but they also acknowledge that all threats, if not explicitly so, are implicitly

conditional in nature. Kent concedes, however, that in terms of the bargaining power of the threatener in using an implicit vs. an explicit conditional form, "as far as the parties' decisions are concerned …all that matters is what they believe" (Kent, 1967: 87).

One of the first examinations of threats and their effects on social and verbal behavior can be found in Milburn and Watman (1981). Their work primarily emphasizes extra-linguistic factors such as the tone of voice and the surrounding context, or what they call "the verbal surround" (*ibid.*: 55) in which a threat is uttered. If the tone is angry or enraged or if the verbal surround is one of conflict between the two parties, there is a greater likelihood that the threat will be taken seriously. Linguistically, however, they call attention to what they term the "verbal context" (*ibid.*: 56). Here, verbal context refers specifically to insulting, pejorative language, which "can be expected to raise the intensity of feeling" and possibly lead, on the part of a normally calm person, to a threat being enacted (*ibid.*). For example, uttering the threat, "'You are a complete ass, and if you try to visit my daughter, I shall have you thrown in jail,' adds to the seriousness with which the incident is regarded and leaves it more likely that the conflict will escalate, and that counterinsults and counterthreats will be issued" (*ibid.*). Therefore, pejorative language and insulting terms, such as calling someone "a complete ass," that are accepted as insults in one's culture will play a large role in the seriousness and construction of authentic threats (*ibid.*).

Important work in behavioral psychology by Weintraub (1981, 1989, 2003), who isolated the grammatical aspects of spontaneity, deception, decision making, emotional expression, and intimacy, linked verbal habits and behavior of former national leaders such as Theodore Roosevelt, Richard Nixon, Ronald Regan, and Bill Clinton in order

create a descriptive framework of leadership styles. Applying concepts from Chomsky's (1957) early Transformational Grammar work, Weintraub states that the two sentences "John loved Mary" and "Mary was loved by John" represent two different surface structures that derive from the same deep structure (2003: 139). He claims that the two "styles" or surface structures are preferences chosen by different personality types; therefore, correlating particular psychiatric styles to certain grammatical structures can lead to a better understanding of human behavior (*ibid.*). Specifically, he outlined 12[20] grammatical categories that link speech to behavior and thought, some of which are: qualifiers ("I think," "kind of," "what you might call"), retractors ("but," "however," "nevertheless"), 'I' and 'we' as active participants, 'Me' as a passive participant, negatives ("not," "no," "never"), explainers ("because," "therefore," "since"), adverbial intensifiers ("very," "so," "really"), and direct references ("As I said previously in response to that question") (2003: 143-147).

While Weintraub does not explicitly relate these categories to threatening behavior as such, Smith (2006) points out that there are several behaviors which are intimately linked to those who threaten, and therefore, these categories may be highly relevant to threateners. For example, Smith claims that Weintraub's personality trait of decisiveness, which he measures by the occurrence of qualifiers, can lead to an assessment of how prepared a threatener is to carry out the intended act (2006). Other traits such as having an angry, aggressive disposition or an oppositional character, which have also been connected with threatening behavior (e.g. Davis, 1997), are measured by increased levels of negatives, direct references, and rhetorical questions and decreased

---

[20] Weintraub delineates 12 categories in his 2003 work, which is what is cited here. His previous grammatical categories, while mostly the same, varied in terms of organization and scope.

levels of qualifiers. Similarly, domineering behavior, another common trait of threateners (*ibid.*), is observed when there is a high level of connectives such as retractors and explainers, and Weintraub adds that obscenities and commands will also play a role in this kind of speaker's verbal behavior (2003).

Similarly, Hermann (2003) used language from the public speeches and media interviews of national political leaders to create a complex list of 'seven dimensions of personality,' which she then used to computationally predict the leadership traits of others through their language. Like Weintraub, Hermann did not specifically focus on threateners *per se*; however, she did identify behaviors which others have recognized as inherent in those who threaten. For example, Hermann's categories of "belief in one's own ability to control events" and "need for power and influence" aptly fit the profile of a threatener as previously defined (Shuy, 1993; Fraser, 1998). In what can be directly related to threatening behavior, she states that a speaker in these categories "proposes or engages in a strong, forceful action, such as an assault or attack…," "attempts to regulate the behavior of another person or group," "tries to persuade, bribe, or argue with someone else…," "and is concerned with his or her reputation or position" (*ibid.*). In both categories, she grammatically found that "the need for power focuses on verbs" (2003: 190). In Hermann's framework, then, behavior of a threatening nature is equated with a large number of highly descriptive verbs.

Another area of research focusing on threatening language originates in work on workplace violence. Based on a comprehensive 1992 report from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and a study on workplace violence (Jenkins, 1996), Turner and Gelles (2003) state that workplace violence is "the leading

cause of death for women in the workplace and second leading cause of death for men"

and that there are approximately 900-1000 workplace deaths every year nationwide (14).

It has been suggested that these statistics have been underreported by 25-50% (*ibid.*).

Furthermore, a U.S. Department of Justice study (Duhart, 2001) reported 1 million cases

of workers being attacked, 6 million cases of workers being threatened, and 16 million

cases of workers being harassed (Turner and Gelles, 2003). Workplace violence is

pervasive, and even though verbal abuse of a threatening nature almost always precedes

physical violence (e.g., Turner and Gelles found this to be true in 99% of the cases they

examined), large numbers of threats do occur without leading to violence. Yet, it must be

recognized that in each case, the risk of violence is still real and threats need to be

examined holistically (Turner & Gelles, 2003).

Turner and Gelles (2003), therefore, propose a "whole person" approach to threat

assessment, which includes examining verbal, mental, behavioral, and obsessive clues for

signs of potential violence. They claim that specific verbal clues such as language

inclusive of hopelessness, violent behaviors, fantasies, mention of suicide, profanity, and

other challenging, intimidating claims are generally apparent in threatening language and,

when measured accordingly, can serve as indicators of potential violence (*ibid.*).

Furthermore, obsessions about the object of desire and mention of weapons are also

indicative of threatening language (*ibid.*). Within their system of threat level

classification, depending on the specificity with which the following features are included

in a threat, they add: a description of the way in which a physical assault will take place

or property will be damaged, a time deadline in which the threat will be carried out, the

use of racist themes, mention of a behavior for which the victim needs to be punished, a

focus on self as the victim of some wrongdoing, and a fixation on a specific individual or group of individuals. In each case, the more detail or specificity used in a threat, the higher its level of dangerousness; conversely, the more general or vague each of the above categories is, the lower the level of potential danger (*ibid.*). Inclusion of some kind of description of the way in which a threat will be carried out and a focus on the victim, or personalization, were also noted as relevant to threatening language by Rugala and Fitzgerald (2003) in their discussion of threat assessment techniques discussed above.

Davis' (1997) work on managing workplace violence does not consider linguistic features in a holistic sense, but he does devote space to one lexical category in particular—profanity, which he claims is a key component of threats. Specifically, he states, "the use of profanity and other foul and offensive language often goes hand in hand with violent behavior. This is not to say that everyone who ever curses or utters an ethnic slur is going to commit an act of physical violence. However, almost all of those persons who do commit acts of violence use profanity and other offensive language— before, during, and after the act—to describe or discuss both the victim and the violence itself" (xiii).

Davis (1997) describes violence as a process, which unfolds in three distinct phases: early potential, escalated potential, and realized potential. During the first stage, there is a growing tendency for a person's behaviors to become increasingly inappropriate. These behaviors include objectifying and dehumanizing others, challenging authority, becoming argumentative, alienating customers or clients, spreading lies, swearing excessively, using sexually explicit language, and abusing others verbally. During the second stage, there is an escalation of arguing, ignoring company

policies, stealing, threatening, conveying unwanted sexual advances or violent intentions,

and blaming others. Finally, in the third stage, individuals might participate in physical

altercations, display weapons, and commit or attempt to commit assault, arson, or suicide

(Davis, 1997). In the first stage, profanity and derogatory language will be used to

objectify and dehumanize co-workers in order to lessen their worth in the eyes of the

individual, making it easier to target and blame others. In the second stage, these "slurs"

(12), escalate and take the form of a verbal threat and then a written threat, which may be

sent by email or internal company mail. Finally, in the last stage, time has allowed the

individual to build up anger, rage, or a feeling of malcontent to the point where they

might act out upon their former threats or instigate new ones with the intent of fulfilling

them. Davis cautions us to "remember, violence starts with thoughts and moves first to

language then to actions" (*ibid.*, 13). In his framework, profanity, pejorative language,

and derogatory language all play a role throughout the process of threatening and

especially in the escalation of abusive, violent behavior.

The linguistic features most commonly associated with threatening language are

summarized in Table 1.4 below. It must be noted that while the aforementioned scholars

briefly examined language and its association to threats, in many of cases, they did not

provide actual examples that included linguistic features. Rather, the discussions about

language were usually vague and non-descript. Therefore, authentic linguistic examples

taken from the Communicated Threat Assessment Reference Corpus (CTARC)[21], which

are inferred to be related to each specific feature, are offered. The inferences are based on

---

[21] CTARC is the corpus of threatening communications that I created for this research; it will be described, in detail, in Chapter 3. All examples used herein from CTARC are categorized by their threat type (DEF = defamation, STLK = stalking, etc.). The threat types are also described in Chapter 3.

discussions with experienced threat assessors at AGI and the ways in which they

categorize similar features and functions of threatening language[22].

Table 1.4: Linguistic Features and Functions Scholars and Practitioners most Associate

with Threatening Language

Linguistic Feature	Linguistic Function	Source Examples	Source	Examples from CTARC
conditional threats, conditional clauses	conditionality	"I will (or won't) do this *if* you do (or don't do) that." "If you harm A, I will harm you."	Kent, 1967: 30; Milburn and Watman, 1981: 14	*If you alert bank authorities, she dies* (OTH); *Unless yu pay me $1,000 in the maner explained below, sumthing terrible wil happen to your dauter Josephine.* (OTH)
insults, pejorative language (including racist and sexist language), profanity, obscenities	intimidation tactic	"You are a complete ass…;" "Get out of my way, you SOB." "dogs, beasts," "Give me your purse, bitch!" "You are the biggest bigot I ever met."	Milburn and Watman, 1981: 56, 62; Davis, 1997: 10-11; Turner and Gelles, 2003: 95; Weintraub, 2003; Mardigian, 2008, p.c.; Baker, 2008, p.c.	*airheaded submissive idiot female slut* (DEF); *incompetent deficient, sloppy and unprofessional* (DEF); *Your Nothing but, "A Worthless Piece of Shit."* (STLK)
specific or		"…you have	Turner and	*I will hunt you down*

---

[22] This is not to be taken as a sound methodology for the identification of linguistic features in threats, as there is no way to determine exactly how each scholar wished their data to be interpreted or exemplified. This chart merely demonstrates the lack with which linguistic features have been holistically discussed in this genre and provides a starting place to test several of the more common beliefs about the language of threats. In the following chapters, two very rigorous methodologies will be applied in order to examine the ways in which writers of threats encode their feelings, attitudes, and judgements about the recipient (i.e., their stance) through the linguistic elements that exist in the threatening communications.

vague action of harm		been judged, you will be punished just as you have punished others."	Gelles, 2003: 98; Hermann, 2003; Rugala and Fitzgerald, 2003; Mardigian, 2008, p.c.	*and kill you like a wild animal* (STLK); *I wanna slice open your wrists…* (STLK)
specific or general time frame		"your time is at hand;" "this can go on no longer;" "soon you will reap what you have sown;" "you must leave now or you will be responsible for what happens next."	Turner and Gelles, 2003: 98	*Be there in 10 days. Then I'm gonna start kicking butt* (HAR); *I will call you between 8 and 10 am tomorrow to instruct you on delivery.* (OTH)
behaviors for which a victim needs punishing		"you apply policies unfairly;" "I and everyone else knows what you did yesterday and what you have been getting away with for the past three months since you came here, you will not get away with this I promise you…"	Turner and Gelles, 2003: 95, 96	*You need to be counseling your father about his resent adultering girlfriend in Paris* (DEF); *A thieving S.O.B. interested only in how you can part from the shareholders even more money for *your* benefit…* (DEF)
second person pronouns	fixation on object of desire, personalization	"you, proper names,	Turner and Gelles, 2003; Rugala and Fitzgerald,	*But I will have you no matter what…* (STLK); *I will admit to you that the reason I'm going*

		knowledge of home address"	2003; Mardigian, 2008, p.c.	*ahead with this attempt now is because I cannot wait any longer to impress you.* (STLK); *Jodie will always be Jodie.* (STLK)
first person pronouns	focus on self as victim of injustice or wrongdoing	"I, me"	Turner and Gelles, 2003; Mardigian, 2008, p.c.	*Since I have been black-balled by employers…* (DEF); *Many dirty things happened to me...* (DEF)
modals	commitment to threat, demonstration of intent	"must, will, have to"	Mardigian, 2008, p.c.	*I must destroy her!* (STLK); *You have to obey the Holy Spirit's words.* (HAR)
adverbs	language that tries to bolster the seriousness of intent	"really, honestly, truly"	Mardigian, 2008, p.c.	*I'm really honestly being serious.* (STLK); *they are really going to give it to you…* (VIOL)
negatives	coping mechanism, denial	"not, no, never, nothing"	Weintraub, 1989: 12, 2003	*you never know where I will show up…* (STLK); *never talk to me again you frickin psycho* (STLK); *You are nothing more than a low life rat…* (HAR)
lack of qualifiers	*lack* of language that weakens a statement	"I think, kind of, what you might call, I believe"	Weintraub, 1989: 12, 57, 2003	*I think I shall wipe out a school bus some morning.* (VIOL) vs. *I will go on a kill rampage Fry. night…* (VIOL)
retractors	signals impulsivity, difficulty adhering to decisions	"but, although, however, nonetheless"	Weintraub, 1989: 13, 2003	*Although I was physically very strong, mentally I wasn't able to stop the harassment…* (VIOL); *…we hope to be able to release Chavez shortly after*

				your delivery. However, if any interference occurs with the delivery we will not hesitate to make him the first example…(OTH)
rhetorical questions	indicates aggression and direct engagement	"Do we not deserve better?"	Weintraub, 1989: 57, 2003; Baker, 2008, p.c.	*…why don't you show some concern for public sensibilities & cut the ad?* (VIOL) *WHAT???WILL HAPPEN???NEXT???* (HAR)
commands		"Wipe that grin off your face."	Weintraub, 1989: 57, 2003	*WELCOME BACK, NOW GET OUT!!!!* (HAR)
lexical markers of hopeless-ness, weapons, fantasies, suicide			Turner and Gelles, 2003	*This gun gives me pornographic power* (VIOL); *My ultimate fantasy is to have a beautiful, naughty, sexy lil girl like you as a daughter!!!* (STLK)

In sum, then, it has been posited or, more concisely, intuited that the grammatical and lexical features and functions generally inherent in threatening language include conditional clauses; adverbial or nominal markers of time; a threatened action; profanity, insults, or other derogatory language; a specified behavior for which a victim needs punishing; a focus on the victim as demonstrated through the use of second person pronouns, direct addresses or references, and proper names; a focus on the self as a victim as evidenced through first person subject and object pronouns; a commitment to the intended action through modals of obligation as opposed to the use of mitigating language; negative markers; conjunctions that retract or mitigate previous statements

rather than those that conjoin them; commands; rhetorical questions; and lexical terms

that refer to hopelessness, weapons, suicide, and fantasy. These features, to some degree,

most likely *do* play a role in functioning of threats; however, exactly what role they play

and to what extent they exist in threatening language remains to be empirically verified.

Furthermore, additional linguistic markers of stance, which could be valuable in

assessing and understanding threats, have yet to be uncovered—one of the main goals of

this research.

1.7: OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION

The remaining chapters will be laid out as follows: Chapter 2 provides a discussion of the

previous literature on 'stance,' as it is called in corpus linguistics, or 'evaluation,' as it is

broadly referred to within Systemic Functional Linguistics. Since stance has been long

studied within various disciplines such as Anthropology, Sociology, and Linguistics,

there is a wealth—albeit a "heterogeneous and variegated," wealth—of scholarship on the

topic (Englebretson, 2007: 2-3); thus, only the most pertinent and relevant literature will

be covered herein. Chapter 3 describes the data collection and compilation of the

Communicated Threat Assessment Reference Corpus (CTARC), a corpus of 470

authentic threatening communications that total over 152,000 words, on which the

analyses for this dissertation research were performed. This chapter also offers the

findings from a survey of threatening language ideologies. This study compares several

of the more oft-cited linguistic features associated with threatening language from

scholarly literature, law enforcement practice, and layperson impressions in order to

determine how accurate our frames (Bateson, 1954/1972; Hymes, 1974; Goffman, 1974,

1981) or 'structures of expectations' (Ross, 1975; Tannen, 1993) about threatening language truly are. The results demonstrate the need for further work on stance to be performed and, selecting two methodologies that have been well tested in such analyses (Englebretson, 2007), both corpus analysis (e.g., Biber *et al.*, 1998; Biber, 2006) and Appraisal analysis (e.g., Martin and Rose, 2003; Martin and White, 2005) will be explained in relationship to their roles in the investigation of stance in the genre of threatening communications herein. Chapter 4 offers a corpus-based analysis of those grammatical features identified through previous corpus-based studies on stance, specifically adverbials, complement clauses, and modals, and Chapter 5 provides an analysis of stance in two authentic threat texts at the lexical, clausal, and intra-textual level through the Appraisal framework. Chapter 6 concludes with a summary of the forms and functions of stance salient to threatening communications and revisits the research questions posed at the beginning of this research.

CHAPTER 2: THEORIZING 'STANCE'

"One of the most important things we do with words is take a stance" (du Bois, 2007: 139). And that stance—a speaker or writer's personal feelings, opinions, and attitudes about a person or proposition, generally speaking—can be expressed subtly or boldly through the lexico-grammatical choices he or she makes (Biber, 2006). When viewed across a text, particular indexes of stance can significantly influence the emotions and reactions of the audience as well as demonstrate the stancetaker's commitment to the mentioned proposition; furthermore, they can serve the purpose of aligning or disaligning the stancetaker with another person or proposition or of reproducing and reinforcing a socially-situated ideology, thereby making stance an extremely powerful construct (Biber, 2006; du Bois, 2007; Martin and White, 2005). In text 2.1, for example, there are several ways in which the writer's stance is represented through linguistic forms, language functions, and ideologically-constructed identities.

> Text 2.1: Stop the madness
> Subject: Stop the madness
> If this is how you treat honest dissent then WATCH OUT all
> of you will reap what you sow Umv is right BITCH you work
> for me and I say my rights and voice will NOT be silenced
> See your rat ass in costa rica

First, the writer demonstrates his negative feelings towards the recipient through the use of the lexically value-laden words *bitch* and *rat ass*. Likewise, he demonstrates negativity towards an unnamed proposition by calling it *madness* and something for which *dissent* was required—and justified in the writer's eyes as signaled by its collocation with *honest*. Moreover, the author simulates shouting or calls attention to certain words and phrases he deems important with the use of capitalization in *watch out*, *bitch*, and *not*, which serves

to emphasize his frustration or anger (Park, 2007). Finally, through the repeated use of *will*, used here as a modal of obligation or prediction, the writer demonstrates the seriousness with which he is making these claims in *will reap* and *will not be silenced*. Through the prosodic use of these negatively imbued lexical, paralinguistic, and grammatical markers, respectively, the writer makes his stance perfectly clear—he feels negatively towards the recipient and the unnamed proposition and he wants these feelings to be taken seriously.

In terms of the roles each participant plays in this scene, it can be seen that the writer is vying for power throughout the text—another way in which his stance is expressed. The recipient, possibly the author's supervisor or boss, is the one managing the *honest dissent*, and because the author does not agree with the way in which she handled the *dissent*, he reverses the power roles by declaring *bitch you work for me* and *my rights and voice will not be silenced*—the silencing being something that can only be done in certain socially-defined situations by the person holding the power (Bourdieu, 1991). Simultaneously, through the uptake of this particular stance, the author is choosing to align himself with a particular ideologically-defined identity (Jaffe, 2009). In this case, that identity could be described as that of the subjugated worker seeking retribution through a reversal of power. Furthermore, it has been found that an anonymous threat, as opposed to one that is signed, may cause greater anxiety and fear (Einhorn, 1992), which, in this case, serves to strengthen the writer's control of the situation and solidify his position as the one in power as well as to distance him from possible future repercussions in the event his identity is revealed (Mardigian, 2010, p.c.).

This is just a brief example to highlight some of the ways in which stance is negotiated and its markers are presented, yet much more could be examined in just this one short text. For example, the use of the more formulaic phrases *reap what you sow* and *not be silenced* as well as the invocation of *costa rica* as a seemingly negative place for the recipient may also contribute to the contextually-based meaning if explored in more depth.

What this discussion demonstrates is that stance is a powerful construct that is manifested in a multitude of ways as it allows speakers and writers not only to express their personal attitudes, feelings, and value judgements about a person or object and their commitment to a proposition (Biber *et al.*, 1999; Conrad and Biber, 2000), but also to negotiate power and solidarity between themselves and others (Martin and White, 2005) and to convey "presupposed systems of sociocultural value" (du Bois, 2007: 139). Linguistic stance "always arises out of the relation between the individual and a social matrix, including copresent others" (Hanks, 2000: 9); therefore, as a social act made by social actors (du Bois, 2007; van Leeuwen, 1993, 1996), stance is dialogic in that it references, refers to, and even juxtaposes voices that have come before, thereby further iterating, refining, shaping, or denouncing the stance of another (Bakhtin, 1981; Hanks, 2000; du Bois, 2007). And, stance is context-dependent and ideologically-driven in that it can be defined and interpreted variously across differing communities of practice (Kiesling, 2004; Bucholtz, 2009). As such a complex, social construct, stance has been widely studied across the disciplines of linguistics, anthropology, and psychology and this research has increased over the past two decades with multiple book publications, conference panels, and special journal issues devoted to the topic (Englebretson, 2007).

However, like the concept of genre, stance has been broadly defined and applied in a myriad of ways both within and across disciplines, leaving researchers of stance with multiple layers of theoretical understanding and numerous methodological approaches that continuously add to the list of stance types and to the debate of whether or not these types can function simultaneously (du Bois, 2007). And while this work on stance is arguably invaluable in the process of fleshing out this relatively new theoretical construct, what is ultimately missing from this work is a more multi-faceted functional approach that investigates how we, as social actors, interpret stance through our own culturally-constructed frames (Goffman, 1974, 1981); an approach that not only uncovers how well our preconceived notions about threatening language reflect the ways in which stance forms are manifested in actual language practice, but also reveals, on both a quantitative and a qualitative basis, how the myriad of literal and interpersonal functions of stance perform in a genre that has been ideologically- and socially-constructed.

This multilayered, iterative understanding of stance is essential for a variety of reason. First, stance, in its broadest sense, is a cognitive "device for interpreting the world" (Bednarek, 2006: 4), which, when linguistically expressed, not only allows us to offer this interpretation to others (*ibid.*), but also becomes part of the discursive practices "through which we make sense of our own and others' lives" (Davies and Harré, 1990: 46). Specifically, as we move through life, we consciously and unconsciously evaluate people, objects, and propositions and we mentally catalog those evaluations (Bednarek, 2006). As these evaluations are linguistically narrated across time, they are revised, edited, and reassembled through dialogic interaction with other voices, stances, and frames, and they continue to shape our ever-shifting identities or 'selves' (Ochs and

Capps, 1996; Haviland, 2005). Then, as variations of these 'narrated selves' come to represent or be associated with particular values or stances, what Bauman (2001) refers to as 'styles,' they can come to index certain socially-based ideologies (Johnstone, 2009). In fact, Kiesling (2009: 172) goes so far as to argue that it is in the very act of stancetaking that interactional meaning is created and that stance is a "primitive in sociolinguistic variation," i.e., it is where "indexicality in variation begins" and is "the original-first-" or "possibly," what he terms, the "zero-order indexicality" after Silverstein's (2003) model. Arguably, then, as these basic acts of evaluation are linguistically encoded within the language of speech participants, ideologies, indexing particular stances or styles over time through linguistic variation, are reproduced and disseminated, ultimately playing an essential role in social reproduction and change (Jaffe, 2009) and in the construction and reproduction of socially-based language practices; therefore, it is vital that we further our understanding of stance as a socially-performed act in order to better theorize this semiotic, and still relatively unexplored, relationship.

Moreover, according to Jaffe (2009: 3), "some forms of speech and writing are more stance-saturated than others" and many such kinds of language have been given attention in linguistics; for example, Biber *et al.* (1999), Conrad and Biber (2000), Precht (2000, 2003b), Scheibman (2002), Kärkkäinen (2003), and Wu (2004) examined grammatical features of stance in conversation, Biber *et al.* (1999), Conrad and Biber (2000), and Bednarek (2006) looked at stance or evaluative language in newspaper discourse; Biber *et al.* (1999), Conrad and Biber (2000), Charles (2004), Martin and White (2005), and Biber (2006) studied stance or appraisal in academic registers and genres; and Hoey (2000) and Johnstone (2009) provided an examination of stance in the

rhetoric of specific prominent individuals—Noam Chomsky, a well-known linguist, and Barbara Jordan, an African-American politician. Yet, threatening language, which I argue is equally, if not more highly, saturated with features of stance, as threats are proffered under times of great emotional stress or excitement and must demonstrate a relatively-high level of commitment in order to be interpreted as a threat, has not, as of yet, received any attention in stance research.

Finally, as stance provides a link between individual performance and meaning (Jaffe, 2009), affective and epistemic markers of stance serve as an index of authorial positionality, i.e., how a speaker or writer feels about the recipient and how certain a speaker or writer is about the proposed or implicit proposition. Thus, having a more grounded understanding of stance in threatening communications may provide valuable insight for those working in threat assessment and law enforcement. Informed by previous studies on stance (e.g., Biber *et al.*, 1999; Conrad and Biber, 2000; Martin and White, 2005; Biber, 2006), this research hypothesizes that stance markers, which have been shown to function differently across registers due to each register's specific "communicative purposes and production circumstances" (Conrad and Biber, 2000: 73), may function in yet another new way in this socially-defined genre and be variously interpreted based on one's culturally- (Hymes, 1974) and socially-defined (Goffman, 1974, 1981) footing or frames. Specifically, it is argued that the social sanction (Martin and White, 2005) against carrying out threats, i.e., arrest, prosecution, and jail time, may socially affect the ways in which writers express affect, use epistemic markers of commitment, and align themselves with various socially-constructed identities through stance, thereby posing new interpretations of the relationship between language forms

and ideologically-constructed language practices. According to Conrad and Biber (2000), for example, markers of epistemic stance—ones which demonstrate a speaker or writer's commitment level to a proposition and which are oftentimes used by law enforcement practitioners to help determine a threatener's commitment to carrying out their threatened action—have been found to perform various social functions that are separate from their traditional epistemic roles. In their analysis of spoken language, Conrad and Biber (2000) found that the high frequency of stance adverbials marking 'doubt' (e.g., 'perhaps,' 'maybe') oftentimes served the additional role of 'suggesting,' and adverbs traditionally marking the stance of 'actuality' or 'reality' (e.g., 'really,' 'actually') were also found to "soften disagreements" (*ibid.*: 73). Similarly, it has been found that the use of affective slang terms—those that are oftentimes used by threat assessment practitioners in determining an author's state of emotion towards the recipient of a threat—can perform multiple functions based on an individual's socially-constructed ideologies of the term, resulting in varying interpretations of the user's intended stance (Kiesling, 2004; Bucholtz, 2009). For example, as demonstrated in her study of the Mexican and Mexican American slang term 'güey,' which is most closely associated with the term 'dude,' Bucholtz (2009) found that while teachers considered the use of 'güey' to be vulgar and inappropriate, those who used the term did so as an interpersonal marker of solidarity to greet friends, boast, and offer playful insults, all of which signaled a stance of cool nonchalance, thereby demonstrating how affective language such as "slang gains its semiotic value only within the sociocultural context in which it is used" (*ibid.*: 165). Therefore, when related to threatening communications, it is imperative that further investigation of the markers and resulting functions of stance be empirically tested, as

those interpreting these previously untested manifestations of stance in this genre are doing so from their own socioculturally-constructed frames.

Thus, an examination of stance in threatening communications will ultimately provide an analysis of a new, stance-rich genre that will contribute to our growing understanding of stance as it is realized through language; it will shed light on the ways in which our socially-constructed understanding of language and language practices is reflected in its actual use, and it will offer insight into new ways in which markers of stance function based on the socially-situated context in which they are construed. The remainder of this chapter theoretically situates the current study of stance within the larger body of literature on evaluative language, arguing for a more dialectic approach than currently exists, and delineates the main ways in which stance manifests itself in language.

2.1: SITUATING 'STANCE'

As previously mentioned, interest in stance research has increased tremendously within the past few decades (Englebretson, 2007); yet, reviewing the literature is no easy task for two main reasons—first, a wide variety of labels have been used to define, broadly or more narrowly, the same concept, making generalizability of the concept within and across disciplines difficult at best; second, the three main labels in use, 'appraisal,' 'evaluation,' and 'stance,' have been theoretically operationalized in varying ways, making it difficult to create a uniform understanding of the phenomenon.

2.1.1: Demarcating 'Stance'

'Stance' and its various sub-components have been broadly referred to by terms such as 'affect,' which refers to the expression of feelings and emotions (Ochs, 1986, 1989; Ochs and Schieffelin, 1989); 'intensity,' which refers to the grading or amplification of emotions (Labov, 1984); 'modality,' which is broken into 'modalization' for expressing probability and 'modulation' for expressing obligation (Halliday, 1985/1994); 'hedging,' which has been broadly used to refer to expressions of reliability (Hyland, 1996, 1998; Bednarek, 2006); 'evidentiality,' which marks the reliability and source of a speaker's knowledge (Chafe, 1986; Chafe and Nichols, 1986); 'subjectivity,' which refers either to a speaker's expression of beliefs, judgements, attitudes, emotions, and personality—the focus of which is on the speaker's *self*-expression (Lyons, 1977, 1982) or to the "speaker's concern for the actual conduct of interaction" rather than the "participants' self-expression" (Fitzmaurice, 2004: 428); and 'commitment,' which more generally refers to the expression of beliefs, the articulation of various levels of commitment, and the adoption of positions of agreement/disagreement and alignment/disalignment (Stubbs, 1986).[23] Generally-speaking, these approaches to stance can be divided into two broad categories—those that treat stance as a myriad of separate phenomena—i.e., modality is treated as a separate phenomenon from attitudinal meaning (e.g., Halliday, 1985/1994; Eggins and Slade, 1997; Martin, 2000)—or as a single phenomenon that encompasses all

---

[23] Due to the fact that several comprehensive literature reviews covering these varying terms have been published within the past decade, they will not be delineated in more detail here. Instead, refer to Thompson and Hunston (2000), Bednarek (2006), Englebretson (2007), and Jaffe (2009) for an overview of these related terms.

aspects of stance (e.g., Conrad and Biber, 2000; Thompson and Hunston, 2000; Bednarek, 2006; du Bois, 2007).

Over the past few decades, three particular terms have seen a rise in popularity in linguistic and anthropologic research—'appraisal' (Martin, 2000; Martin and White, 2005), which primarily focuses on affective instantiations of 'stance;' 'evaluation' (Hunston, 1994; Thompson and Hunston, 2000; Bednarek, 2006); and 'stance' (Biber and Finegan, 1988, 1989; Biber *et al.*, 1999; Conrad and Biber, 2000; Bucholtz, 2009; Johnstone, 2009). But despite the fact that 'appraisal,' 'evaluation,' and 'stance' are the three most closely related and utilized terms in current use (Bednarek, 2006), they operationalize the concept in varying ways—none of which, I argue, when taken individually as has primarily been done in previous research, successfully addresses the multifaceted nature of stance herein explored.

2.1.2: Operationalizing 'Stance'

Traditionally-speaking, researchers in linguistics who have adopted the three terms— 'appraisal,' 'evaluation,' and 'stance'—have adhered, to a greater or lesser degree, to functional frameworks in that they focus on authentic language in use from the user's perspective (Thompson and Hunston, 2000), i.e., language is viewed as serving communicative ends (Nichols, 1984). Within these functional traditions, corpus linguistic researchers of 'stance' tend to ground their analyses in large collections of contextualized linguistic forms in order to identify and explain functional patterns of both epistemic and affective markers of stance (i.e., moving from form to function while emphasizing the similarities between epistemic and affective stance), while researchers utilizing

'appraisal' and, to a slightly lesser degree, 'evaluation' have closer ties to function-to-

form based approaches such as Halliday's (1985/1994) Systemic Functional Linguistics

(SFL) and Lemke's (1992, 1998) parameter-based frameworks, respectively. And while

each approach operationalizes the construct differently, one of the main differences

between these functional approaches, as pointed out by Bednarek (2006), is that while

Appraisal takes a separating approach to the study of stance (i.e., the differences between

affective and epistemic stance are emphasized), evaluative parameter-based frameworks,

like many corpus approaches, take a combining approach that emphasizes the similarities

between the two. Table 2.1 outlines the major demarcations associated with these terms.

Table 2.1: Operationalizing Stance

Stance	Evaluation	Appraisal
functional	functional	functional
form to function	function to form	function to form
combining approach	combining approach	separating approach
corpus-based approach: Biber and Finegan (1988, 1989); Biber *et al.*'s (1999); Conrad and Biber (2000); Biber (2006)	parameter-based frameworks: Lemke (1992, 1998); Hunston and Thompson (2000); Bednarek (2006)	discourse analytic approach: Martin (1997, 2000); Martin and Rose (2003); Martin and White (2005)

And while each approach has greatly contributed to our knowledge of stance, each, on its

own, has failed to fully account for stance as a multifaceted construct. Therefore, I

propose *a combined approach of methods* to the study of stance, which will approach it

from both form and function. Of these three functional approaches, then, the corpus-

based approach to stance and the SFL-based Appraisal framework will be utilized over

the parameter-based frameworks of evaluation due to their ability to examine stance from

such disparate ends of the spectrum—both in terms of approaching stance (i.e., utilizing

combining and separating approaches that emphasize the similarities *and* differences

between stance types) and in terms of method (i.e., utilizing large-scale corpus analysis *and* close discourse analysis of stance). Through the integration of these two disparate approaches, which will be briefly outlined below, the iterative approach to the examination of stance can begin to be constructed.

'Stance,' as a superordinate term that is typically associated with large-scale corpus-based examinations of grammatical features in specific registers and genres (Bednarek, 2006), is defined as a speaker or writer's culturally-organized "personal feelings, attitudes, value judgements, or assessments" about a theme, recipient, or proposition being presented (Biber *et al.*, 1999: 966), and it can be broken down into three main categories or domains: epistemic, attitudinal, and style stance.

Epistemic stance mainly focuses on a writer's level of commitment to or certainty of a proposition (Conrad and Biber, 2000). For example, in the utterance "well *perhaps* he is a little bit weird…," 'perhaps' indicates a level of uncertainty regarding the subject's weirdness, and in the following sentence "You can *actually* hear what she's saying," 'actually' serves as a comment on the reality of being able to hear something being said (*ibid.*: 59). Epistemic markers of stance are made in reference to another proposition, i.e., a commitment to, a comment about the limitations of, or certainty towards a proposition, and grammatical markers include adverbials, complement clauses, modals, stance nouns plus a prepositional phrase, and premodifying stance adverbs (Biber *et al.*, 1999), all of which will be discussed in more detail in section 2.2 below.

Attitudinal stance markers, which, at least in English, are less common than epistemic markers and are "more limited grammatically," convey a speaker or writer's attitudes, feelings, judgements, or expectations (Biber *et al.*, 1999: 974). In the following

sentence "He's a *jerk*," 'jerk' is a value-laden adjective describing the author's feelings about the subject (*ibid.*: 968), and the phrase 'as one would expect' in "the extent to which insect flight-muscles are developed is, *as one would expect*, correlated with the capacity for flight" offers a stance of expectation in this academic passage (Conrad and Biber, 2000: 60).

Finally, style stance describes the manner in which information is presented (Conrad and Biber, 2000). In this category, stance markers, which are primarily adverbial in form, are used to comment on the communication itself (Biber *et al.,* 1999). For example, in "*honestly,* I've got no patience whatsoever," 'honestly' signals the fact that the author is being sincere in his or her claim (*ibid.*: 975). Similarly, 'to put it bluntly' in "*to put it bluntly,* they have uncontrollable passions" serves to indicate the manner in which the communication is to be understood (*ibid.*).

Through large-scale corpus analyses of these categories of stance, patterns of meaning can be uncovered that shed light first, on how interpersonal meaning is linguistically encoded within and across particular socially-defined registers and genres and second, on how variation within those domains is influenced by its linguistic, social, and cultural contexts (Biber *et al.*, 1998). This large-scale examination of language form and social function is essential in furthering our theoretical understanding of authentic language practices, as it has been found that intuition alone is unreliable in discerning such distinctions (*ibid.*). However, if analysis ends at the level of genre or register, a more nuanced understanding of those very language practices we are seeking to uncover is missed. Therefore, in order to more fully understand the functional patterns that arise, a closer discourse analytic approach—one such as SFL-based Appraisal that is focused

more on language function as opposed to language form—also needs to be applied; by utilizing a discourse analytic framework that approaches stance through its functions rather than through a list of preconstructed stance forms, it will allow for a more nuanced examination of the functions of stance *and ultimately* provide a better description of stance forms within a socially-defined register or genre.

SFL, which takes a "close, data-oriented inquiry" that "demonstrates the functional unity of structurally disparate elements" (Nichols, 1984: 109), is the most functionally-driven approach to evaluative language on the theoretical scale. Researchers of SFL theoretically view language as social practice, wherein language production is a result of the interplay between its two fundamental aspects—its systematicity and its functionality (Martin, 1997). Critically for this study, the latter is reflected in discourse through the internal grammatical structure within language, i.e., specifically, the functions of language explain the motivations for language form and structure (Halliday, 1978). Within SFL, meaning is created as a function of the larger human experience and is encoded in language in three interconnected strata—language (composed of grammar and discourse), social context, and genre (Martin, 1997: 6).

Within the level of language, where stance markers are manifested, SFL identifies three general functions for which we use language, one of which, the interpersonal, serves "to enact our social relationships" (Martin and Rose, 2003: 6). Stance—known as 'evaluation' in SFL frameworks, but further referred to herein as 'stance'—is concerned with this interpersonal aspect of language and is linguistically represented through a negotiation of social relationships, how the people in those relationships interact, and the feelings they try to share (i.e. what actual emotions, feelings, or intentions are expressed,

for example, through adjectives, adverbs, hedging, tag questions, complement clauses, or addresses of politeness). The relationships, which are the primary focus, are realized through an undefined number of these linguistic markers, which are strewn throughout a text, "forming a 'prosody' of attitude"—or discourse cohesion (Halliday and Hasan, 1976)—that reflects the interpersonal meaning (Martin and Rose, 2003: 27). Appraisal[24] (Martin, 2000; Martin and Rose, 2003; Martin and White, 2005) is a discourse analytic framework that allows analysis of interpersonal relationships by uncovering prosodic "meaning beyond the clause," or, in other words, across whole texts (Martin and Rose, 2003: 1). Collectively, the systems of analysis within Appraisal, as theoretically realized, do not constrain linguistic forms of stance, but approach the linguistic resources offered in texts as systematic constructions of interpersonal meaning which, through close discourse analysis, reveal much about an author's underlying positionality and attitudinal meaning—i.e., the functioning of stance (Martin and White, 2005).

Appraisal, then, in combination with large-scale corpus analysis, offers an iterative approach that moves fluidly from form to function and from function to form, ultimately allowing for a more rigorous examination of the relationship between linguistic forms and stancetaking practices within this socially-defined genre. Yet, for this approach to be truly dialogic, it must also allow for an examination of alternative voices, in this case, the culturally-situated voices of those who ideologically constructed the genre based on a shared understanding of particular language practices—in this case, an understanding of threatening language practices. So while corpus analysis is an

---

[24] The three interwoven ways authors establish their position in relation to larger social semiotic systems—through 'attitude,' 'engagement,' and 'graduation' (Martin and White, 2005)—will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 3 and 5.

excellent method for uncovering patterns of linguistic forms within and across socially-constructed genres and Appraisal is appropriately situated to outline nuanced functions of stance within the genre, what is lacking is this more comprehensive understanding of how we, as social actors, utilize culturally-shaped ideologies and ideologically-constructed identities to shape our individual language practices. The final piece of the iterative approach herein proposed, then, comes from recent work done by anthropological linguists and sociolinguists, who have moved away from examining the functions of stance as the final theoretical construct and towards the construction of identities and ideologies as realized through culturally-constructed stances and stancetaking moves or styles (Bauman, 2001).

Specifically, researchers in this vein have demonstrated the importance of stance in linking language form, function, and practice with the ultimate goal of uncovering socially-based ideologies (Jaffe, 2009) from which arise ideologically-based identities that affect our language practices (Bucholtz, 2009, Kiesling, 2009). However, the emphasis here has primarily been placed on identifying how ideologically-based identities, or what Johnstone (2009: 30) calls an "ethos of self," are constructed via patterns of linguistically manifested interactional and epistemic stances. What I propose herein is to draw upon this link between ideology and stance in reverse of what has heretofore been done (i.e., from language ideology about particular language practices to manifestations of stance within the corresponding socially-constructed genre) in order to better understand how student, practitioner, and scholarly ideologies about threatening language in various communities of practice actually mirror the patterns of stance that exist within this ideologically-constructed genre. This approach sheds light on how our

culturally-constructed ideologies about language and language practices construct and reify our larger understanding of social language practices, which, herein, may serve to constrain stance forms and stance functions to those found within a genre constructed by a particular ideologically-situated community of practice. It is through this multi-layered approach to stance, then, that its true interpersonal nature can be uncovered.

2.2: EXPRESSIONS OF STANCE

According to Hunston (2007: 27), "stance is a meaning, a type of meaning, or several types of meaning, rather than a form." Yet, while stance is a multi-layered theoretical construct that can be identified through socially-constructed ideologies, interpersonal negotiations of power, and functional language practices, ultimately, stance, in each of its instantiations discussed herein, is manifested in language, i.e., in linguistic forms. The following section describes the way in which those forms are categorized in this research.

2.2.1: Paralinguistic Expressions

According to Biber *et al.* (1999), there are three main forms through which stance can be expressed: paralinguistically, lexically, and grammatically. In the first manifestation, examples of which discussed in this section are summarized in Table 2.2 below, both paralinguistic devices, such as pitch, loudness, and duration of speech, and non-linguistic devices, such as facial expressions, gestures, and other body language, can be used to express a writer's feelings or attitudes towards the recipient and/or the proposition being discussed.

Table 2.2: Paralinguistic Features of Stance[25]

Feature	Example	Reference
pitch, loudness, and duration of speech		Biber *et al.,* 1999
facial expressions, gestures, and other body language		Biber *et al.,* 1999
adverbs following speech-act verbs such as *said* or *spoke* in fiction texts	"'He's really upset,' Irmgard said *nervously*." "'Do you?' Helen spoke *angrily*."	Biber *et al.,* 1999
acronyms	*btw* for *by the way* *ttyl* for *talk to you later* *lol* for *laughing out loud* or *laugh out loud*	Crystal, 2001; Huffaker and Calvert, 2005; Park, 2007
lexical variations	*cya* for *see you* *b4* for *before*	Crystal, 2001; Huffaker and Calvert, 2005; Park, 2007
emoticons—a lexical blend of 'emotion' and 'icons'	:-), :-p, ☺, ☹	Crystal, 2001; Huffaker and Calvert, 2005; Park, 2007
upper case lettering/capitalization	"OVERALL, I'm substantially satisfied with my performance last year."	Park, 2007; Smerick, 2008, p.c.
repeated punctuation	!!!	
bolding	**We are Silverton.** **…we are sick of you**. *Get out* before **we get you!!**	CTARC (HAR)
italics	…just *get out of Silverton*. *Get out* before **we get you!!**	

However, because paralinguistic and non-linguistic devices are not traditionally "explicit" in a linguistic sense, there are very few stance devices of this sort available in writing for study (*ibid*.: 966). To use their own example, there is nothing in the way that the present paragraph was written (e.g., the font, typeface, etc.) that would divulge the stance of the writer, i.e., whether it was written with anger or joy. The one exception they

---

[25] None of the tables in this section are meant to be exhaustive lists of stance features or references. They simply define, exemplify, and differentiate those that are discussed in this research.

noted was in the use of adverbs following speech-act verbs such as 'said' or 'spoke' in

fiction texts. In this case, where the paralinguistic devices of fictional characters cannot

be seen, writers were found to quite frequently (500 times per million words) modify

speech-act verbs with stance-filled adverbs such as 'desperately,' 'emotionally,'

'eagerly,' and 'optimistically' in order to reflect the underlying attitude of a character,

thus giving the reader an idea of what gestures or pitch might accompany the utterance

(e.g., "'He's really upset,' Irmgard said nervously." or "'Do you?' Helen spoke angrily.")

(*ibid.*: 967).

However, recent work on computer-mediated communication (CMC)—otherwise

known as 'netspeak' or internet language—(e.g., Crystal, 2001; Herring, 2004; Huffaker

and Calvert, 2005), has added considerably to the list of paralinguistic devices[26] available

to express a writer's stance in texts. Because online registers such as blogs, chats, instant

messaging (IM), and online role playing games (e.g., World of Warcraft (WOW)) share

features of both real-time synchronous spoken interaction and asynchronous text-based

interaction, the paralinguistic features upon which speakers rely for signs of interpersonal

and affective feelings are simultaneously vital for successful online interaction, yet

lacking from traditional text-based communication (Park, 2007). In order to fill this void,

typographical conventions such as acronyms (e.g., 'btw' for 'by the way,' 'ttyl' for 'talk

to you later'), lexical variations (e.g., 'cya' for 'see you,' 'b4,' for 'before'), and

emoticons—a lexical blend of 'emotion' and 'icons'—(e.g., ':-),' ':-p,' '☺,' '☹') were

created as substitutes for gestures, pitch, and other paralinguistic cues (Crystal, 2001;

Huffaker and Calvert, 2005). For example, in a study of interpersonal and affective stance

---

[26] For a more complete review of these online paralinguistic features see Crystal (2001).

markers in chat room discourse, Park (2007) found that using typographical conventions such as upper case lettering to signal frustration or emphasis or to simulate shouting (e.g., "OVERALL, I'm substantially satisfied with my performance last year"), smiley face emoticons to demonstrate agreement or to build rapport (e.g., "☺," ":)"), "shorthand" abbreviations to acknowledge humor and personalization (e.g., "lol" for "laughing out loud"), and repeated punctuation to indicate a heightened intensity of emotion (e.g., "!!!") served the place of traditional paralinguistic markers of stance in online registers (*ibid.*: 148-150). Text 2.2a further exemplifies several of these typographical stance markers.

> Text 2.2a: We are Silverton—paralinguistic markers of stance
> It's a fact—**We are Silverton.** You, your wife, and your kids are not. The old saying goes, you can take people out of the ghetto but you cannot take the ghetto out of the people. When you come from drunken scum, you are not ever far away from being the same. […] You've got to get psychiatric help; get whatever you need, just *get out of Silverton*. Be a cancer somewhere else, **we are sick of you**. *Get out* before **we get you!!**

In this text, the use of bold lettering, italics, and the final exclamatory punctuation mark can be understood to highlight the author's strong connection to his own community in "We are Silverton," emphatically emphasize his negative stance towards the recipient of the threat in "we are sick of you," and accentuate the requested proposition through a harsh whispery voice in "get out of Silverton" and "Get out before we get you!"

And while an examination of paralinguistic and non-linguistic markers of stance remain an increasingly important area of study (Huffaker and Calvert, 2005), especially as they have been found to perform additional functions in threatening communications (e.g., block lettering capitalization is often used to disguise hand printing in addition to being used for emphasis or to demonstrate a heightened emotional state (Smerick, 2009, p.c.)), they are not examined in detail in this research, as the corpus created for this study

does not consist of a representative sample of texts possessing paralinguistic features. As

more threatening communications with typographical markers of stance are added to the

corpus, more research on this aspect of stance should be undertaken.

2.2.2: Lexical Expressions

The next two manners of expressing stance in writing are through lexical and

grammatical devices, what Biber *et al.* (1999) call overt expressions of stance. Lexical

stance, examples of which are summarized in Table 2.3 below, is "carried by individual

lexical items" or "semi-fixed expressions" as opposed to whole sections of text

(Channell, 2000: 39).

Table 2.3: Lexical Features of Stance

Feature	Example	Reference
nouns	"They were, are, the most plodding, bloated, self-important *slop-bucket* in rock history…"	Biber *et al.,* 1999 Channell, 2000
	"*nazi/communist regime*"	
	"*prostitutes, vagrant children, armed men, mobs, looters, right-wing youth gangs and neo-Nazis, vandals, wild dogs, bigots roam*"	
	economic *diversity* immigration *diversity*	Gales, 2009
	…you can take people out of the *ghetto* but you cannot take the *ghetto* out of the people. When you come from drunken *scum*, You've got to get psychiatric *help*; Be a *cancer* somewhere else,	CTARC (HAR)
main verbs	"Yeah, I *love* that film."	Biber *et al.,* 1999
adjectives	"The nurses are *wonderful* there." *good*, *bad*, *nice*, *right*, *difficult*, *best*, and *appropriate*	Biber *et al.,* 1999
	"They were, are, the most *plodding*, bloated, *self-important* slop-bucket in rock history…"	Channell, 2000

> "…David Owen; so *self-important*, so
> *naked* in his ambition…"
> *wicked*   COCA, 2010
> The *old* saying goes…   CTARC (HAR)
> When you come from *drunken* scum,
> You've got to get *psychiatric* help;
> …we are *sick of* you.

Lexical markers can directly refer to the emotional state of the speaker or writer (e.g., "Yeah, I *love* that film.") or they can represent the speaker or writer's feelings or evaluation of another person, object, or proposition (e.g., "The nurses are *wonderful* there.") (Biber *et al.*, 1999: 968). These "value-laden words," many of which are the most common words in English, are typically expressed in nouns, main verbs, and adjectives, and their distribution varies by register. For example, adjectives such as 'good,' 'bad,' 'nice,' and 'right' are found with a high rate of frequency in conversation, while 'difficult,' 'best,' and 'appropriate' were found with higher frequency in academic prose (*ibid.*: 968-969). In addition to these examples, which Channell (2000) would classify as purely semantic in their evaluative nature, i.e., the evaluative stance is built into the meaning of the word, Channell further delineates a pragmatic category within lexical stance, which requires that the immediate context be taken into account when defining the evaluative nature of a term or phrase. In the following examples, she argues that "self-important" in the first context is seen by British readers as negative (as evidenced by the surrounding negative semantic collocates "plodding," "bloated," and "slop-bucket"), whereas the same phrase as seen in the latter context is understood by British readers as positive due to Lord (David) Owen's "marked success as an international negotiator" in his role as a former politician: "They were, are, the most plodding, bloated,

self-important slop-bucket in rock history…" vs. "…David Owen; so self-important, so naked in his ambition…" (Channell, 2000: 44).

In addition to examining the synchronic context of a word, Hasan (2003) postulated that language has the potential to be used in ways that "re-write" large portions of its own semantics over time, which Channell (2000) found to be true in her lexicographic study of words such as 'regime' and 'roam' that almost always portray a negative stance in current British English. For example, 'regime' frequently collocates with culturally-negative terms such as "nazi" and "Communist," while 'roam' is most often used with people whose activities are typically deemed to be ideologically subversive or deviant such as "prostitutes, vagrant children, armed men, mobs, looters, right-wing youth gangs and neo-Nazis, vandals, wild dogs, bigots" (*ibid*.: 46, 53). In these examples, Channell (2000) demonstrated that lexical items hitherto defined "neutrally" by corpus-based dictionaries such as the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary and the Collins COBUILD English Dictionary oftentimes take on new meaningful connotations—"emotive or affective component[s] additional to [a word's] central meaning" (Lyons, 1977: 176, quoted in Channell, 2000: 40), further supporting her semantic/pragmatic delineation.

Similarly, in a corpus-based examination of the neutrally-defined word 'diversity,' Gales (2009) uncovered a positive connotation when the word collocated with topics ideologically favorable to the public (e.g., economic growth) but a strong negative shift in meaning when the word collocated with topics related to immigration in the genres of U.S. political and legal language, demonstrating that genre and topic also play a role in the re-semanticization of words. What Gales (2009) further articulated, though,

was that these contextually-defined re-semanticizations serve a larger function—an ideological function in that "both the production and reception of discourse are performed by socially positioned subjects" (Hasan, 2003: 447). Therefore, because meaning is constructed, performed, and interpreted by social subjects—i.e., meaning, manifested materially through linguistic signs, can only exist between individuals who are socially organized and comprise an ideologically-based "social unit" (Vološinov, 1929: 12)—I argue herein that *all* evaluative meaning, i.e., all semantic and pragmatic markers of stance, is contextually-dependent and based on the understanding of the socially organized individuals participating in the semiotic exchange. In fact, Bourdieu (1991: 40) argues that there are no "neutral" or contextually-independent words and that common words, especially in revolutionary times, often take on the opposite meaning. And while revolutionary in a more metaphorical sense, a good current example is the shifting usage of the lexical items 'bad' and 'wicked' to mean 'good' by teenagers in some varieties of American English, as observed in the Corpus of Contemporary American English (e.g., *How cruel and <u>wicked</u> it seems…* vs. *That would be <u>wicked</u> cool.* (COCA, 2010)), which, when used by those adhering to a "youth identity" (Bucholtz, 2007: 245), may be interpreted differently than by those claiming alternative identities.

Herein, then, Biber *et al.*'s (1999) claims are adopted, which state that all "purely lexical expressions of stance depend on the context and shared background for their interpretation" and that "stance… is dependent on the addressee's ability to recognize the use of value-laden words" (*ibid.*: 969). As exemplified by the same threat viewed in Text 2.2a above, in Text 2.2b, for example, we can see lexical stance (underlined) represented

through such lexically value-laden words as "old," "ghetto," "drunken scum,"

"psychiatric help," "cancer," and "sick of."

> Text 2.2b: We are Silverton—lexical markers of stance
> It's a fact—We are Silverton. You, your wife, and your kids are not. The <u>old</u>
> saying goes, you can take people out of the <u>ghetto</u> but you cannot take the <u>ghetto</u>
> out of the people. When you come from <u>drunken scum</u>, you are not ever far away
> from being the same. […] You've got to get <u>psychiatric help</u>; get whatever you
> need, just get out of Silverton. Be a <u>cancer</u> somewhere else, we are <u>sick of</u> you.
> Get out before we get you!

Arguably, though, without the surrounding context, an assessment of a phrase such as

"psychiatric help" might not be taken as an insult, but rather as an offer of genuine help

from a concerned friend. In this case, however, the surrounding context makes it clear

through the prosody of lexical negativity that the author's use of "psychiatric help" was

not meant to be helpful, but harmful.

2.2.3: Grammatical Expressions

Finally, grammatical marking of stance, as seen in Table 2.4 below, is composed, to

varying degrees, of two linguistic elements—"one presenting the stance and the other

presenting the proposition framed by that stance" (Biber *et al.*, 1999: 969). For example,

in the utterance "I hope that you will take care of this matter immediately" (DEF), stance

is expressed grammatically through the combination of the main stance verb "hope" and

the complement clause "that you will take care of this matter immediately," which is

framed by the hopeful stance of the speaker.

Table 2.4: Grammatical Features of Stance

Feature	Example	Reference
Adverbials • single adverbs and adverb phrases	*unfortunately*, *quite frankly*	Biber and Finegan, 1988; Biber *et al.*, 1999; Conrad and

	…you are not *ever* far away from being the same.	Biber, 2000 CTARC (HAR)
• hedges	*kind of*, *sort of*	Biber *et al.*, 1999
• prepositional phrases	*in fact*, *without doubt*	
• adverbial clauses	*as one might expect*, *to be honest*	
• comment clauses	*I guess*, *I think*	
	It's a fact—We are Silverton.	CTARC (HAR)
Complement Clauses		Biber *et al.*, 1999
• controlled by verbs	I *hope that* you will take care of this matter immediately.	CTARC (DEF)
• controlled by nouns	*The fact that…*	Biber *et al.*, 1999
• controlled by adjectives	*I'm happy that…*; *I'm sad to…*	
• extraposed structures	*It's amazing that…*	
Modals and Semi-Modals	*can, may, might, have (got) to* "I don't think she *would* be missed…"	Biber *et al.*, 1999 CTARC (OTH)
	…you *can* take people out of the ghetto but you *cannot* take the ghetto out of the people. You'*ve got to* get psychiatric help…	CTARC (HAR)
noun plus prepositional phrase		Biber *et al.*, 1999
	"the *possibility of* many fraudulent foreign medical degrees"	CTARC (DEF)
premodifying stance adverbs	"*so* happy" "*about* this age"	Biber *et al.*, 1999

Grammatical marking of stance is overtly manifested in English through five main categories: adverbials, complement clauses, modals and semi-modals, noun plus prepositional phrase, and premodifying stance adverbs (Biber *et al.*, 1999). Because *the Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (*ibid.*) outlines each of these categories in depth and chapter 4 defines those categories utilized in this research, they will only be briefly explained and exemplified below.

Adverbials, which have been extensively studied in the English registers of conversation, academic prose, and news reporting and have been found to vary systematically across these registers (Biber and Finegan, 1988; Conrad and Biber, 2000), are grammatically realized through five grammatical constructions. These include single adverbs and adverb phrases (e.g., "unfortunately," "quite frankly"), hedges (e.g., "kind of," "sort of"), prepositional phrases (e.g., "in fact," "without doubt"), adverbial clauses (e.g., "as one might expect," "to be honest"), and what Biber *et al.* (1999) refer to as comment clauses (e.g., "I guess," "I think") (*ibid.*: 969-975).

Like adverbials, complement clauses, the second category, most clearly consist of two individual components—the stance marker and the proposition framed by that stance. These clauses consist of those controlled by a verb (e.g., "I hope that…"), those controlled by a noun (e.g., "The fact that…"), those controlled by an adjective (e.g., "I'm happy that…" or "I'm sad that…"), and "extraposed structures" (e.g., "It's amazing that…") (*ibid.*: 969-970).

The final three categories of grammatical stance cannot be as explicitly divided into the two components—the stance marker and the proposition framed by the stance (*ibid.*: 970). In the case of Modals and semi-modals such as "can, may, might" and "have (got) to," respectively, which make up the third grammatical category of stance markers, the "modal verb (as stance marker) is incorporated into the main clause (expressing the framed proposition)" (*ibid.*). For example, in the utterance "I don't think she would be missed…" (OTH), "would" functions as a marker of the author's predictive stance about the proposition that "she" will "be missed." Likewise, the fourth grammatical category, Noun plus prepositional phrase (e.g., "the possibility of many fraudulent foreign medical

degrees") (DEF), demonstrates that while separable into two distinct parts, the

prepositional phrase cannot necessarily be argued to be a proposition (*ibid.*). Finally, the

fifth category, Premodifying adverbs, is described as a stance adverb plus an adjective or

a noun phrase. This category, which is simply an adverb that modifies a particular phrase

(e.g., "so happy," "about this age"), is treated separately by Biber *et al.* (1999) due to the

fact that the adverb only marks stance towards that specific phrase (i.e., it is phrase

internal) rather than marking stance towards a whole proposition (*ibid.*: 970). For the

purposes of this research, this final category will not be held distinct from the first

category—adverbials—unless the functions found within the genre require it.

Grammatically-speaking, then, stance can be manifested in numerous ways. As

exemplified by the threat previously seen in Texts 2.2a and 2.2b, Text 2.2c now

demonstrates grammatical expressions of stance (capitalized).

> Text 2.2c: We are Silverton—grammatical markers of stance
> IT'S A FACT—We are Silverton. You, your wife, and your kids are not. The old
> saying goes, you CAN take people out of the ghetto but you CANNNOT take the
> ghetto out of the people. When you come from drunken scum, you are NOT
> EVER FAR AWAY from being the same. […] You'VE GOT TO get psychiatric
> help; get whatever you need, just get out of Silverton. Be a cancer somewhere
> else, we are sick of you. Get out before we get you!

In the first clause, "it's a fact," the author positions the reader to understand that the

proposition that follows is factual in nature, specifically: "We are Silverton." There are

no other voices allowed to contradict this stance. He further juxtaposes the propositions

of being able to remove people from the ghetto but not being able to remove the ghetto

from the people with the possibility/ability modals "can" followed by "cannot," and he

demonstrates his stance towards the recipient's need for "psychiatric help" with the

obligatory semi-modal "have got to." Finally, he links the likelihood of the recipient

being "drunken scum" through the adverbial clause "not ever far away."

Through these three linguistic expressions of stance—paralinguistic, lexical, and

grammatical—language, as meaningful social practice, can be seen as a manifestation of

interpersonal, dialogic interaction (du Bois, 2007). And it is within this layer of

meaningful interaction that this research is situated.

2.3: CURRENT APPROACH TO STANCE

When viewed through the prosody of stance features strewn throughout Text 2.2d, it

becomes quickly apparent that stance, as it is ultimately manifested in language, is not

only ubiquitous, but it is also a rich interpersonal resource of socially- and culturally-

shaped evaluation, affect, commitment, and positioning utilized between ideologically-

situated individuals within a shared semiotic space.

> Text 2.2d: We are Silverton—all markers of stance
> IT'S A FACT—**We are Silverton**. You, your wife, and your kids are not. The <u>old</u>
> saying goes, you CAN take people out of the <u>ghetto</u> but you CANNNOT take the
> <u>ghetto</u> out of the people. When you come from <u>drunken scum</u>, you are NOT
> EVER FAR AWAY from being the same. […] You'VE GOT TO get <u>psychiatric</u>
> <u>help</u>; get whatever you need, just *get out of Silverton*. Be a <u>cancer</u> somewhere
> else, **we are <u>sick of</u> you**. *Get out* before **we get you!**

Therefore, for the purposes of this research, stance, as the superordinate term, will be

taken to mean more than "the expression of opinion through language" (Bednarek, 2006:

3) or the way "that speakers and writers convey their personal feelings and assessments in

addition to propositional content" (Conrad and Biber, 2000: 57). Stance, or stancetaking,

is defined herein after du Bois' (2007: 163) conceptualization as "a public act by a social

actor, achieved dialogically through overt communicative means, of simultaneously

evaluating objects, positioning subjects (self and others), and aligning with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimension of the sociocultural field."

Furthermore, as such an interpersonal construct needs to be examined through a multi-faceted, iterative approach in order to fully reveal and hone the connection between linguistic forms, language functions, and ideologically-based social language practices, what is herein proposed is an integration of three analytic traditions. First, I take as my starting point the language ideologies from various scholarly, practitioner, and layperson communities of practice and examine the ways in which they perceive stance to be manifested in this socially-defined genre and performed as a culturally-based language practice. Next, through the process of corpus analysis, which allows for large-scale quantitative investigations of language features, I test how accurate these ideologically-based conceptions of stance are within the genre of threatening communications. This analysis uncovers linguistic forms significant to the genre, and allows us to begin identifying general functions of stance markers within and across the genre, ultimately moving from form to function. However, as corpus analyses do not provide for a nuanced examination of these functions as they occur within their larger intra-textual context, the discourse analytic framework of Appraisal is then applied. And, as Appraisal does not constrain the linguistic forms through which stance is manifested, but rather focuses on the functions of stance, it further demonstrates how well preconceived notions of stance functions and corresponding forms mirror those located in the genre. Finally, once the forms and functions of stance have been described and contextualized through corpus and Appraisal approaches, they can be viewed again through the ideological perspectives of those from scholarly, applied, and general communities of practice in order to

demonstrate how our folk linguistic (Preston, 2007) impressions of language—those that

oftentimes conflict with authentic language practices—ultimately shape the way in which

we organize, interpret, and reify language and language practices in society, thereby

fulfilling the functional, interpersonal, and iterative investigation of stance in this genre.

CHAPTER 3: DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

Over the past two decades, the field of forensic linguistics has seen rapid growth in practice, as more courts are calling upon linguists as experts, and in scholarship, as there are now two professional associations[27]—the International Association of Forensic Linguists (IAFL), the International Association for Forensic Phonetics and Acoustics (IAFPA)—and one scholarly journal, *the International Journal of Speech, Language, and the Law*, devoted to the field (Coulthard and Johnson, 2007). Yet, performing research within this field is a difficult and oftentimes lengthy process due to two main elements— proprietary methods and/or proprietary data. In the former case, many of the *methods* currently used to assess threatening communications are proprietary and require a case-based user fee, a yearly license, or an expensive software purchase, if they are available for public consumption at all. Examples include Dr. Carole Chaski's ThreatAssess and PREText, which are two modules from her ALIAS system "designed for Identification and Assessment based on linguistic patterns" (Chaski, 2010) and Gavin de Becker's MOSAIC, which is a program designed to assess a variety of threatening situations through a set of computational systems, each one dedicated to assessing a separate threat type from workplace violence to threats against judges (de Becker, 2009). And while no comment is being offered here on the success or quality of these systems, what is of note

---

[27] The International Language and Law Association (ILLA) was founded in 2008; while the association promotes topics related to forensic linguistics, it also includes topics related more broadly to language and the law.

is that these methods cannot contribute to the improvement of the field because they are not available for further scholarly testing, refinement, or general methodological use.

Second, the *data* required for studies of forensic linguistics are oftentimes highly sensitive in nature (e.g., threats to national security, which are accessible only to those with top level security clearance), legally unavailable (e.g., threats in cases that have not yet gone to trial or are in the process of appeal), or proprietary (e.g., threats belonging to corporations or private individuals)—and at times, all three situations may apply. In order to overcome hurdles such as these that challenge research, there need to be more collaborative efforts between academics and practitioners, as noted by those beginning to make the bridge in forensic psychology (see, e.g., Dowden, *et al.*, 2007). Therefore, one of the goals of this research is to begin to build that bridge between academics and practitioners involved in forensic linguistics by utilizing public methods to analyze sensitive, proprietary data, which would not otherwise have been available for analysis.

For this research, I collected 470 authentic threats for a period of one year at a private threat assessment company, the Academy Group, Inc. (AGI), in the greater Washington D.C. area; the three sections in this chapter will describe the data collection, compilation, and analysis phases. Specifically, section 3.1 describes the corpus compilation and text annotation phase and provides a summary of the two resulting corpora: CTARC and the K-corpus. Section 3.2 outlines the two main methodological approaches used in this research: corpus analysis (3.2.1), which examines linguistic forms in order to uncover interpersonal functions of stance, and the discourse analytic Appraisal analysis (3.2.2), which begins with stance function and reveals the forms through which those functions are manifested. Section 3.3 details and provides the results from the pilot

study that was conducted to determine how a non-scholarly, non-practitioner audience (i.e., undergraduate students who are more influenced by popular culture than threat literature or practice) inherently views the language of threats. These results uncover the language ideologies about threatening language from the third and final community of practice examined herein (the previous two—scholars and practitioners—are outlined in chapter 1); the language ideologies for each of the three communities of practice are also synthesized at the conclusion of this section as a comprehensive reference for the following analysis chapters.

3.1: THE CORPORA

As discussed above, due to the sensitive nature of research on threatening communications, there are no publically available corpora for research and very few private corpora in existence. One notable private exception is the Communicated Threat Assessment Database (CTAD), which is maintained by the Behavioral Analysis Unit (BAU), a unit housed within the FBI's Critical Incident Response Group and a part of the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime. CTAD, which was designed to house all criminally-oriented and threatening communications sent to the FBI, was implemented in 2004 (Fitzgerald, 2007) and, as of 2009, it contains 3721 threatening communications with a total of 888,286 words (Fitzgerald, 2009, p.c.).

Prior to 2004, the federal government had two other similar databases—the FBI's Anonymous Letter File, which only contains 2000 threatening communications from high-profile cases at any given time, and the U.S. Secret Service's Forensic Information System for Handwriting (FISH), which focuses exclusively on handwriting in cases of

threats against public officials (Fitzgerald, 2007). None of these corpora, however, are in a format suitable for use with commercial concordancing software such as WordSmith, AntConc, or MonoConc (e.g., the BAU commissioned the creation of a proprietary database system to organize and store CTAD's communications (Fitzgerald, 2009, p.c.)) or are publically available for academic research. Therefore, for the purposes of this research, two new corpora were constructed: the Communicated Threat Assessment Reference Corpus (CTARC) and the Known-document Comparison Corpus (K-corpus).

3.1.1: Overview of the Corpora

Table 3.1 below summarizes the details of the two corpora constructed for this research. CTARC contains threatening communications from 139 separate writers and is comprised of a total of 152,078 words; the K-corpus, which was created in order to provide an appropriate comparison corpus for identifying stance functions salient to CTARC, contains 109 separate writers and is made up of a total of 158,789 words.

Table 3.1: Composition of CTARC and the K-corpus

CTARC	K-corpus
470 threatening communications	556 non-threatening communications
152,078 words	158,789 words
139 separate writers	109 separate writers

All texts in both corpora are from written rather than spoken registers, as the cases at AGI are largely comprised of written threats. The texts in CTARC primarily consist of personal emails and business-style letters, with a small sampling of work/school-related blog postings and handwritten notes. The K-corpus was constructed to contain a roughly equal number of texts in each of these registers for balance. However, while it is

acknowledged that registers have distinct linguistic characteristics (e.g., Biber, 1988;

1995), because threats are not register-dependent, the language in CTARC varies widely

along a continuum *across* registers from informal to formal. For example, business

letters, which traditionally utilize more formal language (e.g., academic and/or technical

language) and adhere to a particular set of writing conventions (e.g., including the date, a

salutation, a closing, and a signature), were found in CTARC to possess both formal

conventions as well as those more typically associated with informal communications

such as slang, regional colloquialisms, and profanity. Additionally, in many cases they

did not include a final signature, or when they did, they were almost always pseudonyms

or the name of a group rather than an individual (e.g., the Warriors of the Rainbow).

Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the two corpora were constructed to include an

equal number of texts within each text register with the aim of providing a more balanced

amount of informal and formal language for comparative purposes, but within each

corpus, all registers were examined collectively. Further research on the variation of

registers possessing threatening communications is needed[28].

3.1.2: Text Collection

The data for these two corpora were compiled over a period of one year from July, 2008

to August, 2009 at the Academy Group, Inc. (AGI), a private behavioral analysis

company located in Manassas, Virginia. As a field site, AGI was uniquely situated to be a

---

[28] While not part of this research, some variation was observed in the ways registers are used when they contain threats. For example, informal text messaging conventions such as 'u r' for 'you are' and 'btw' for 'by the way' were found to exist quite frequently in formal business letters, while oftentimes the traditional return address and closing signatures of business letters did not exist, thus blurring the lines between the language use and stylistic conventions in formal and informal registers. In most cases noted, the trend appeared to be moving towards informality rather than formality.

repository for a wide array of threatening communications. For the past twenty years, AGI's specialized consultants—all former Federal Bureau of Investigation[29] (FBI) Unit Chiefs, Deputy Chiefs, and Supervisory Special Agents—have been working for Fortune 500 companies, individuals in the private sector, and government agencies on threat assessment cases involving criminal profiling, cyber crime, and school and workplace violence (AGI, 2009). Since their inception in 1989, AGI has investigated thousands of threatening communication cases, all of which were accessible for the purposes of constructing CTARC.

The texts in the K-corpus were compiled from AGI cases wherein the client requested both a threat assessment (i.e., an assessment of how likely it is that the threat will be carried out) and an analysis of potential authorship. In these cases, when AGI receives the threatening communication(s), they request samples of comparable writing from the same potential and/or suspected population of writers (e.g., if a threat is in the form of a business email and was sent from a company-internal email address, business emails from a sampling of the employee population are requested—hence the K-corpus name: *Known-document* Comparison Corpus). The client is instructed to include unmarked samples from the suspected author(s), if one (or more) exists. Thus, because these communications primarily come from the same population of speakers as the threateners—in many cases, the threatener's own non-threatening texts *may* be included in the K-corpus—and from the same written registers as the threats (mainly emails and business-style letters), they provide a good comparison for highlighting grammatical

---

[29] Sadly, the one member of the AGI team, Ken Baker, who was the only practitioner formerly from the U.S. Secret Service, passed away during the text collection phase of this project. I would like to recognize Ken's contribution to this project in helping to identify appropriate cases, offering guidance on current threat assessment procedures, and understanding the value of and encouraging collaborative research between scholars and practitioners.

forms marking stance and interpersonal stance functions that are salient to the language of threats in CTARC.

3.1.3: Corpus Construction and Mark-up

In order to organize the collection of threatening communications into a cohesive, thematic corpus (Martin, 1997) and create the comparative K-corpus, the first phase was to scan each text into an electronic .txt file using OmniPage Pro, which includes optical character recognition (OCR) capabilities. After scanning, each file was proofread and edited carefully in order to ensure that each text's unique characteristics, including all non-standardized grammatical features, were captured by the OCR program.

The next step was to mark up each text with up to 150 xml headers (e.g., <date></date>) that encoded the text's known information[30]. For CTARC, this included adding headers denoting, for example, the status of the case (i.e. whether the case was solved or unsolved), the date and location of the communication's origin, the written register of the threat (e.g., email, business-style letter, cut-and-paste, handwritten note, etc.), the unique contextual factors that might have been involved with the case (e.g., if there were ancillary events occurring with the threats), and the recipient's personal information, or what the agents at AGI more broadly refer to as victimology data (e.g., was the recipient a male or female, was he or she a manager within an organization, or were other unique events occurring in his or her life that may have triggered the threat) (Baker and Mardigian, 2008, p.c.).

---

[30] Because CTARC will continue to be housed at and maintained by AGI, this extensive mark-up, which was based, in part, on the individual case notation system used by some FBI and AGI practitioners, was included as an investigatory tool for future threat assessment cases (e.g., for case linkage and analysis) as well as for this and future research on genre description and register variation.

Two organizational categories that were drawn from this mark-up and used throughout the current study are the type of threat (e.g., harassment, stalking, kidnapping) and the threat's realization status (i.e., whether the threat was carried out, not carried out, or the status is unknown). Tables 3.2 (threat type) and 3.3 (threat realization status) below offer the breakdown of texts in each of these two categories.

Table 3.2: Breakdown of Threat Types in CTARC

Threat Type[31]	# of Texts	# of Authors	# of Words
Defamation (DEF)	146	37	74,456
Harassment (HAR)	167	46	36,215
Stalking (STLK)	84	16	18,103
Violence (VIOL)	43	21	10,400
Other (OTH)	30	19	12,904

Overall, there were 21 possible threat type designations, which were condensed here into the five general categories shown in Table 3.2 based on the number of texts in each category and the similarity of threat type. For example, both workplace violence and school violence were captured under the broad category of violence. The 'Other' category captures threat types that did not possess enough texts to stand alone or those that did not fit within the general description of another category (e.g., animal rights, political, religious). For a complete breakdown of the threat types in CTARC see Appendix A.

In terms of threat realization status, Table 3.3 demonstrates that only slightly more than 22% of the cases (as signified by author count) in CTARC possess a known

---

[31] Each text entered into CTARC receives up to two threat type designations. For example, a text can primarily be a stalking threat, but it can also possess themes of a religious nature. Thus, it would receive a primary designation of stalking and a secondary designation of religious. The designations in Table 3.2 refer only to each text's primary designation. Furthermore, many of the primary categories (e.g., animal rights) did not contain any threats, so only those categories containing threats are represented in Table 3.2. A complete breakdown of primary and secondary threat types can be found in Appendix A.

status (i.e., cases wherein the end result, whether realized or not realized, is definitively

known).

Table 3.3: Breakdown of Threat Realization Status in CTARC

Threat Realization Status	# of Texts	# of Authors	# of Words
Realized	67	14	13,778
Non-realized	37	16	11,736
Unknown	366	109	126,564

And while the number of texts included in each of the known status categories is

admittedly small, it has been found that as few as ten texts per category offer a

representative sampling for most grammatical features (Biber, 1990; Biber *et al.*, 1998).

For the purposes of this research, cases were labeled as either realized or non-

realized when the end result had been definitively confirmed. Realized cases were those

wherein the threatener followed through on what he or she threatened to do or performed

a related action that resulted in some kind of tangible harm to the victim or the victim's

property. Non-realized cases were those wherein the writer, through arrest or voluntary

admission, declared that they never had the intention, the means, or the commitment to

carry out the threat. These threats were admittedly written for the purpose of instilling

fear and/or panic in order to get revenge, regain control, or gain some kind of personal

reward. All other cases—the large majority—were labeled as unknown status.

For the K-corpus, because it was constructed for purely comparative purposes, the

only mark up it received was a case code connecting it to the original case file, the

register of the communication, and the sex of the writer. No additional categorizations

were assigned to the K-corpus.

3.1.4: Corpus Annotation

There were two separate annotation phases to this project, both of which involved part of

speech (POS) tagging. The following threat in Texts 3.1a-c provides a visual example of

the results from both tagging programs—the CLAWS tagger and the Biber tagger[32].

Text 3.1a: Bernard—untagged
BERNARD: We have photographs of you having sexual relations with multiple
women. We will send copies to your wife ; and your management. (HAR)

Text 3.1b: Bernard—CLAWS4 Tagger
BERNARD_NP1 :_: We_PPIS2 have_VH0 photographs_NN2 of_IO you_PPY
having_VHG sexual_JJ relations_NN2 with_IW multiple_JJ women_NN2 ._.
We_PPIS2 will_VM send_VVI copies_NN2 to_II your_APPGE wife_NN1 ;_;
and_CC your_APPGE management_NN1 ._.

Text 3.1c: Bernard—Biber Tagger
Bernard ^np++++=BERNARD
: ^:+clp+++=EXTRAWORD
We ^pp1a+pp1+++=We
have ^vb+hv+vrb++=have
photographs ^nns++++=photographs
of ^in++++=of
you ^pp2+pp2+++=you
having ^vbg+hvg++xvbg+=having
sexual ^jj+atrb+++=sexual
relations ^nns++++=relations
with ^in++++=with
multiple ^jj+atrb+++=multiple
women ^nns++++=women.
. ^.+clp+++=EXTRAWORD
We ^pp1a+pp1+++=We
will ^md+prd+++=will
send ^vb++++=send
copies ^nns++++=copies
to ^in++++=to
your ^pp$+pp2+++=your
wife ^nn++++=wife

---

[32] While more detail about the notational conventions will not be discussed here, a detailed description of the CLAWS tagger is available from http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/claws/. Additionally, a brief overview of the Biber tagger is available from http://www.americannationalcorpus.org/SecondRelease/Biber-tags.txt, with more extensive descriptions in Biber *et al.* (1998) and Biber (2006) (see full citations in the references).

```
; ^;+clp+++=;
and ^cc+cls+++=and
your ^pp$+pp2+++=your
management ^nn++++=management.
. ^.+clp+++=EXTRAWORD
```

First, in order to extract the data for the pilot study described in section 3.3 while

at my field site, the commercially-available CLAWS4 tagger from Lancaster University

was used[33]. This version of CLAWS comes with the C7 tagset, which consists of 140

POS tags (e.g., _DD = determiner, _MD = ordinal number). And while CLAWS has

achieved a 96-97% accuracy rate in tagging the British National Corpus, they

acknowledge that this rate might vary when used on other types of texts (UCREL, 2009).

In the case of CTARC, wherein writers frequently make an effort to mask their normal

writing habits through non-standardized language use (Smerick, 2009, p.c.), the accuracy

rate was much lower (roughly 80% accuracy). Thus, as the pilot study required an

analysis of lexical items at the primary POS level (i.e., nouns, verbs, etc.), the main stems

of the tags were hand-edited to verify that primary the parts of speech were accurate (e.g.,

it was verified that tags beginning with "N" are nouns: _NN2 = common plural noun,

_NPD1 = singular weekday noun). The survey then located the "violent action verbs," for

example, by calling up all words with a _V stem tag using WordSmith 5.0. The results

were sorted so that all of the same verb forms were grouped together (e.g., all instances

of *is* were grouped together, while all instances of *run* were grouped together). Finally,

verb groupings were either deleted (e.g., *is* is not a violent action verb, so all instances

were deleted) or further examined. In the latter case a decision on whether or not to count

---

[33] It was also necessary to find a commercially-available tagger due to the fact that CTARC will be housed
and maintained by AGI. This active version of CTARC will continue to be tagged by CLAWS as new texts
are added.

a verb was based on its context of occurrence (e.g., *kill* in the utterance: *my head is killing me* is not a part of the threat that is oriented towards the victim; therefore, it was not counted. However, *kill* in the utterance: *I'm gonna kill you* is part of the threat; therefore, it was counted). For this survey, the CLAWS tags were used to locate violent action verbs, profanity, second person pronouns (including variants like *ya'll*), modals, and lexical words marking time.

The second tagging phase was performed on a separate untagged version of CTARC and on the K-corpus with the Biber tagger, which is not commercially available. The Biber tagger, which has been honed over the past two decades to accurately tag a variety of grammatical and semantic features (Biber, 2006), consists of approximately 150 tags, more than 30 of which are specifically aimed at identifying grammatical features that mark stance, including, for example, *that* complement clauses that appear with and those that appear without the complementizer (e.g., *We <u>know that</u> you are not that stupid.* (DEF) vs. *But, I <u>know</u> I am better, superior to you.* (DEF)). Because of the relatively small size of these corpora, the corpora were tagged, the tags were counted using a supplementary Tag Count program also written by Biber, the tags for the grammatical markers of stance were hand-checked for accuracy[34], and then the counts were adjusted, where necessary. This data was then used for the remainder of the corpus analyses in this research.

---

[34] Because only the tags for grammatical markers of stance were checked, the accuracy rate was not recorded. However, it should be noted that very few tags in these 4 categories (adverbials, *that* complement clauses, *to* complement clauses, modals) were found to be mislabeled.

3.2: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

Research on stance is most fruitful when examined through complementary approaches such as corpus analysis, which offers a broad view of how stance functions on a grammatical level within various registers, genres, and language varieties; and discourse analysis, which provides a more detailed picture of how stance functions within language at the lexical level (Hunston and Thompson, 2000). This research, then, utilizes both quantitative corpus-based analysis (3.2.1) and qualitative discourse analysis (3.2.2) in order to provide a more well-rounded description of the grammatical *and* lexical forms that mark stance and of the ways in which they function within the context of threatening communications.

3.2.1: Corpus Analysis

Corpus research examines large quantities of naturally-occurring language in order to uncover actual patterns of use. Its two primary goals are "assessing the extent to which a pattern is found" and "analyzing the contextual features that influence variability" (Biber *et al.*, 1998: 3). Early studies revealed the extensive variation that exists in the use of features across different genres and registers (Biber, 1988), and further corpus work has highlighted the contextually-dependent nature of authorial meaning, demonstrating how, instead of being located within individual words in a text, it is distributed within and across texts through the prosodic patterning of features (Teubert, 2004). Most applicable to the examination of meaning is the recent corpus-based research scholars have done on stance. This work has mapped variation in the form and function of interpersonal meaning across a variety of registers (e.g., Biber and Finegan, 1988, 1989; Conrad and

Biber, 2000; Kärkkäinen, 2003; Biber, 2006) language varieties (e.g., Precht, 2003a, 2003b; Friginal, 2009), and time periods (e.g., Fitzmaurice, 2004), which will be examined in more detail in Chapter 4. In each case, corpus research has proven effective in not only identifying those features associated with stance, but also in contextualizing the prosodic realization of those features within large bodies of naturally-occurring data, allowing linguists to quantitatively and qualitatively interpret the ways in which authorial stance functions both literally and interpersonally across various genres. Therefore, in order to better understand and identify markers of stance, whose prosodic use in threatening communications manifests and reveals an author's fundamental desire to "victimize others" (Olsson, 2004: 158), it is necessary to analyze these features in a genre-specific reference corpus (Hänlein, 1999)—CTARC.

Because the primary purpose of this research is to describe the function of authorial stance within threatening communications (i.e., the focus is on describing a social phenomenon within *a particular group of texts* rather than on describing the distribution and function of *a single grammatical feature* (Biber *et al.*, 1998)), the unit of observation used herein is based on textual authorship; specifically, each observation is a set of one or more texts written by a single author[35]. This research design not only allows for an examination of the variation of grammatical features marking stance within a genre-specific corpus (CTARC), but also for comparisons of stance *across* registers, or, in this case, *across* corpora (CTARC vs. the K-corpus), threat type categories

---

[35] For practical purposes, the unit of observation roughly translates into a threat assessment case (i.e., multiple threats, all of which are assessed to be written by the same author, typically make up one AGI case).

(harassment vs. defamation vs. stalking, etc.), and threat realization categories (realized vs. non-realized).

For each observation, grammatical markers of stance were counted using the Biber Tag Count program described above and automatically normalized to a rate of 1000 words (i.e., each grammatical feature occurs x times per 1000 words), which roughly corresponds to the length of most of the shorter observations in the corpora. Additionally, it has been found that counts for most common grammatical features "are relatively stable across 1000-word samples" (Biber, 1990; Biber *et al.*, 1998: 249). After normalizing the counts, mean scores for the grammatical features were computed for each corpus (CTARC, K-corpus) and each CTARC category (each threat type and each threat realization status), allowing the distribution of features to be compared across corpora and threat categories. Finally, to test these grammatical features for significance, ANOVAs[36] were run in order to compare "the extent of variation among groups to the variation within groups" (Biber *et al.*, 1998: 276).

Thus, the corpus analysis in chapter 4 is broken down into two main analyses. First, as one of the main goals of this research is to provide a broad description of how stance functions in threats, all grammatical forms marking stance that occur more than .5 times per 1000 words are examined in more detail using the concordancing program

---

[36] While the data from the analysis of threat types will be written up separately in future research, the fact that there were five means that needed to be compared required the use of ANOVA rather than a t-test; therefore, ANOVAs were run for all of the grammatical feature comparisons: CTARC vs. the K-corpus, Realized threats vs. Non-realized threats, and Defamation vs. Harassment vs. Stalking vs. Violence vs. Other (see Appendix D for the distributions of the threat type categories). Duncan Multiple Range Tests were then run to determine which of the threat type categories were significantly different from the others.

WordSmith 5.0[37] (Scott, 2010). Figure 3.1 below provides an example screenshot of the concordance for the modal *will*.

Figure 3.1: WordSmith Concordance for the Modal *will*

Using a qualitative social constructionist approach, as outlined in Precht (2003b: 255), which focuses "on finding patterns in the relationships between interlocutors, their relative status, and presentation of self," each concordance was sorted so that functional patterns were easier to identify. For example, in Figure 3.1 above, the concordance was sorted alphabetically first, by the word immediately to the search term's left and second, by the word immediately to the search term's right. Commonly occurring patterns (e.g., with pronouns marking the subject of the utterance, verbs denoting the proposed action, and the grammatical voice with which the verbs were encoded) were examined and outlined in more detail in order to provide a clearer picture of how the grammatical forms

---

[37] Available through http://www.lexically.net/wordsmith/.

in threats interact with other lexical items and how they then construct and construe the interpersonal stances of the writer.

Second, in order to identify stance functions salient to threats or to a particular threat category (realized vs. non-realized threats), two measurements were used. First, grammatical markers of stance—adverbials, complement clauses, and modals—with a significance value of $p < .05$ were examined in more depth in order to uncover differences in function between the corpora or sub-corpora. However, the majority of these grammatical variables were found to have large standard deviations, reflecting the fact that there is extensive variation for these features among the texts within each sub-corpora; yet, simultaneously, there were relatively large differences in the mean scores for many of these features between the two corpora, indicating that there *are* linguistic differences between the two despite the extensive range of variation among texts within each category. Therefore, in order to capture these latter differences, a second measurement based on frequency was set (Biber, 2010, p.c.). And, since frequency is an ill-defined term in many studies (Gales and Chand, 2010), the term salience will be used for the purposes of this benchmark, which is herein defined as those features occurring at least more than two times as often in one corpus (or sub-corpus) than in the other *and* those features occurring at least .5 times per 1000 words in one or both of the corpora being compared.

The results offer an empirically-grounded set of grammatically-based functions that broadly demonstrate the ways in which threateners take a stance towards their victims in order to negotiate power, instill fear, and mitigate responsibility for their actions. To elaborate on these interpersonal functions on a more intimate level, Appraisal

analysis is performed on three individual threats in order to reveal "the lexically oriented systems which tune these additional dimensions of repartee" (Martin, 2000: 145) within their threatening context.

3.2.2: Appraisal Analysis

Appraisal (Martin and Rose, 2003; Martin and White, 2005) is a discourse analysis tool that allows analysis of interpersonal relationships by uncovering "meaning beyond the clause," or, in other words, across whole texts (Martin and Rose, 2003: 1). Focusing on interpersonal relationships of authorial stance, power, and solidarity (i.e., a focus on function rather than form), there are three interwoven ways authors establish their position and take a stance in relation to larger social semiotic systems: through attitude, engagement, and graduation (Martin and White, 2005).

Attitude highlights how feelings are mapped within texts, covering the categories of emotion, ethics, and aesthetics. These categories illuminate an author's textually instantiated positive and negative feelings of happiness, security, and satisfaction; attitudes towards behavior; judgements of how normal, capable, or resolute someone is; assessments of how truthful or ethical someone is; and evaluations of things, phenomena, or processes. Collectively, these linguistic resources function in a prosodic manner to create and construe attitudinal meaning, or authorial stance (Martin and White, 2005). Within threat letters, analyses of authorial attitude offer a means of investigating how serious a threat is, why the threat is being offered, and the ways in which the author's ethical positioning may influence both.

Engagement distills how authors, as social actors in a text (van Leeuwen, 1996), dialogically position themselves towards both their text and larger social practices and mores. Utterances can be monoglossic, where only the author's voice can be heard, and/or heteroglossic in that they reveal, refer to, reflect, and/or negotiate the attitudes, stances, and perspectives of those who came before, while at the same time they anticipate the forthcoming attitudes, stances, and perspectives of new audiences (Bakhtin 1981). Within threat letters, authors use the dialogic system of Engagement to create alignment and solidarity with their audience—usually a victim or related third party—or, if the opposite effect is desired, to disalign and distance the author from the audience (Martin and White, 2005). In addition, authors can create this solidarity or distance subtly or boldly on a cline of *Graduation*, which has the effect of turning up or down the 'volume' of an utterance, through quantification, intensification, and repetition (Martin and White, 2005). Collectively, the systems of analysis within Appraisal permit us to move beyond intuitive, ideologically-based assessments of the function of language and approach the linguistic resources offered in threats as systematic constructions of meaning which reveal much about the author's underlying position, emotion, and intent, thereby supplementing and honing the functions identified through the previous corpus analyses.

The texts chosen for analysis were selected in two manners. First, to ensure that the texts selected for further analysis were representative samples of the threatening communications in CTARC, a total of 40 texts (approximately 10%) were randomly selected from across each of the threat type and threat realization categories. Second, since CTARC is a private corpus containing sensitive, confidential material, each of the

40 texts was sanitized for all identifying information and submitted to AGI for reprint permission. Out of the 25 approved texts, the three chosen for closer analysis represent a spectrum of threat types and realization statuses. Additionally, these texts were chosen for their ideological and cultural value, i.e., they were compelling examples of threats (Martin and Rose, 2003). The remaining texts that were granted reprint permission have been used, as appropriate, for exemplification purposes throughout this research. Thus, texts chosen for analysis are representative samples from CTARC that further identify and demonstrate how stance is grammatically and lexically marked and how it functions on an interpersonal level within threats.

In this project, then, the innovative use of these two methodologies will be linked to provide an iterative way of uncovering and describing authorial stance in threats through the dual perspective of linguistic form and language function. Ultimately, the dialogic meshing of these two approaches "give[s] us the kind of information that is not obtainable from intuition" (Hunston and Thompson, 2000: 57), and, as understanding stance is vital for the ways in which we interpret meaning, negotiation relationships, and perceive the world (Bednarek, 2006; Martin and White, 2005), revealing how stance functions as opposed to how we *think* it functions in this oftentimes dangerous genre is of the utmost importance.

3.3: SURVEY OF STUDENT LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES

As is well-established in corpus linguistics, socially-defined genres (e.g., threats) and registers (e.g., emails and business letters) exhibit unique linguistic patterns and unique collocations of linguistic patterns (Biber *et al.*, 1998), and these patterns can aid us in

understanding how authentic language functions to create meaning, negotiate

relationships, and disseminate ideologies within society (Martin and White, 2005). These

patterns are formed through the process of enregisterment, "whereby distinct forms of

speech come to be socially recognized (or enregistered[38]) as indexical of speaker

attributes by a population of language users" (Agha, 2005: 38). Here, characterological

figures are constructed, i.e., stereotypical persons linked to particular forms of speech,

and "observable patterns of role alignment are potentially overdetermined in subsequent

construal given the complex space of self- and other-contrasts in which they occur"

(Agha, 2007: 177). Thus, when performing studies of authentic language use, because we

tend to notice unusual patterns—those that become associated with characterological

figures in a particular language variety—we "cannot rely on intuition or anecdotal

evidence" (Biber *et al.*, 1998: 3). What initially began, then, as a pilot study to investigate

how students' enregistered constructions of threatening language were first, influenced

by their culturally-based frames of reference (Goffman, 1974; 1981) and second,

mirrored by what exists within a corpus of authentic threats, is presented here as the third

point in the triangulation of language ideology data. Specifically, the following survey

ascertains how a layperson audience—as opposed to those with scholarly or experiential

backgrounds in researching or assessing threatening language like those two communities

of practice surveyed in Chapter 1—views the language of threats. The threatening

language survey (Appendix B) was conducted over a period of one academic year and the

---

[38] Agha's use of the term 'register' is different than that used herein to describe text types defined by their situational characteristics (e.g., emails, business letters, text messages), which is based on Biber *et al.* (1998). Specifically, Agha derives enregisterment "from the verb *to register* ('recognize; record'); the noun form *a register* refers to a product of this process, namely a social regularity of recognition whereby linguistic (and accompanying nonlinguistic) signs come to be recognized as indexing pragmatic features of interpersonal role (persona) and relationship" (2005: 57).

results were gathered from over 100 undergraduate students aged 19-24, who were

attending a level one research institution in California.

3.3.1: Student Survey Results

As discussed with regard to the language ideologies from scholars and practitioners in

Chapter 1, our cultural and social frames allow us to organize our experiences and

negotiate meaning within a context (Hymes, 1974; Goffman, 1974, 1981), and these

frames play a role in the construction of language ideologies for students as well. In this

instance, one particularly influential frame is that of television, as, according to recent

Nielsen Ratings, college students who live away from home watch an average of 24.3

hours of television a week (Aspan, 2006). Upon closer examination, it was found by a

2010 national survey of U.S. college students that within the top 25 most watched shows

(cable and network) were the following crime-based series: 24, Bones, Castle, CSI,

Dexter, Law and Order, and NCIS (Top Colleges, 2009). These shows, which

collectively comprise the genre known as crime fiction[39], portray criminal events in a

fictitious manner by exaggerating the crime, the relationship between characters, and the

criminal process—shows "credited with the ability to influence society, indicating the

interconnectedness of fictional and nonfictional" (Kruse, 2010: 88). And while

entertaining to many, as evidenced by viewership numbers and ratings, threat assessment

practitioners oftentimes dislike shows in this genre due to their potential for influence—

what has been termed the 'CSI effect' (*ibid.*). Such an effect can lead to gross

misrepresentations of the rigid protocols followed in lawful investigations, the length of

---

[39] As opposed to true crime, wherein the events portrayed are firsthand accounts of or close reenactments of real events.

time required to perform certain legal procedures, and the quality of individuals who genuinely devote themselves to law enforcement careers (Mardigian, 2009, p.c.). Yet, while this influential connection has been downplayed in recent literature (e.g., Cole and Dioso-Villa (2007) claim there is little evidence to substantiate the existence of the effect and Kruse (2010) focuses instead on the shows' more positive cultural outcomes), it is through this very framing of popular culture, as will be explored below, that students' ideologies about threatening language are constructed.

As prototypical examples of threats from this genre, through which students continue to interpret new experiences and build upon their understanding of threatening language (Fillmore, 1975), the following were selected from three of the shows on the aforementioned college students' most watched list. The first threat—a conditional threat—aired on Showtime, a cable channel that has few restrictions on language use, while the second two—a conditional and a veiled threat, respectively—aired on primetime network channels, which do restrict most profane language use.

- *Look, I don't want to cancel all my credit cards and I hate waiting in line at the DMV, so give me back the wallet you stole from my car or I'll break your fucking neck!* (Dexter, Season 1, Popping Cherry).

- *I am going to ask you one last time. Who are your co-conspirators? You have until the count of three, or I will kill you.* (24, Day 5, 6am-7am)

- *Get that finger out of my face bitch!* (CSI, Season 1, Sex, Lies, and Larvae)

Based on these prototypical examples, it is not surprising to find that the most common threat types assumed to exist, as seen in Figure 3.2, are conditional and veiled threats, and the most common linguistic features assumed to be associated with

threatening language, as seen in Figure 3.3, are violent physical action verbs, profanity, second person pronouns, necessity modals, and a general time frame.

Figure 3.2: Student Ideologies about Threat Types
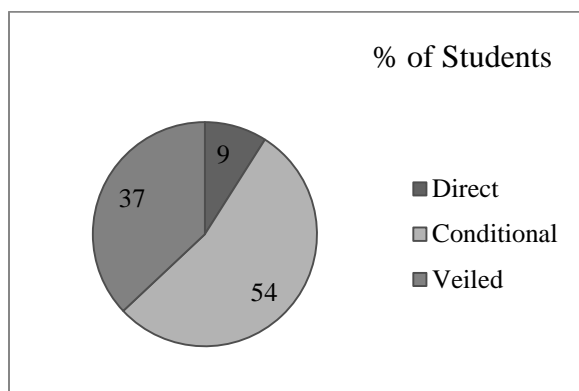
N = 103

Figure 3.3: Student Ideologies about Threatening Language
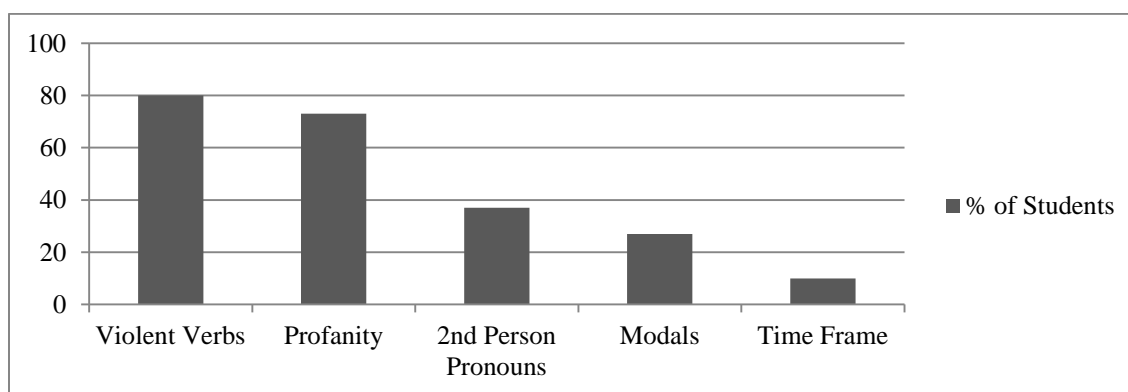
N = 103

For the language portion of the survey (Figure 3.3), students were specifically asked to list or describe the kind of language they thought was most commonly found in threats. They were allowed to list the linguistic name of the forms (e.g., proper nouns, first person pronouns, etc.), examples of the forms (e.g., uncertain language like "I feel" or "I think," etc.), or descriptions of what the forms might do—i.e., how the forms might function in a threat (e.g., forceful language, softening language, polite terms, etc.). And

while the majority of answers were of the first two types (linguistic names of forms or

examples of lexical items), there were many students who also contributed to the

functional descriptions as well, which are included in Table 3.4 below. This table also

includes linguistic forms and functions of note that were less frequently mentioned, but

still occurred close to 10% of the time in the survey data.

Table 3.4: Summary of Forms and Functions from Student Ideologies

Linguistic Feature	Linguistic Function	Source Examples	Percentage of Student Respondents
violent physical action verbs		"kill, die, hurt, beat, destroy, slice, murder"	80%
profanity (including sexist and racist language)		"shit, fuck, Chink, gook"	73%
second person pronouns	to focus on victim rather than self (it is not the threatener's fault)	"you, you all"	37%
"forceful" modals		"will, must, shall, have got to, have to"	27%
specified or abstract time frame		"tomorrow, soon, by 2pm, in 10 days"	10%
concept nouns or similar language suggesting the justification for the threat	to justify the threatened action	"it is my right; because you did…, I will do…"	< 10%
conditional clauses[40]	to place conditions on the threat	"if you don't do this, this will happen"	< 10%
religious invocation		"because you angered God…"	< 10%
active voice	to actively involve self	"I'm gonna"	< 10%
future tense		"I will, I'm gonna"	< 10%
cold, angry,	to disallow for		< 10%

---

[40] It is interesting to note that while 54% of the students selected "conditional" as the main threat type, fewer than 10% of the students mentioned conditional clauses as being inherent in threatening language.

distraught tone	pleading or other voices to be heard; to lead victim to feel powerless

Interestingly, the majority of these categories overlap with many of the categories identified in chapter 1 from scholars and practitioners. Specifically highlighted are a focus on conditional threat types; adverbial or nominal markers of time; a threatened action; profanity, insults, or other derogatory language; a focus on the victim as demonstrated through the use of second person pronouns, direct addresses or references, and proper names; and a commitment to the intended action through modals of obligation. In order to test these commonly occurring assumptions about threatening language, the five linguistic features most commonly identified by students in Figure 3.3 and the distribution of threat types from Figure 3.2 above are compared against what exists within CTARC.

3.3.2: Comparative CTARC Results

As seen in Figure 3.4 below, CTARC is comprised of 62% veiled threats, 26% conditional threats, and 12% direct threats, as opposed to the 37% veiled, 54% conditional, and 9% direct threat distribution seen earlier in Figure 3.2 from student intuitions. Likewise, the distribution downplays the emphasis Kent (1967) and Milburn and Watman (1981) place on conditional threats and it supports Yamanaka's (1995) claim that more research needs to be done on indirect threats as opposed to just direct and conditional threats.

Figure 3.4: Threat Types in CTARC
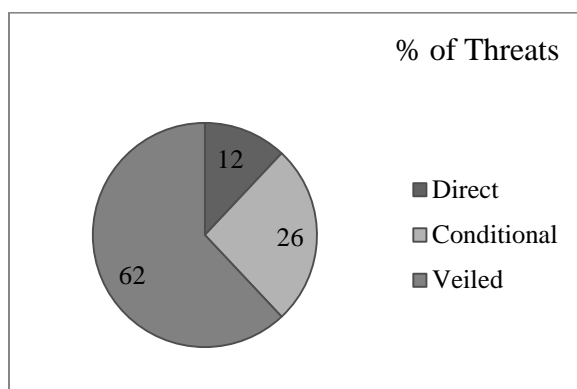
N = 470[41]

Figure 3.5 below represents the distribution of those five linguistic features identified by students, which are also supported, to varying degrees, by scholars and practitioners, as being most commonly associated with threatening language—profanity, action verbs of harm, second person pronouns, modals of intent, and time frame—as they occur in CTARC.

Figure 3.5: Language Features in CTARC
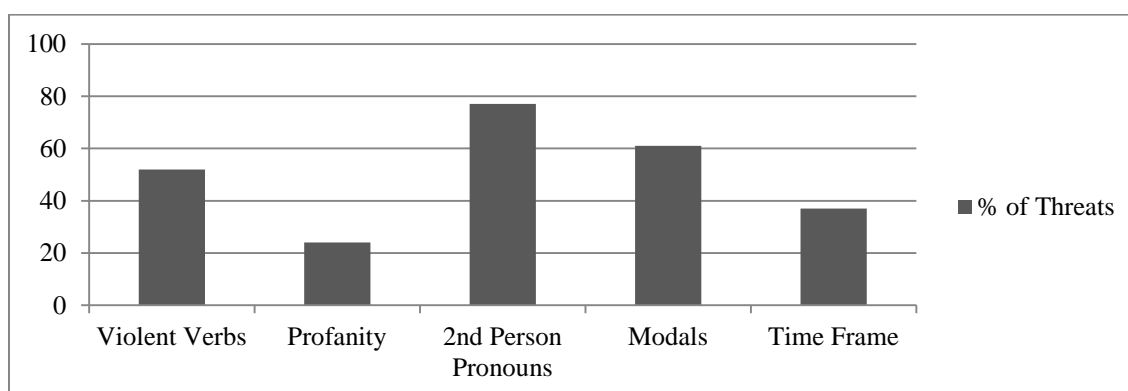
N = 470

---

[41] While the observation units for the corpus analysis in chapter 4 are based on textual authorship, those for the first portion of the survey research were based on individual texts, as each text can possess a different threat type even if one author wrote multiple texts. The latter portion of the survey detailing pronoun use is based, once again, on textual authorship.

The findings here show that when compared to the student ideologies in Figure 3.3 above, violent verbs and profanity occur less often than expected, while second person pronouns, modals, and a time frame occur more often than expected. In fact, the first two of these categories demonstrate a fairly large divergence from what was expected to what exists in the authentic threatening language found in CTARC.

First, the notion that profanity or other derogatory language is abundant in threatening language, as believed by a majority of surveyed students and supported by many scholars and practitioners, does not agree with what was found in CTARC. According to Figure 3.5, only 24% of the communications possess profane, sexist, racist, or insulting language, demonstrating that threats can still be effective without profanity. For example, the threat in Text 3.2 below, twenty copies of which were handwritten in red ink and sent to newspapers around the U.S. in 2007, successfully transmits the threatening message without using any of the aforementioned styles of derogatory or potentially offensive language.

Text 3.2: Goldman Sachs[42]
GOLDMAN SACHS.
HUNDREDS WILL DIE.
WE ARE INSIDE.
YOU CANNOT STOP US.
A.Q.U.S.A.

Therefore, while one of the primary functions of threatening language is to intimidate and instill fear in the recipient (Olsson, 2004), these results demonstrate that threats are not always dependent on intimidating or instilling fear with profanity or insults.

---

[42] Text 3.2 is publically available through the National Terror Alert's website: www.nationalterroralert.com.

100

Second, personalization, or a focus on the victim, was cited as a fairly common,

but not highly frequent, feature of threats by students[43]. Yet, as is verified by CTARC in

Figure 3.5 above, 77% of the threatening communications therein possess one of the

primary methods of demonstrating personalization—the second person pronoun, which

includes variants such as *ya'll*, as in *If I were ya'll I would be real afraid* (HAR); *u*, as in

We give U 1 more day… (OTH); and *yu* as in *Unless yu pay me $1,000…* (OTH). Text

3.3, which was seen in chapter 2 to outline the ways in which stance are manifested,

exemplifies the heightened sense of personalization or focus placed on the victim of the

threat through the second person pronoun.

> Text 3.3: We are Silverton—personalization
> IT's a fact—WE are Silverton. YOU, your wife, and your kids are not. The old
> saying goes, YOU can take people out of the ghetto but YOU cannot take the
> ghetto out of the people. When YOU come from drunken scum, YOU are not ever
> far away from being the same. […] YOU've got to get psychiatric help; get
> whatever YOU need, just get out of Silverton. Be a cancer somewhere else, WE
> are sick of YOU. Get out before WE get YOU!

While this text emphasizes the weight placed on the use of the second person

pronoun, it also raises an interesting question about the primary focus of threatening

communications—i.e., is the focus of a threat typically on the recipient, as indicated by

37% of the students and as exemplified in Text 3.3 above, or on the threatener, which

was not mentioned at all by the students but has been suggested by Turner and Gelles

(2003) and Mardigian (2009, p.c.), who claim that a focus on the self, as opposed to the

victim, might *also* play a role in threatening language? As seen in Text 3.4 below,

---

[43] While many scholars and practitioners also identified "a focus on personalization" as a common feature
of threats, students were the main ones to exemplify that focus primarily though the use of the second
person pronoun. Scholars and practitioners, on the other hand, while including the second person pronoun
as a marker, also emphasized additional markers such as first names, home addresses, the kind of car
owned by the victim, etc.

through the use of personal and possessive pronouns, threateners can also turn the focus

on themselves as opposed to their victims.

> Text 3.4: You are MINE
> YOU ARE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE
> MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE
> MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE
> MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE
> MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE
> MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE. MAINLY BECAUSE I
> WONT LET YOU GO. BUT I WILL HAVE YOU NO MATTER WHAT I
> HAVE TO DO - YOU ARE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE
> MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE MINE
> MINE MINE MINE. YOU ONLY DANCE FOR ME. ONLY ME ME ME ME
> ME. SOON I WILL HAVE INGREDIANTS TO CAST A SPELL ON YOU. I
> MUST BE PATIENT. YOU MAY NOT HEAR FROM ME FOR AWHILE BUT
> DON'T WORRY. I WILL BE WATCHING YOU. PROTECTING YOU FROM
> EVIL. YOU WON'T BE LONELY WILL YOU. I WILL SEE YOU DANCE
> SOON. AND I WILL HAVE THE BEST SEAT IN THE HOUSE. IF YOU
> ONLY KNEW HOW CLOSE I'LL BE. I LOVE YOU.

As demonstrated in past literature, markers of stance allow an author to negotiate

their position and power, promote solidarity or distance, and provide an index of self—all

in relation to others (Martin and White, 2005; Johnstone, 2009; Kiesling, 2009). As

evidenced in Texts 3.3 and 3.4 above, one of the ways in which this relationship is

negotiated is through the prosodic use of pronouns in conjunction with stance markers. In

Text 3.4, for example, the repetition of *mine* and *me* foregrounds the self-preoccupation

of the writer (Weintraub, 2003), while serving to classify the second person participant as

a possession. In conjunction with stance-filled words and phrases, the first person subject

is patient, loves, protects, and casts a spell reminiscent of the romantic fairy tale *Sleeping

Beauty,* while the second person actor won't be lonely or placed in evil's way. This puts

the threatener in a beneficent position of power and relegates the recipient of the text to

the position of the helpless, yet purportedly fortunate, victim. And, as seen in Figure 3.6 below, the distribution of personal pronouns in CTARC demonstrates that there is an equally heightened focus on self and the personally addressed victim in threats.

Figure 3.6: Distribution of Pronouns in CTARC
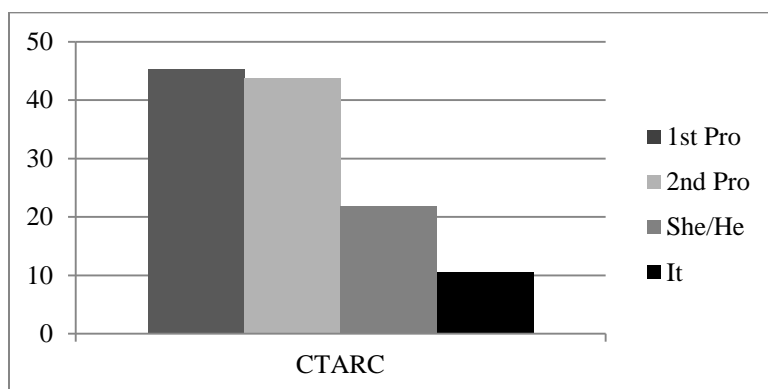
Frequency per 1000 Words, N = 118

What these results demonstrate is that threats, like all forms of communication, are ultimately the product of the society from which they derive in that they are the manifestation of personal feelings, emotions, and intentions that have been shaped, influenced, and even encouraged by the larger social structure (Eggins and Martin, 1997). As such, they need to be investigated first, through a corpus of authentic genre-specific communications, which can shed light on the *true* nature of language (Biber *et al.*, 1998) as opposed to that which is ideologically-constructed, or *assumed* to exist, based on our culturally-based 'structures of expectations' (Ross, 1975; Tannen 1993); and second, through a linguistic construct that views language as a part of the larger social semiotic system of meaning, at the very core of which are an author's culturally-organized "personal feelings, attitudes, value judgements, or assessments" about the theme, recipient, or proposition being presented (Biber *et al.*, 1999: 966)—specifically, stance.

3.3.3: Summary of Language Ideologies about Threatening Communications

The majority of linguistic features and language functions presented above, in some sense, are tools of authorial stance. Specifically, they demonstrate the ways in which threateners show commitment towards the threat, offer personal affect towards the victim, and negotiate their position of power. Over the next two chapters, the forms and functions presented in Table 3.5 below, which synthesizes the ideologies about threatening language from the three communities of practice, will be interpreted in light of the stance functions uncovered therein.

Table 3.5: Student, Scholar, and Practitioner Ideologies about Threatening Language

Linguistic Feature	Linguistic Function	Source Examples	Source
violent physical action verbs; specific or vague action or harm		"kill, die, hurt, beat, destroy, slice, murder;" "…you have been judged, you will be punished just as you have punished others."	students, scholars, practitioners
profanity (including sexist and racist language), insults, pejorative language, obscenities[44]	to intimidate	"shit, fuck, Chink, gook;" "You are a complete ass…;" "Get out of my way, you SOB." "dogs," beasts," "Give me your purse, bitch!" "You are the biggest bigot I ever met."	students, scholars, practitioners
second person pronouns	to focus on victim rather than self (it is	"you, you all;" "proper names,	students, scholars,

---

[44] While admittedly different, these features were frequently conflated in the threat assessment literature and student surveys, making firm distinctions between the categories difficult. Since the remaining chapters focus more on function rather than form, further delineation was not deemed necessary for the present purposes.

	not the threatener's fault); to demonstrate fixation on object of desire, personalization	knowledge of home address"	practitioners
"forceful" modals	to demonstrate commitment to threat, to demonstrate intent	"will, must, shall, have got to, have to"	students, practitioners
specified or abstract time frame		"tomorrow, soon, by 2pm, in 10 days;" "your time is at hand;" "this can go on no longer;" "soon you will reap what you have sown;" "you must leave now or you will be responsible for what happens next."	students, scholars
concept nouns or similar language suggesting the justification for the threat; behaviors for which a victim needs punishing	to justify the threatened action	"it is my right; because you did…, I will do…;" "you apply policies unfairly;" "cheating, stealing;" "I and everyone else knows what you did yesterday and what you have been getting away with for the past three months since you came here, you will not get away with this I promise you…"	students, scholars
conditional clauses, conditional threats	to place conditions on the threat	"if you don't do this, this will happen;" "I will (or won't) do this *if* you do (or don't do) that;" "If you harm A, I will harm you."	students, scholars
religious invocation		"because you	students

		angered God…”	
active voice	to actively involve self or others	“I’m gonna”	students
future tense		“I will, I’m gonna”	students
cold, angry, distraught tone	to disallow pleading or other voices/opinions; to lead victim to feel powerless		students
first person pronouns	to focus on self as victim of injustice or wrongdoing	“I, me”	scholars, practitioners
adverbs	to bolster the seriousness of intent	“really, honestly, truly”	practitioners
negatives	to cope or deny	“not, no, never, nothing”	scholars
lack of qualifiers	to weaken a statement	“I think, kind of, what you might call, I believe”	scholars
retractors	to signal impulsivity, difficulty adhering to decisions	“but, although, however, nonetheless”	scholars
rhetorical questions	to indicate aggression and direct engagement	“Do we not deserve better?”	scholars, practitioners
commands		“Wipe that grin off your face.”	scholars
lexical markers of hopelessness, weapons, fantasies, suicide			scholars

It is through our ideologies about language, then, that we can further our understanding of the ways in which we co-construct meaning in culturally-situated contexts. Chapter 4 will investigate grammatical markers of stance and their corresponding functions through a corpus-based analysis and Chapter 5 will begin with these interpersonal functions and further identify lexical manifestations of stance through an Appraisal analysis. The language ideologies outlined above will be interwoven

throughout the discourse, thereby sharpening our culturally-based understanding of

threatening language through the revelation of empirically-grounded functions of stance

therein.

CHAPTER 4: A CORPUS-BASED ANALYSIS OF STANCE

There is <u>definitely</u> <u>a possibility that</u> I <u>will</u> be killed in <u>my attempt to</u> get Reagan[45]. (STLK)

This utterance, taken from John Hinckley's final letter to Jody Foster before his attempt to kill President Ronald Reagan in 1981, exemplifies the four grammatical manifestations of stance—adverbials, *that* complement clauses, modals, and *to* complement clauses, respectively—that are the present focus of investigation. Specifically, this chapter explores these linguistic markers of stance as well as their corresponding functions in threatening communications from three perspectives: theory, ideology, and salience.

The theoretical perspective, presented in section 4.1, is grounded in previous functional corpus analyses of stance in a variety of genres, registers, and language varieties. From these previous empirical studies (e.g., Biber *et al.*, 1999; Biber, 2006), I briefly outline the three ways in which stance is manifested in language (paralinguistically, lexically, grammatically) and highlight those linguistic forms central to this chapter that can be readily examined using corpus-based techniques (i.e. the empirically-grounded features that *grammatically* mark stance). Additionally, in order to exemplify the contextually-varied nature of stance across language varieties, registers, and genres, a brief survey of these grammatical forms and their functions discussed in previous research is included.

Section 4.2 focuses on these empirically-grounded grammatical categories—adverbials, complement clauses, modals—as they occur in threats with the goal of

---

[45] In all threat examples, all names (people, places, companies, etc.) are pseudonyms, except in cases that received national publicity (e.g., John Hinckley's attempted assassination of President Ronald Reagan, the JonBenét Ramsey killing, etc.); however, all non-standard language use has been captured as it existed in the original document.

revealing the ways in which these texts ultimately fulfill their pragmatic function—threatening. Specifically, distribution patterns for each linguistic form, which are based on Biber *et al.*'s (1999) semantic categorizations of forms marking stance in English, are presented; next, the literal and interpersonal functions of those features occurring more than .5 times per 1000 words (i.e., those features offering more consistent contributions to the functioning of stance in the genre) are outlined, demonstrating how authorial commitment, intent, and power are realized and negotiated within threatening communications.

Next, as stance is about the negotiation of *interpersonal* relationships through the authorial sharing of emotions, the negotiation of power, and the demonstration of commitment (Martin and White, 2005), section 4.3 synthesizes the functions identified in section 4.2 in order to highlight the primary interpersonal functions in threats. For the purposes of this research, interpersonal meaning is located not in the exchange between discursive participants (e.g., Halliday, 1984; Eggins and Slade, 1997), as threats are primarily one-way soliloquies, but in "the mental states of the speaker," or what Hill (2008: 44) refers to as a personalist ideology of language. It is here that a writer formulates language in ways that reflect the culturally-situated voices of others in a dialogic sense (Bakhtin, 1981) in his or her attempt to shape, negotiate, and construct interpersonal relationships with readers, i.e., the writer utilizes particular linguistic forms for the specific function of conveying his or her culturally-based feelings, attitudes, or judgements to the reader, as well as his or her certainty about or commitment to a stated act (Conrad and Biber, 2000). In threats, then, what is found are two highly distinct sets of patterns—one set that strengthens the role, responsibility, and demonstrated attitude of

the threatener and one set that weakens those stances. Drawing from the ideological

perspectives about threatening language presented in chapters 1 and 3 (i.e., the untested

intuitions about threatening language from various scholarly, practitioner, and student

communities of practice), I investigate how accurately these two interpersonal sets of

functions—those strengthening and those weakening the threatener's stance—are

reflected in our socially-constructed ideologies about threatening language. The

comparison demonstrates that while our ideologies correctly identify one of the

functional sets—that strengthening the threatener's stance—the set of functions

weakening the threatener's stance is absent from our overall understanding of this

pragmatic act. This ideologically-motivated masking of linguistic function, a process

known as erasure (Irvine and Gal, 2000), ultimately shapes the ways in which we

construct, negotiate, and reify meaning in discursive language practices, a discussion that

will be further taken up in the following section.

Finally, section 4.4 examines those features that are significant and/or salient to

threats, further shaping our understanding of threats as a functional genre. In this section,

the grammatical features marking stance that have statistical significance and heightened

salience to threats (as compared to the comparison K-corpus of non-threats outlined in

chapter 3) and to either of the threat internal categories (i.e., realized vs. non-realized

threats) are highlighted and their corresponding functions are outlined. Then, after

synthesizing how the salient functions in realized vs. non-realized are distributed

according to the two sets of functional patterns outlined above—those strengthening and

those weakening—I compare, once again, how well these functional patterns are reflected

in our ideologies about threatening language. In this case, ideologies that specifically

address threat fulfillment (realized vs. non-realized) and threat level (high level vs. low level) are examined, ultimately producing results similar to those noted in section 4.3. This section concludes with a discussion of how erasure (Irvine and Gal, 2000), as an ideological process, affects the ways in which we conceptualize interpersonal meaning within this, and potentially other, pragmatic acts.

To revisit two of the main research questions posed at the start of this research, the goals specific to this chapter, then, are twofold. First, my aim is to contribute to our larger, cross-disciplinary understanding of stance as a theoretical construct. By taking a multilayered approach to stance, beginning in this chapter with a corpus-based analysis of grammatical features that mark stance and concluding with an examination of interpersonal stance functions salient to the genre, a more complete picture of stance can be formed. This understanding moves beyond the literal and textual functions of stance as indexed by their semantic categorizations and towards an interpersonal perspective which builds on and links existing cross-disciplinary knowledge about the ways in which speakers and writers attempt to form, negotiate, and maintain interpersonal relationships through language.

Second, by integrating language ideologies from various communities of practice into this study, I challenges our preconceived notions about threatening language and demonstrate how, in fact, authorial stance functions more broadly than expected within the genre. These findings not only hone our understanding of the forms commonly used by threateners to mark their stances, but also offer new insights about the ways in which threateners, as social actors, attempt to negotiate this interpersonal meaning between themselves and their victims. This multi-faceted approach to examining stance—from the

perspectives of theory, ideology, and salience—will greatly enrich our knowledge of the

pragmatic act of threatening by presenting a more comprehensive picture of stance in this

performative genre, ultimately aiding in the reconstruction of our ideologies about

threatening language and about the ways in which threateners threaten.

4.1: GRAMMATICAL STANCE

As discussed in more depth in Chapter 2, stance can be expressed through language

paralinguistically, lexically, and grammatically. Paralinguistic markers of stance such as

bolding for emphasis, using all CAPITAL LETTERS to simulate shouting, and adding

emoticons (e.g., ☹, ☺) to replicate the writer's intended emotion (Park, 2007) offer one

way in which stance manifests itself though language. Similarly, lexical markers of

stance, which are value-laden in that they embody evaluative meaning in their very

definition and include some of the most commonly used words in English (Biber *et al.*,

1999; Biber, 2006), are another way in which stance is linguistically expressed. For

example, words such as *great* and *nice* vs. *bad* and *wicked* traditionally represent

opposite evaluative stances of something being either good or bad on a relative scale.

However, as paralinguistic and lexical markers of stance *are not* always explicitly

encoded but *are* always context dependent, as exemplified by the negatively-stanced *bad*

and *wicked* which have taken on the opposite meaning of *good* in some American

dialects, as observed through COCA (2010), they are "extremely difficult to

operationalize" through large-scale corpus analyses (Biber, 2006). Instead, a close

discourse analysis of individual texts, such as that provided in Chapter 5 via the

Appraisal framework, is necessary in order to uncover lexical manifestations of stance

forms as well as their corresponding functions as defined by their surrounding culturally-

constructed context. Grammatical stance, on the other hand, while still contextually

dependent in terms of function, is *overtly* observable through corpus analysis since the

stance is encoded through two annotatable components—the stance marker and the

proposition being evaluated (Biber *et al.*, 1999). Thus, the focus of this present chapter,

as framed by Biber *et al.*'s (1999) and Biber's (2006) methodological approach to stance,

is on overtly marked grammatical manifestations of stance, which herein include three[46]

primary categories—adverbials, complement clauses, and modals. Appendix C offers a

more detailed summary of these lexico-grammatical features and their semantic

categorizations from Biber (2006: 92-93).

4.1.1: Adverbials

The category of adverbials examined here includes single adverbs (e.g., *Unfortunately,*

what we had was unique and you will not have that again. (HAR)); adverb phrases (e.g.,

Quite frankly one would think you would have more pride than you have exhibited in

taking things to this level and putting me in this position. (DEF)); and hedges (e.g., *He*

kind of downplayed the level of compliance work in the group… (DEF)). They can be

broken down into four main semantic classes: certainty, likelihood, attitude, and style

(Biber, 2006). Epistemic adverbials of certainty demonstrate a heightened level of

certainty about a proposition and include lexical items such as *no doubt, actually,* and

never; while epistemic adverbials of likelihood demonstrate less certainty and include

---

[46] While there are other grammatical manifestations of stance, as discussed in Chapter 2, I do not examine the stance noun + prepositional phrase category in this chapter, as, like lexical marking of stance, it is not always clear without context if the prepositional phrase is actually a proposition (Biber *et al.*, 1999).

apparently, probably, and *sort of*. Attitude adverbials, which index a writer's personal attitude, include, for example, *curiously, hopefully, and ironically*; and style adverbials mark the way in which a writer uses language (e.g., *simply, frankly, honestly*), describes information (*typically, generally*), or attributes that information to others (*according to*). Each of these semantic categories are further discussed and exemplified in section 4.2.1 below.

Research on stance adverbials has demonstrated that markers tend to vary somewhat systematically across particular registers, genres, and language varieties. For example, the register of *spoken* language, which includes face-to-face and telephone conversations, has been found to demonstrate a high rate of certainty adverbials (e.g., "in fact," "really," "of course") and a lower, yet notable, rate of likelihood adverbials (e.g., "apparently," "probably"), whereas *written* press reports and official documents exhibit virtually no adverbials marking stance (Biber and Finegan, 1988: 7-8). Similar distribution patterns were found in the genre of university language, where adverbials marking stance are much more common in spoken registers than in written ones and epistemic adverbials of certainty followed by likelihood are most frequent (Biber, 2006). Interestingly, though, while still relatively rare, style adverbs such as "generally" and "typically" were found to occur in university language more often in writing than in speech (*ibid.*: 104). Furthermore, single adverbs, which include fixed adverb phrases[47]

---

[47] Conrad and Biber (2000: 69) include multiple word phrases in which the components have lost their individual meaning, such as "sort of" and "of course," but they do not include phrases wherein the components retain their meaning individually, such as "in fact," which can also be modified (e.g., "in actual fact"). While I do not challenge these methods of categorizing single adverbs in this research, I would like to point out that some adverbs in their single adverb category can be modified by a small set of profane lexical items. For instance, while "of course" is most frequently found online in an unmodified form (occurring 413,000,000 times through a simple Google search), it was also modified by "fuckin(g)" in "of fucking course" 460,900 times and "frickin(g)" 7230 times.

such as "of course," are far more prevalent than other adverbial types in certain registers, specifically in news reportage, academic prose, and conversation, in the latter of which up to 70% of the adverbials are of this singular form (Biber *et al.*, 1999; Conrad and Biber, 2000: 69). When examined across the language varieties of American and British English in the register of conversation, Precht (2003b) found that adverbials occur at an almost equal rate with modals and adjectives, while Biber *et al.* (1999: 982) uncovered distinct distribution preferences of adverbial comment clauses, wherein Americans tended to prefer "I guess" and the British strongly preferred "I think."

It has also been demonstrated that genres and registers utilize adverbials for a variety of functions—both literal and interpersonal (Biber and Finegan, 1988; Biber *et al.*, 1999; Thompson and Zhou, 2000; Bondi, 2002; Silver, 2003). Literal functions are those directly indexed by the lexical definition of the adverb (e.g., certainty adverbials oftentimes function as literal indicators of certainty), and indeed, the semantic class distinctions outlined in Biber *et al.* (1999) reference these literal functions performed by adverbials (see Appendix C). Interpersonal functions, on the other hand, are those that function on a metapragmatic level in order to enact and negotiate social relationships (Martin and White, 2005). For example, Biber and Finegan (1988: 30) pointed out that actuality adverbials, which belong to the semantic class of certainty, frequently function as interpersonal markers of "solidarity, shared familiarity, and emphasis." Likewise, Thompson and Zhou (2000: 128) demonstrate that adverbials, when utilized in conjunction with disjuncts such as "yet" and "but," serve the interpersonal function of showing concession to or assertion of a proposition. Similarly, Silver (2003: 372), in his examination of "evidently" in academic language, found that it can function as a

metapragmatic strategy for "seeking common ground" and conveying a "collegial attitude" between an academic writer and his or her scholarly audience[48]. Finally, in a study of presidential speeches given by Bush between 2001 and 2006, Cesarani (2007:1) found that he used the adverbial pattern "fortunately" plus "importantly" with an extremely high rate of frequency as a rhetorical strategy that first, demonstrated his favorable stance towards a proposition and second, placed extra emphasis on the importance of it in order to align his audience with a proposition that was both favorable and important (*ibid.*).

Ultimately, these findings, which are not meant to be exhaustive but to offer a general understanding of the patterning of adverbials that mark stance, demonstrate the relative systematicity of variation that has been found in the distribution of adverbial forms within individual genres, registers, and language varieties, while simultaneously displaying the wide variability of interpersonal functions accompanying them. Therefore, while the examination herein frames adverbials (as well as all of the following grammatical markers of stance) by semantic class and makes reference to their corresponding literal functions, especially when pertinent to the threat itself, the focus will be on the new interpersonal functions uncovered in threatening language, as these interpersonal functions, which "are concerned with negotiating social relations: how people are interacting, including the feelings they try to share" (Martin and White, 2005: 7), are at the heart of the performative nature of threats.

---

[48] Silver (2003: 372) categorized functions that served as mitigating "hedges" or supporting "boosters" of a proposition as "metatextual." And while I acknowledge these functions herein, I categorize them under the interpersonal metafunction as described in Martin and White (2005: 7). Martin and White's "textual" metafunction is more concerned with "information flow: the ways in which ideational and interpersonal meanings are distributed in waves of semiosis, including interconnections among waves and between language and attendant modalities." Therefore, all functions described herein that are not literal will be categorized as interpersonal.

4.1.2: Complement Clauses

The second grammatical category examined herein is complement clauses, which are divided into two types—*that* clauses and *to* clauses, which hold the proposition being evaluated. In each case the clause can be controlled by a verb, noun, or adjective marking stance. For instance, in the sentence: *We strongly <u>believe that</u> it is the responsibility of industry to create a new awarness of the hazards of env ironmental neglect.* (OTH), the epistemic verb *believe*, demonstrates the speaker's level of certainty towards the proposition: *that it is the responsibility of the industry….* By using *believe* rather than *know*, for example, the speaker admits that while creating awareness is likely to be *the responsibility of the industry*, it is not certainly so. Similarly, in the sentence: *I was not <u>happy to</u> see that I did not get front page cover-age.* (VIOL), the affective adjective *happy*, which is lexically negated by the marker *not*, signals the writer's negative emotional stance about the proposition: *to see that I did not get front page cover-age.* And, while semantically similar, these two kinds of complement clauses present differing sets of semantic meaning and corresponding functions (see Appendix C), which will be detailed, where relevant to threatening communications, in section 4.2.2 below.

While complementation, as a syntactic phenomenon, has seen a recent increase in study by functional linguists, complement clauses have been less widely studied as functional components of stance; yet these clauses, as the propositions controlled by lexemes that mark the author's stance, play an important role in the distribution and functioning of stance (Thompson, 2002). In general, it has been found that stance-controlled complement clauses occur more frequently in speech than in writing and that in conversation, fiction, news, and academic language verbs plus complement clauses

occur with greater frequency than nouns or adjectives plus complement clauses, which are relatively rare (Biber *et al.*, 1999; Biber, 2006). Likewise, verbs plus *that* complement clauses occur more frequently than verbs plus *to* clauses across the aforementioned genres and registers (*ibid.*). The most common semantic verb classes reported with *that* clauses are verbs of certainty and likelihood, with "teacher-centered academic registers" such as classroom teaching and management utilizing more certainty verbs that function to convey information, to indicate the extent to which it is factual, to provide context, and to impart personal attitudes about the course; whereas in "student-centered academic registers," such as study groups, more likelihood verbs are used to recall course information and to mitigate opinions (Biber, 2006: 106). Verbs controlling *to* clauses were most frequently those from the semantic class expressing desire (e.g., "want," "like"), while semantic verbs of causation (e.g., "help," "try") were found with approximately half the frequency. Verbs of cognition (e.g., "is believed") and probability ("seem," "tend"), which were somewhat equally distributed, were the only semantic classes more frequent in written than spoken registers (*ibid.*: 108-109).

One noted exception to these findings is in Friginal (2009), who examined stance in the English language discourse between Filipino call center agents and American customers. He found that in contrast to the aforementioned genre and register distributions, where *that* clauses were far more frequent than *to* clauses, in call center discourse across language varieties, verbs plus *to* clauses occurred with slightly more frequency. Upon further examination of the factors that might affect their overall distribution, Friginal (2009) found that those participants in the role of callers utilized them more regularly than agents. Specifically, callers strongly preferred verbs of desire

(e.g., "want," "like") with *to* clauses, which seem to directly reference the literal purpose

for the call—to desire or request a service or product (*ibid.*: 158). These findings again

demonstrate that, like adverbials, complement clause patterns seem to vary somewhat

systematically within registers, genres, and language varieties, but do offer a variety of

literal and interpersonal functions therein.

4.1.3: Modals

Finally, modals and semi-modals make up a special class of stance verbs that signal a

writer's level of commitment towards ("intrinsic" or deontic modality) or certainty about

("extrinsic" or epistemic modality) a proposition (Biber *et al.*, 1999: 485). Modals

generally fall into three main semantic categories, each of which can possess deontic or

epistemic meaning: modals of permission, possibility, and ability ("can, could, may,

might"); modals of obligation and necessity ("must, should, (had) better, have (got) to,

need to, ought to, be supposed to"); and modals of volition, intention, and prediction

("will, would, shall, be going to") (*ibid.*). In the deontic category are those modals that

refer to actions under the direct control of an animate subject, specifically modals of

permission, obligation, volition, and intention. For example, in the sentence: *You <u>may</u>*

show this note, only to the persons who <u>shall</u> be required to authorise the release of the

money required. (VIOL), *may* is used to offer the author's permission to *show this note*

and *shall* is used to indicate the author's intention in terms of who will be allowed *to*

authorise the release of the money. In the epistemic category are those modals that refer

"to the logical status of events or states," specifically, those that indicate certainty or

likelihood: possibility, necessity, and prediction (Biber *et al.*, 1999: 485). For instance, in

the sentence: …*the gov't <u>ought to</u> take you out back and shoot everyone of you crooked sonofbitches.* (HAR), *ought to* signals that it is necessary, rather than obligatory, for the *gov't* to *shoot everyone of you crooked sonofbitches*. However, as has been noted in previous literature (e.g., Leech and Coates, 1980; Kärkkäinen, 2003; Biber, 2006), and *especially* in terms of threatening communications, the lines between these categories can be blurred. For example, in *All of you <u>must</u> be baptized strongly by the Holy Spirit to chase out all the dirty evil spirits causing the problems.* (HAR), *must* could demonstrate that in order for the reader to be freed from his *dirty evil spirits,* it is necessary for him to *be baptized;* or, depending on the context of the threat, it could demonstrate that the recipient is obligated to *be baptized* as part of the condition of the threat. Therefore, primary emphasis herein will be placed on the interpersonal categorizations of modals in section 4.2.3, with the literal deontic and epistemic distinctions discussed where noteworthy to the underlying meaning or functioning of the modal verbs.

Like adverbials, modals[49] have been widely studied as markers of stance over the past few decades, and indeed, they have been found to be "the most common grammatical device used to mark stance" in spoken and written university registers (Biber, 2006: 95) and in conversation (Biber *et al.*, 1999). Within these registers, the distribution patterns of individual modal use are fairly similar. Specifically, the most frequently occurring semantic class of modals across genres and registers is that of prediction with "will" being the most frequently used modal (Biber *et al.*, 1999: 486; Biber, 2006). "Will" is followed by "would" and "can" in the combined registers of

---

[49] Modals as a grammatical category are being distinguished here from broader concepts such as modality (e.g., Halliday, 1985/1994) and evidentiality (e.g., Chafe, 1986), wherein modals are one linguistic form among many that represent particular evaluative or epistemic meaning.

conversation, fiction, news reporting, and academic language (Biber *et al.,* 1999: 486), by

"can" and "would" in spoken university registers, and by "can" and "may" in written

ones (Biber, 2006: 97).

When examined more broadly across language varieties, Kärkkäinen (1991, 2003)

found that epistemic modals fall behind epistemic adverbials[50] in use in conversations

from different language varieties, specifically in conversations between British and

Finnish English speakers (1991) and between American English speakers (2003).

Similarly, Precht (2003b) found differences in the functional use of particular modals

between British and American varieties of English, which somewhat mirror Brown and

Levinson's (1987) framework of positive and negative politeness. She determined that

modals such as "could" and "need to" were used more frequently by speakers of

American English in workplace situations to mitigate or accentuate social status

differences between speakers, while in British English, modals such as "could" and

"would" were frequently used in various registers in order to mitigate opinions to avoid

insulting the listener. Further interpersonal functions of modals include organizers of

discourse in university lectures, such as in "I'm now going to talk about language…"

(Biber, 2006: 116), requests with assumed compliance in service encounters, as in "Can I

get an application?" (*ibid.*: 99), and emphatic expressions of persuasion in the registers of

classroom management and office hours, as in "…here's what you're gonna have to do—

you're gonna have to show either using the navigation tool or use the story board type

PowerPoint presentation…" (Biber *et al.*, 2002: 33).

---

[50] In each study, Kärkkäinen separated what she called "epistemic phrases" such as "I think" and "I suppose" from her category of stance adverbs. In Biber *et al.*'s (1999) classification, these phrases are called "comment clauses" and are combined under the broad category of adverbials, which is how they are treated herein.

Modals, then, like adverbials and complement clauses, share many similar distribution patterns within registers, genres, and language varieties, yet offer a range of literal and interpersonal functions depending on the cultural and social context. Those outlined here for modals, as well as for the previous grammatical markers of stance, are by no means complete. The purpose here is expressly demonstrative, i.e., each language situation, while sharing many of the same instantiations of forms marking stance and literal stance functions, is contextually unique; therefore, while previous categorizations of meaning serve as an empirically-tested and theoretically-grounded foundation for this study of stance, threatening communications, as a pragmatically-salient social genre, must be examined individually in order to further our understanding of the ways in which language is socially-organized and interpersonal expressions of stance therein are contextually-construed.

Motivated by these functional examinations of stance, the following section outlines the distribution patterns of adverbials, complement clauses, and modals in threatening communications, which were extracted through the quantitative, corpus-based methods (Biber *et al.*, 1999; Biber, 2006) described in Chapter 3. Additionally, as the expression of stance is an interpersonal, rather than a *purely* subjective, experience in a dialogic sense (Martin, 2000; Precht, 2003b) as defined above, this section identifies and interprets the interpersonal functions of stance, as well as those literal functions of stance found to serve purposes particularly relevant to threats, using the qualitative social constructionist approach outlined in Precht (2003b: 255), which focuses "on finding patterns in the relationships between interlocutors, their relative status, and presentation of self" within and across texts.

4.2: THE DISTRIBUTION AND FUNCTION OF GRAMMATICAL MARKERS OF STANCE IN THREATS

The distribution for each of the three grammatical categories marking stance in the genre of threatening communications are compared below in Figure 4.1. In general, the distributions show that modals occur with the most frequency, followed by complement clauses (separately or combined[51]), and then adverbials, which roughly mirror the distribution rankings found in conversation and in spoken and written academic language (Biber *et al.*, 1999; Biber 2006). However, what is of immediate interest is that the frequency with which modals occur in these *written* threat texts is more closely aligned with the *spoken* registers previously mentioned, wherein modals occurred at an approximate 2 to 1 ratio over combined complement clause categories (*ibid.*).

Figure 4.1: Distribution of Categories Marking Stance in Threats
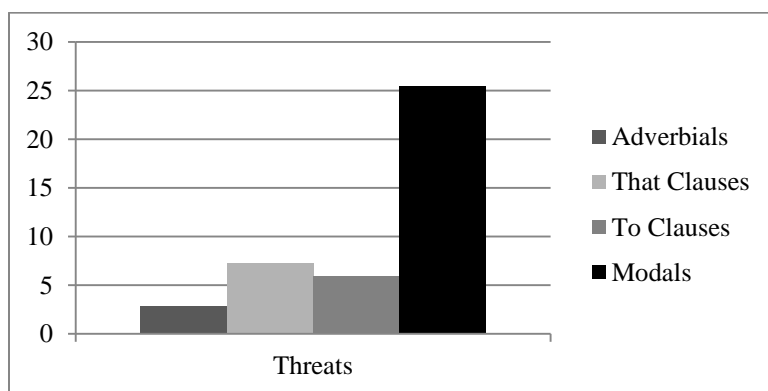
Frequency per 1000 Words, N = 118

In order to explore these distributional patterns in threats in more detail, the following sections investigate the semantic distributions and corresponding functions of

---

[51] Due to the distinctly different semantic meanings represented by *that* clauses and *to* clauses, each category will be displayed and discussed separately.

each grammatical category marking stance—adverbials (4.2.1), complement clauses (4.2.2), and modals (4.2.3)—with particular attention given to modals, as they occur at a high rate of frequency in threats.

4.2.1: Adverbials Marking Stance

As mentioned above, there are four main semantic classes of adverbials: certainty, likelihood, attitude, and style. While stance adverbials as a whole do not occur with a high rate of frequency (less than 3 times per 1000 words), Figure 4.2 shows that, like previous corpus findings in written academic language (Biber, 2006), the adverbials that do occur are most often adverbials of certainty.

Figure 4.2: Distribution of Adverbials in Threats
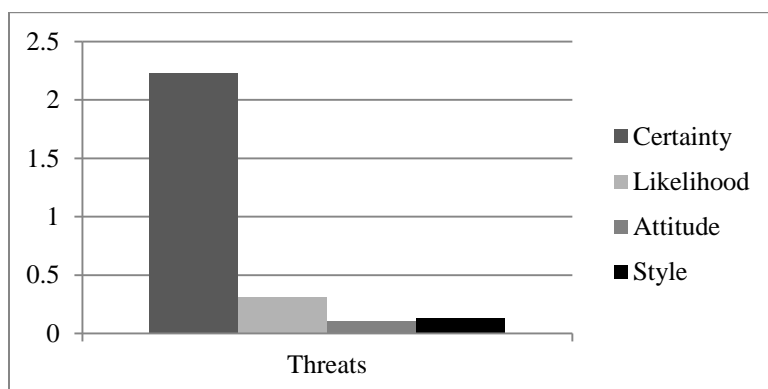
Frequency per 1000 Words, N = 118

Of the certainty adverbials that occur in threats, seen in Table 4.1, the most common are *never*, *really*, and *always*, which collectively make up over 65% of that category. In the other three categories, *maybe* was the most common likelihood adverbial, *unfortunately* and *seriously* were equally ranked as the most frequent attitude adverbials, and *truly* was the most common style adverbial.

Table 4.1: Most Frequent Adverbials Marking Stance in Threats

Semantic Category	Most Frequent Forms
certainty	*never*
	really
	always
likelihood	*maybe*
attitude[52]	*unfortunately*
	seriously
style	*truly*

What is of semantic interest here is that the most common adverb in the certainty

category and the most common adverbs in the attitude category are heavily embedded

with negativity and solemnity through the use of *never*, *unfortunately*, and *seriously*,

while the most common adverb in the likelihood category emphasizes the tentative nature

(rather than the probable nature, for example) of the threat with *maybe*. Additionally, in

the style category, writers of threats highlight their honesty of purpose most commonly

with *truly*, which mirrors suggestions by practitioners that threateners oftentimes

lexically overemphasize the honesty of their intent in order to be taken more seriously

(Smerick, 2009, p.c.). Finally, on a more syntactic level, similar to earlier findings (e.g.,

Biber *et al.*, 1999; Conrad and Biber, 2000), all of the most commonly used adverbials in

threats are single adverbs as opposed to adverb phrases (e.g., *in fact*) or hedges (e.g., *sort

of*), which did occur, but with relative infrequency in threats. However, because

adverbials in the latter three semantic categories (likelihood, attitude, style) only occur

less than .31 times per 1000 words, they do not contribute frequently to the overall

functioning of stance in threats. Therefore, the focus here will be on the functional

---

[52] *Sincerely* was actually found to be the most common attitude adverb in threats, but since its function was explicitly relegated to the formulaic closing of business-style letters by two writers, it is not included in the discussion here.

patterns of certainty adverbials, which occur 2.23 times per 1000 words and are outlined in Section A below. Section B summarizes the most frequent lexical forms and functions for this category.

A: Certainty Adverbials

Certainty adverbs in threats can be primarily divided into adverbs expressing certainty and those expressing actuality. In each case, they commonly serve two literal stance functions in threats: one offers the writer's certainty towards or belief in the actuality of the threat proposition, thereby emphasizing and strengthening the claim; the second offers the writer's certainty towards or belief in the actuality of what is contextually comprehended to be a justification for the threat, thereby removing personal responsibility from the threatener. In each case, the writer possesses a heightened level of conviction towards the stated proposition.

Certainty about the threat

- *You will <u>never</u> see Christmas!* (STLK)

- *If you do not comply by May 19 you will <u>never</u> see your husband alive again.* (OTH)

- *This is <u>obviously</u> not the end of this...I am sorry to say.* (HAR)

Belief in the actuality of the threat

- *Be careful going to your car all alone, not <u>really</u> alone. I'm here.* (STLK)

- *I've been up there many times, not stalking her <u>really</u>, but just looking after her.* (STLK)

Certainty about the threat justification

- *I <u>always</u> believed that he too was enjoying the sadistic punishment of women.* (DEF)

- *I guess once a thief <u>always</u> a thief.* (DEF)

<u>Belief in the actuality of the threat justification</u>

- *And even now he <u>really</u> hasn't got a clue of what is going on with the new situations concerning terrorist attacks!* (VIOL)

- *She <u>actually</u> thinks she's normal.* (OTH)

Looking more closely at the function of *never*, which occurs in almost 40% of the texts and is the most frequently occurring certainty adverbial, an additional function can be seen, wherein its use places an exaggerated emphasis on the certainty of the threat justification, further mitigating the threatener's responsibility in the act. Specifically, by emphasizing the reason for the threat as an ultimatum with *never*, which allows no room for debate, the threatener is able to frame his or her role in the act as one of forced necessity rather than personal choice for which he or she would otherwise be held responsible. This finding is similar to that of Lord *et al.* (2008: 376), who found that certain kinds of sex offenders frequently use markers of stance "to push personal responsibility aside in order to justify the 'reasonableness' of employing aggression," ultimately mitigating their role in the action.

<u>Mitigating the responsibility of the threatener</u>

- *I know I will <u>never</u> enjoy life.* (OTH)

- *I've got a little list, of society offenders who might well be underground who would <u>never</u> be missed…* (VIOL)

- *My dad <u>never</u> (not once) talked to me or asked about my life's details and tell me what he knew.* (OTH)

- *Although we talked on the phone a couple of times I <u>never</u> had the nerve to simply approach you and introduce myself.* (STLK)

B: Summary of Adverbials Marking Stance in Threats

Of the semantic categories of adverbials in threats, certainty adverbials were found to occur with the most frequency, followed by adverbials of likelihood, style, and attitude. However, only certainty adverbials occurred more than .5 times per 1000 words, making the other semantic categories less influential in the overall functioning of stance in this genre. In terms of distribution, the most frequent certainty adverbials were *never*, *really*, and *always*, with *never* occurring in approximately 40% of the cases. The main forms and functions for certainty adverbials are summarized in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Summary of Adverbial Forms and Functions Found in Threats

Semantic Category	Most Frequent Forms	Stance Functions
certainty	*never, really, always*	Certainty about the threat
		Belief in the actuality of the threat
		Certainty about the threat justification
	never	Belief in the actuality of the threat justification
		Mitigating the responsibility of the threatener

4.2.2: Complement Clauses Marking Stance

As stated previously, both *that* and *to* complement clauses can be controlled by verbs, adjectives, and nouns, all of which can mark an author's stance. Within each part of

speech category, while there is some overlap in semantic categorization (e.g., certainty, likelihood, attitude), there are also broad semantic distinctions (e.g., speech act verbs, evaluation adjectives, and non-factual nouns) (Biber, 2006)[53], which require each clause type to be examined separately rather than as a combined grammatical class. When each clause type is examined more closely in Figure 4.3, it can be seen that *that* and *to* clauses are both controlled by *verbs* far more often than by nouns or adjectives, which is consistent with a wide range of earlier register and genre findings (Biber *et al.*, 1999; Biber, 2006).

Figure 4.3: Distribution of *That* and *To* Complement Clauses Marking Stance in Threats
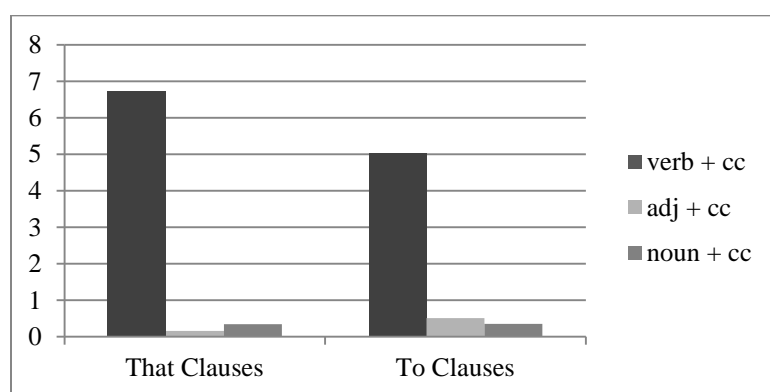
Frequency per 1000 Words, N = 118

Therefore, due to the very low frequency rate of complement clauses controlled by adjectives and nouns (less than .5 times per 1000 words), only *that* (section 4.2.2a) and *to* (section 4.2.2b) complement clauses controlled by *verbs* will be examined in detail here.

4.2.2a: *That* Complement Clauses controlled by Verbs

That clauses controlled by verbs can be divided into the semantic categories of certainty, likelihood, attitude, and speech act/communication verbs (Biber, 2006). Like adverbials,

---

[53] Appendix C lists the full semantic categorizations for each clause type.

verbs of certainty, as seen in Figure 4.4, are considerably more frequent in threats,

followed by speech act verbs. Also like adverbials, attitude verbs are the least frequent in

threats.

Figure 4.4: Distribution of Verbs Marking Stance + *that* Clauses in Threats
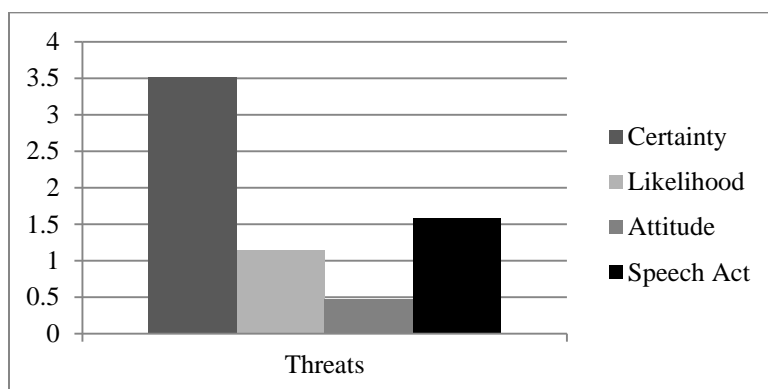
Frequency per 1000 Words, N = 118

     Semantically, as seen in Table 4.3, *know* and *understand* are the most common

certainty verbs, *think* and *believe* are the most frequent likelihood verbs, *hope* and *feel* are

the most frequent attitude verbs, and *say* and *tell* are equally distributed as the most

common speech act verbs.

Table 4.3: Most Frequent Verbs Marking Stance + *that* Clauses in Threats

Semantic Category	Most Frequent Forms
certainty	*know*
	understand
likelihood	*think*
	believe
attitude	*hope*
	feel
speech act/communication	*say/tell*

Interestingly, in the certainty category, *know* makes up roughly 60% of the total number

of certainty verbs, placing more emphasis on the certainty of authorial knowledge as

opposed to the certainty of compassion or understanding, as was found to be the primary

semantic role of *understand*, the second most frequent certainty verb, in threats. With

likelihood verbs, on the other hand, *think* and *believe*, which make up roughly 85% of the

occurrences of verbs in that category, are distributed fairly equally. And while likelihood

verbs occur less regularly than certainty verbs, the use of these two lexical items—*think*

and *believe*—offers more tentativeness and leaves more room for other voices to

contradict or juxtapose that of the threatener, as was seen with the adverbial *maybe*

above. Also of note, is that the most common attitude verb, *hope*, offers a more positive

mood, as opposed to the negativity and solemnity seen with the adverbials *unfortunately*

and *seriously* above. Finally, the most common speech act or communication verbs in

threats, *say* and *tell*, are fairly informal, as they are typically found more often in

conversation than in writing (Biber *et al.*, 1999). In order to examine the more influential

verb forms in depth, those semantic categories occurring more than .5 times per 1000

words—certainty, likelihood, and speech act—will be further investigated in sections A-

C below. Section D summarizes the frequent forms and functions of verbs marking stance

+ *that* clauses in threats.

A: Certainty Verbs Marking Stance + **that** *Clauses*

Certainty verbs used with *that* clauses are those that offer a heightened level of authorial

certainty about a proposition. Within threats, specifically, they tend to fall into two

distinct patterns, both of which reference, in a sense, the justification for the threat. First

are those clauses that are self-addressed with *I* or *we* and index the writer's level of

certainty about the justification for the threat. In this case, the propositions are more

literal in function as they directly index the level of authorial certainty. Second are those

addressed to the victim, frequently through the second person *you*, or a responsible third

party, oftentimes through third person pronouns *he/she* or *they*, that index the recipient's assumed level of awareness about the problematic proposition or justification for the threat. In this latter case, which serves a more interpersonal function, the author is projecting a level of certainty onto the recipient in order first, to demonstrate that he or she was aware of the problem and second, to indirectly reference the justification for the threat, both of which redirect responsibility for the threatened action away from the threatener.

Self-addressed index of certainty about the threat justification

- *I forwarded it to all of my female friends and family, because I <u>knew</u> that it wasn't a hoax.* (HAR)

- *Now, I <u>realized</u> that in that time, Spice Corps was aware of my slavery status…* (DEF)

Other-directed index of awareness about the problem/indirect reference to the threat justification

- *We just want you to leave,don't you <u>understand</u> that we will like to remain all white.* (HAR)

- *We just want to let you <u>know</u> that we feel like you have betrayed us this term by having your substitute, Kjerstin, take over.* (HAR)

- *That's why you get what you want because you <u>know</u> that Sara was having an affair with Sean.* (DEF)

- *They <u>knew</u> that things were all wrong.* (DEF)

B: Likelihood Verbs Marking Stance* + that *Clauses

Similar to verbs of certainty, verbs of likelihood literally demonstrate how likely a writer thinks a proposition is of occurring, but in this case, the verb indicates a lower level of certainty. One of the most common functions of these verbs in threats is simply to lessen the possibility of a proposition in declarative statements such as: *You are not the only fat cat around so don't* <u>*think*</u> *that killing will be difficult.* (OTH), wherein the verb offers room for other voices to comment on the likelihood of the proposition occurring. However, likelihood verbs also occur with relative frequency in threats in a more subjunctive, conditional sense. In these interpersonal cases, questions, conditional clauses, and subjunctive modals, working in frequent conjunction with likelihood verbs, function as additional softening agents in that they add another layer of uncertainty to the proposition.

Conditional softening agent

- *Did you ever* <u>*think*</u> *that what you were told to do could backfire on you?!* (STLK)
- *I* <u>*believe*</u> *that if Mr. Dixon really knew these things he would do something…* (DEF)
- *I have to* <u>*believe*</u> *that if you just check your records closely and you will see the money trail.* (DEF)
- *I would* <u>*think*</u> *that anyone with your tenure as a manager, if they had a fiber of caring or integrity, would have taken a different path than you have chosen.* (HAR)

C: Speech Act/Communication Verbs Marking Stance + **that** *Clauses*

As originally described by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969), performative speech act verbs often serve a formalized declarative role (e.g., *I hereby request…* (DEF)); yet, in threats, the most common speech act verbs are fairly informal, which is typical of spoken language and informal written language (e.g., fiction (Biber *et al.*, 1999)), and they tend to function more frequently as verbs of attribution (e.g., *It is the quality of life that is important, he <u>said</u>.* (OTH)) rather than as verbs of interpersonal communication (e.g., *As I was <u>telling</u> you, I <u>ask</u> for total discretion.* (STLK)). In the following examples, the verb literally identifies the source of information and serves the interpersonal function of distancing or strengthening a claim made by the writer in the larger discursive context. In the case of distancing, the writer uses attribution to state something sensitive or negative about another person or to justify or excuse his actions by placing blame on another. In the case of strengthening attributions, the writer uses the voice of another to support or bolster his claims or propositions.

<u>Distancing attribution</u>

- *I talked to my wife about it and she <u>said</u> that maybe they are covering for each other or maybe the bags manager has something on the others.* (DEF)
- *In my case, my words were secretly recorded, assessed, weighed, judged and officially filed all without my knowledge from a man who <u>told</u> me that he would do no such thing.* (DEF)
- *My voices <u>tell</u> me that I am the reincarnation of Adolf Hitler…* (VIOL)

<u>Strengthening attribution</u>

- *He will <u>tell</u> you that he was well treated.* (OTH)

- *I hear Him <u>telling</u> me to <u>tell</u> you that He wants you to start writing everything down. Like if you get a vision or if you get a prophecy, start writing it down, start writing it down.* (HAR)

D: Summary of Verbs Marking Stance + that *Clauses in Threats*

In sum, verbs controlling *that* complement clauses tend to follow a slightly different distribution pattern than those of previously discussed genres and registers, wherein certainty and likelihood verbs occurred with a more balanced distribution (e.g., Biber *et al.*, 1999; Biber, 2006). In threats, certainty verbs, like certainty adverbials seen above, are far more frequent, occurring at a rate of more than 2 to 1 over speech act verbs, which is the second most commonly-occurring category herein. Likelihood verbs, followed by attitude verbs, are the least frequent. The primary forms and functions for verbs controlling *that* clauses are summarized in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4: Summary of Forms and Functions of Verbs + *that* Clauses Found in Threats

Semantic Category	Most Frequent Forms	Stance Functions
certainty	*(I/we) know, understand*	Self-addressed index of certainty about the threat justification
	(you, he/she, they) know, understand	Other-directed index of awareness about the problem and indirect reference to threat justification
likelihood	*think*	Conditional softening agent
	believe	
speech act	*say/tell*	Distancing attribution
		Strengthening attribution

4.2.2b: *To* Complement Clauses controlled by Verbs

To complement clauses controlled by verbs marking stance represent a different set of

semantic meanings than *that* clauses (see Appendix C for more examples). Specifically,

verbs controlling *to* clauses fall into the semantic classes of probability (e.g., "appear,

seem, tend"), cognition or perception (e.g., "assume, know, remember"), intention or

desire (e.g., "love, need, want"), causation or effort (e.g., "encourage, help, require"), and

speech act or communication (e.g., "claim, promise, tell") (Biber, 2006: 92-93). As seen

in Figure 4.5, verbs of intention followed by those of causation are the most frequent,

with verbs of communication, probability, and cognition occurring with relative rarity

(less than .26 times per 1000 words).

Figure 4.5: Distribution of Verbs Marking Stance + *to* Clauses in Threats
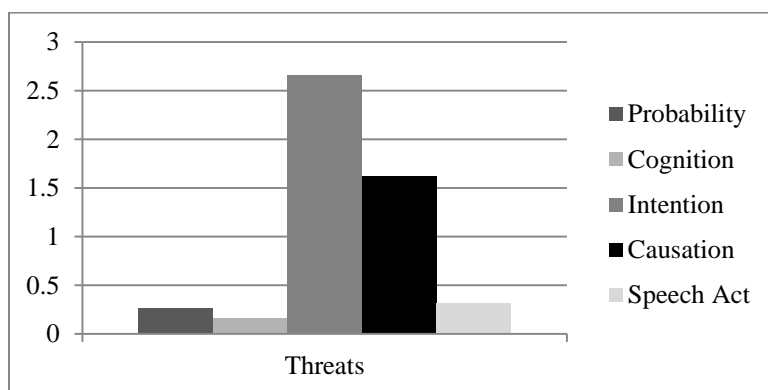
Frequency per 1000 Words, N = 118

Semantically, as seen in Table 4.5 below, the verbs in the most frequent categories in

threats, intention and causation, are *want* and *try*, respectively. Unlike the most frequent

adverbial and *that* clause categories above that highlighted certainty over the more

tentative likelihood features, the most common verbs here emphasize the tentativeness of

the threatener rather than his or her more certain level of determination.

Table 4.5: Most Frequent Verbs Marking Stance + *to* Clauses in Threats

Semantic Category	Most Frequent Forms
probability	*seem*
	appear
cognition/perception	*expect*
intention/desire	*want*
causation/effort	*try*
speech act/communication	*ask/tell*

Due to the relative infrequency of probability, cognition, and speech act verbs, the following examination of the functions of verbs plus *to* clauses will focus specifically on verbs of intention and causation in sections A-B below. Section C summarizes the forms and functions relevant to threats from these categories.

A: Intention Verbs Marking Stance + to *Clauses*

Like intention and desire verbs in academic language, which were found to function along a cline of literally expressing the intentions or desires of the speaker (e.g., *I do want to see you and at least have one convesation with you.* (STLK); *I wanta sign up and you're not doing it for me.* (HAR)) to serving as indirect interpersonal directives (Biber, 2006), those in threats function in a similar manner. Specifically in threats, indirect directives frequently serve the purpose of directing a recipient to fulfill a desired request on behalf of the threatener(s).

Indirect directives on behalf of the threatener

- *I want you to read from the beginning of EXODUS to the end of JOSHUA.* (HAR)

- *I would like you to investigate a serious issue which is against all the company values.* (DEF)

- *I want you to print this cipher on the front page of your paper.* (VIOL)

- *YOU <u>NEED</u> TO GET THE HELL OUT.* (HAR)

- *We shall not <u>require</u> you to signal your acceptance to us, if you do not accept, then we shall know, and the campaign shall commence.* (VIOL)

Additionally, while *want*, *need*, and *like* are the three most common verbs marking stance in threats, *want* occurred more than three times as often as *need* and *like*, ultimately reinforcing the tentative nature of threats mentioned above; the emphatic use of *want* also leads to an interesting functional pattern. While there are instances of literal desire in relation to the threat (e.g., *Actually, it doesn't matter who it is any more, I just <u>want</u> to kill something.* (OTH)), *want* occurs in about 20% of the cases after a negative (e.g., *not, don't*) when the threatener is discussing the threat, which serves the interpersonal function of mitigating the threatened action through the resource of negative polarity (Martin and White, 2003), as *want* is less face threatening than *need*. And, as *want* collocates with the first person pronoun *I* in more than 50% of the total occurrences of *want*—wherein the majority of negative polarity occurs—as opposed to the second person pronoun *you,* which occurs in only 8% of the cases, it is as if the threatener is downplaying or mitigating his or her role in the threatened action, which has been found to be common in related cases of sex offender speech (Lord *et al.*, 2008).

<u>Mitigation of the threatened action</u>

- *I am using the U.S. postal service as I have decided my next barrage should include abuse that I may <u>not</u> <u>want</u> to subject other humans to such as barnyard waste or perhaps anthrax.* (HAR)

- *I do<u>n't</u> <u>want</u> to cause any trouble in regard to these circumstances – however, it has been disturbing to me for a long time.* (STLK)

- *I don't want to punish My son like you.* (HAR)

- *I don't want to hurt her. ... I think I'd rather just see her not, not on earth, than being with other guys. I wouldn't want to stay here on earth without her.* (STLK)

B: Causation Verbs Marking Stance + **to** *Clauses*

Causation and effort verbs are most literally those that express causal relationships (e.g., *But he's so scared everyone will be out interviewing, that it causes him to act the paranoid way...* (DEF)), but, like intention and desire verbs, they have also been found to function as interpersonal directives in a variety of other registers (Biber, 2006). In threats, causation verbs frequently function in a similar interpersonal manner, specifically in the context of the threatened action.

Directives involving the threatened action

- *You allow yourself to fear death!* (OTH)

- *...permit me to HOPE (!) and PRAY (!) that someone decides you're better off as statistics.* (HAR)

- *Business ethics and morals require me to notify you of this situation and I do so because I do not want to see Acme involved in situations or with people and organizations that possess drug materials and/or use drugs.* (DEF)

- *Don't try to grow a brain John.* (OTH)

C: Summary of Verbs Marking Stance + **to** *Clauses in Threats*

Within the grammatical category of verbs controlling *to* clauses, then, verbs of intention and desire occur more frequently in threats than verbs of causation, with *want* being the most frequent verb overall. Interestingly, this distribution pattern is similar to previous

findings in *spoken* genres, registers, and language varieties (Biber *et al.*, 1999; Biber,

2006, Friginal, 2009). Verbs of communication, probability, and cognition rarely occur in

threats (less than .26 times per 1000 words). The complete summary of functions for

intention and causation verbs plus *to* clauses is seen below in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Summary of Forms and Functions of Verbs + *to* Clauses Found in Threats

Semantic Category	Most Frequent Forms	Stance Functions
intention	*want*	Indirect directives on behalf of the threatener
	(I neg) want	Mitigation of the threatened action
causation	*try*	Directives involving the threatened action

4.2.3: (Semi-)Modals Marking Stance

Modals and semi-modals fall into three main semantic categories: possibility, prediction,

and necessity. Possibility modals are those that suggest possibility (e.g., *might*, *could*),

offer permission (e.g., *may*), and demonstrate ability (e.g., *can*). Necessity modals, which

are the least common category in a variety of registers and genres (Biber *et al.*, 1999;

Biber, 2006) including threats, as seen in Figure 4.6 below, are those that indicate

necessity (e.g., *need to*, *must*) or obligation (e.g., *be supposed to*, *ought to*) on the part of

the speaker or listener. Finally, prediction modals, which have been found to be the most

frequent across a large range of registers, genres, and language varieties (Biber *et al.*,

1999), are those that predict possible or intended future events (e.g., *will*, *be going to*). As

seen in Figure 4.6, prediction modals are also the most frequent category of modals

within threats.

Figure 4.6: Distribution of Modals Marking Stance in Threats
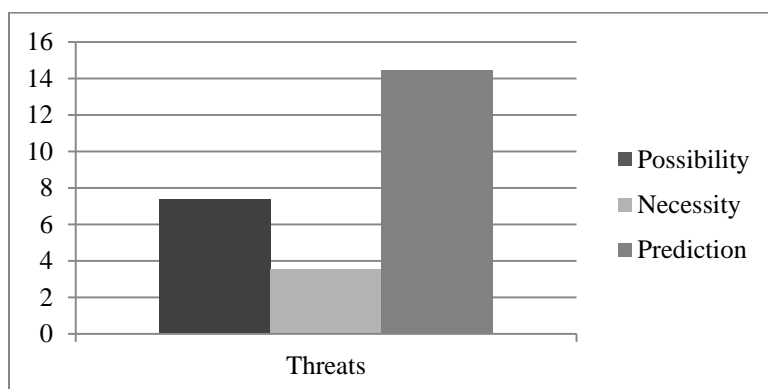
Frequency per 1000 Words, N = 118

Because modals are a relatively closed lexical class, all modals occurring at least .5 times per 1000 words are included in Table 4.7 below. This immediately excludes the necessity (semi-) modals *be supposed to*, *got to*, *(had) better*, and *ought to*, which were only found in threats a total of 8, 3, 2, and 2 times, respectively, as well as the prediction modal *shall* occurring .43 times per 1000 words and, of heightened interest due to its tentative nature, the possibility modal *might* occurring only .33 times per 1000 words. The exclusion of *might* follows the similar semantic distribution patterns seen above, wherein adverbials and complement clauses of certainty surpassed the frequencies of the more tentative likelihood categories.

Table 4.7: Most Frequent Modals Marking Stance in Threats

Semantic Category	Most Frequent Forms
possibility/prediction/ability	*can*
	could
	may
necessity/obligation	*should*
	have to
	must
	need to
prediction/volition	*will*
	would
	be going to

Of additional interest, as seen in Figure 4.7 which presents the individual frequencies of

the commonly occurring modals in threats, is that in the necessity/obligation category, the

frequencies of the interpersonally polite *should* and *have to*, which collectively make up

65% of the modals in this category, greatly surpass the frequencies of the more forceful

must and *need to*.

Figure 4.7: Distribution of Most Common Modals Marking Stance in Threats
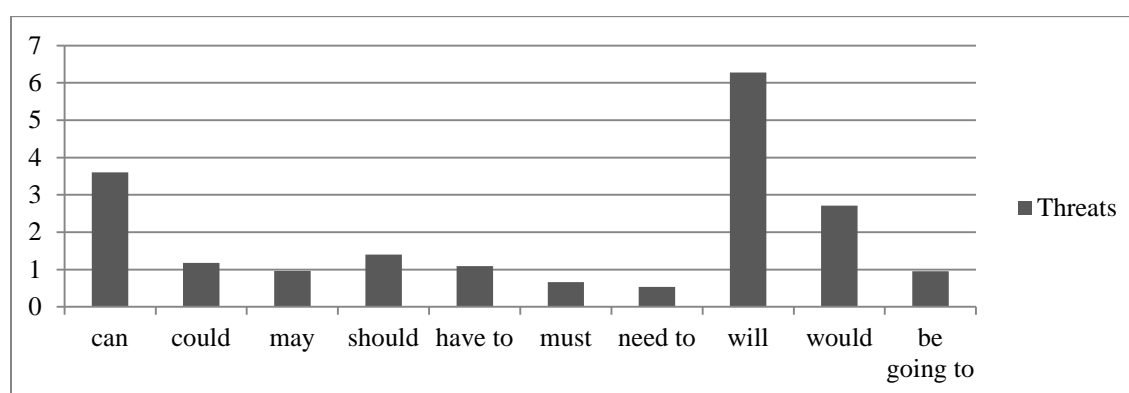
Frequency per 1000 Words, N = 118

In Biber's (2006: 103) study, he found that *should*, which is generally used as a

suggestion rather than as an indicator of obligation, occurs on equal par with *must* in

written university language, whereas *have to*, which is softer and "less face threatening"

than *must*, occurs at one-sixth the rate. In threats, where one would intuitively expect

more commands than suggestions, *should* occurs at twice the rate of *must*, and *must* and

need to, which would be expected to surpass *have to* in threats since the interpersonal

face-saving considerations should be, for the most part, removed due to the anonymity of

the author, each occur only half as often as *have to*. This usage appears to mitigate the

role of the threatener, while the threat appears to be presented as more of a suggestion

rather than as an accentuated request or obligatory demand. This finding, along with the

other distribution and functional patterns, will be examined in more detail in sections A-C below. Section D summarizes the modal forms and functions relevant to threats.

A: Possibility Modals

Of the four possibility/permission/ability modals in this category, *can* represents 60% of the instances in threats, as seen above in Figure 4.7. Upon closer examination of *can*, it can be seen to function as a marker of each of the aforementioned semantic meanings in this category. For instance, it can signal possibility (e.g. *I pointed out what the consequences <u>can</u> be when you miss a signal.* (VIOL)), permission (e.g., *…if the Holy Spirit wants to punish you, the angels <u>can</u> do anything against you or your car.* (DEF)), and ability (e.g., *I don't belong to a union, however, I <u>can</u> offer you certain things…* (OTH)). And, as mentioned earlier, it can be very difficult to differentiate between these meanings (Leech and Coates, 1980; Kärkkäinen, 2003; Biber, 2006). Of particular interest to threats, though, is that while it is often difficult to distinguish between the meanings of possibility and ability, modals in the category of threats are more likely to hold epistemic (possibility) rather than deontic (permission) meaning, wherein they indicate the level of certainty or likelihood inherent in a threat. For example, *can* in the following sentence can easily indicate both possibility and ability, but an indication of permission is not as obvious: *We write it in your own language so you <u>can</u> understand,we <u>can</u> talk like you too,you Indian.* (HAR).

　　　　Furthermore, *can* is seen to collocate most frequently with a somewhat limited collection of verbs: *be*, *do*, *get*, *have*, *see*, *take*, *understand*. When examined more closely, the verbs can be grouped into three categories, which serve three primary

interpersonal functions—one that indicates a more passive[54] role on the part of the threatener by downplaying his or her role in the action (*be, get, have*), one that indicates an active role on the part of the recipient or a related third party by emphasizing the action that person can (and sometimes cannot) do (*do, take*), and one that demonstrates a level of shared understanding and/or compassion, which is contextually presented both earnestly and ironically, between the threatener and his or her victim (*see, understand*).

Mitigating the threatener's role through passive participation

- *Remember that the[55] <u>can be</u> destroyed. I guarantee.* (HAR)

- *The death machiene is all ready made. I would have sent you pictures but you would be nasty enough to trace them back to developer & then to me, so I shall describe my masterpiece to you. The nice part of it is all the parts <u>can be</u> bought on the open market with no quest ions asked.* (VIOL)

- *We sincerely hope that you and your husband <u>can be</u> reunited soon. But there have been a series of setbacks that you should understand.* (OTH)

- *I will do this until you get furstrated and go your way otherwise I will be real mad and it <u>can get</u> worse.* (OTH)

- *The big ugly cow tits <u>can get</u> milked and twisted and beaten and then shed really cry and lube up like they like it…* (STLK)

- *You <u>can have</u> the truth come out about you…* (HAR)

Emphasizing the recipient's role through active participation

---

[54] It should be noted that while this passive function includes instances of passive voice constructions, not all examples here mark grammatical voice. Rather, passivity is being used to indicate a less than active role in the threat through the use of particular verbs classes, e.g. stative verbs.

[55] As a reminder, all non-standard language use including misspellings, incorrect lexical choice, unusual syntax, spacing, and punctuation has been left intact. In this case, it is assumed the writer meant "they" rather than "the."

- *There are many things you <u>can do</u> for me in the meantime like getting her used to breathing hard. She's going to have to pant and groan like she's trying to get out a baby. (STLK)*

- *By year end ACPF Corp will be UNIONIZED and there isn't a damn thing you <u>can do</u> about it! (HAR)*

- *Publish the list of those yankee scumbags so some good old southern boys <u>can take</u> care of them. (HAR)*

- *They are the only ones who <u>can take</u> me out and the Government has never done that. (DEF)*

<u>Emphasizing shared understanding and/or compassion</u>

- *The Holy Spirit is going to open the spiritual eyes of you all, so you <u>can see</u> how greatly the Holy Spirit loves you and tries to help you and MY angels help you, MY beloved sons and servants. (HAR)*

- *MR,DARCY, SIR. I <u>CAN SEE</u> THE PROBLEM IS NOT ONLY WITH YOUR TERRORIST MANAGE'ITS WITH THE STAFF… (HAR)*

- *We hope you <u>can understand</u> our problem and can help resolve this intolerable work environment. (DEF)*

- *Again, I <u>can't see</u> these things going over well with the IRS and SEC and I highly doubt Gordon reports this anywhere, although I am aware there are records of money taken in. (DEF)*

- *You can tell who you want but you'll get ignored because one look an you and anyone <u>can see</u> you should get rip fucked for your own reasons number one another jew bitch doctor and number two being awoman out of her place. (STLK)*

When all modals from this category are viewed together, another interpersonal collocation pattern emerges with *be* (e.g., *may be*, *can be*), which comprises approximately 20% of the entire modal usage in this class. This interpersonal function highlights the hypothetical nature of the threatened action, which has reportedly left recipients questioning what the author's underlying intention is and whether or not the threat will be carried out (Mardigian, 2009, p.c.). Specifically, in many threat assessment cases, due to the uncertain nature of hypothetical threats, recipients of threats may still request an investigation into the seriousness of the threat or personal protection from the threatener due to their feelings of fear at the *possibility* that the threat is real (*ibid.*).

<u>Emphasis on hypothetical action</u>

- *Most dangerous action is that Mr. Kapur is known in the office and outside as VIPER since he records phone call conversations which <u>can be</u> used to blackmail people.* (DEF)

- *And also in this day and age, the Bully Boss <u>can be</u> prosecuted in court.* (DEF)

- *THOSE WHO PARTICIPATE IN ANYWAY IN THE MURDER OF CHILDREN <u>MAY BE</u> TARGETED FOR ATTACK. THE ATTACK THEREFORE SERVES AS A WARNING: ANYONE IN OR AROUND FACILITIES THAT MURDER CHILDREN MAY BECOME VICTIMS OF RETRIBUTION. THE NEXT FACILITY TARGETED <u>MAY NOT BE</u> EMPTY.* (VIOL)

- *Take heed, this <u>could be</u> the beginning of a dangerous association.* (DEF)

- *The girl <u>could be</u> damaged and at least the family should know what to look out for in the future.* (HAR)

- *And I <u>might be</u> one of the Victim that he offered me to buy Acme's products…* (DEF)

- *We <u>may be</u> in TROUBLE or In DANGER to GET KILLED.* (DEF)

- *You <u>may be</u> required to explain why you let this happen, to all the deceased's relatives (all 300 or more of them).* (VIOL)

So while *might* was removed from the list of frequently occurring possibility modals, the overall category retains a mixed level of uncertainty through the juxtaposition of functions that emphasize vs. those that mitigate the role of the threatener and his or her threatened action.

B: Prediction Modals

Within the prediction category, as seen in Figure 4.7 above, *will* and *be going to*, which are semantically similar, collectively comprise 70% of the total instances of prediction modals in threats, while *would* occurs about half as many times as *will*. Interestingly, this finding is not consistent with previous distribution patterns for prediction modals, as *would* was found to occur more frequently than *will* in both American and British written fiction texts, whereas *will* was found to occur far more commonly than *would* in the conversational registers in both varieties (Biber *et al.*, 1999). Another difference occurs with regard to the epistemic and deontic patterns. In written academic language, for example, *will* most often functions to announce or predict future actions and/or events (Biber *et al.*, 1999; Biber, 2006); this function emphasizes the epistemic meaning of *will*, as opposed to the volitional or deontic meaning of *will*. For instance, in the sentence: *Global economies <u>will</u> screech to a halt. General chaos <u>will</u> rule.* (VIOL), *will* is being used to predict the state of events that will come to pass at some point in the future. In

threats, however, while there are still many epistemic, predictive instantiations of *will* (as well as a large number of ambiguous cases where the semantic distinction is not clear), the deontic or volitional meaning occurs with heightened regularity, thereby highlighting the interpersonal relationship between the threatener and the victim as one of power and volitional control.

Specifically, within threats *will* collocates with *I/we* 26% of the time and presents the threatener as the one in control of his or her own actions or over the actions of the victim. And while there is a predictive component to many of these examples, what makes these examples more threatening is the emphasis on the volitional nature of the utterance. The fact that the threatener asserts control over the predicted event places the victim in a powerless position, the perlocutionary effect from which may be a heightened state of fear. Similarly, *will* collocates with *you* in 18% of the occurrences, wherein the threatener, once again through a predictive stance, implicitly, rather than explicitly, asserts control over the victim. In these latter instances, because the threatener is removed from the utterance, the epistemic or predictive meaning is readily apparent. However, because this usage is within the context of a threat, *you will* can also be understood to represent deontic meaning, wherein the threatener's intention—that of asserting control over his or her victim—is more passively, but still powerfully, communicated. *Be going to*, while less frequent than *will*, as seen in Figure 4.7 above, follows these same collocation and functional patterns in threats.

Firmly explicit self-volitional control of action/event

- *I will show up, you can count on that.* (STLK)

- *I am a reporter and I will report what I believe is the truth.* (HAR)

- *I <u>will</u> call you between 8 and 10 am tomorrow to instruct you on delivery.* (OTH)

- *I abhor violence, but in your case, I <u>will</u> make an exception.* (STLK)

- *I <u>will</u> cruse around killing people who are alone at night untill Sun Night or untill I kill a dozen people.* (VIOL)

- *I'<u>ll</u> deal with Michelle in due course.* (HAR)

- *We <u>will</u> hunt your children and we <u>will</u> hunt your conscience.* (HAR)

- *We <u>will</u> get Jacqueline gone and you too for lack of integrity and respect for others by holding this over them for so long.* (DEF)

- *WE <u>GOING TO</u> BLOW YOUR HEAD OFF.* (HAR)

- *I know how to make remote bombs. I <u>gonna</u> blow you & your car up in it.* (HAR)

<u>Firmly explicit self-volitional control of victim</u>

- *BUT I <u>WILL</u> HAVE YOU NO MATTER WHAT I HAVE TO DO - YOU ARE MINE…* (STLK)

- *I <u>will</u> make you pay if it is the last thing that I do on this earth.* (STLK)

- *Again, I'<u>ll</u> let you decide if is illegal activity or not.* (DEF)

- *I <u>will</u> keep you guessing what will come next.* (STLK)

- *I am in New York City now and I'm <u>gonna</u> to give you ten days.* (HAR)

<u>Firmly implicit self-volitional control of victim</u>

- *YOU <u>WILL</u> NEVER SEE CHRISTMAS.* (STLK)

- *You <u>will</u> place ten million dollar in Bank of america account no. xxxxxxxxx* (VIOL)

- *Jackson was a Great Husband! And you <u>will</u> apologize...* (HAR)

- *You <u>will</u> crawl on your belly and you will eat dirt everyday of your life.* (HAR)

- *When you get home you <u>will</u> put the money in a brown paper bag.* (OTH)

- *The next time you go past a butcher shop - look at the raw beef hanging there. That is what you <u>are going to</u> look l like.* (STLK)

- *You'<u>re going to</u> have a lot more time to relax in a nice 8 x 8 cell.* (HAR)

Interestingly, *would* also follows a similar collocation pattern with *I/we*, which occurs in 26% of the instances. In these cases, however, *would* functions as more of a polite suggestion or request than as an explicit command; yet, the self-volitional nature of the threat is still clearly expressed, albeit more implicitly. *You* as a collocate of *would*, on the other hand, only occurs 8% of the time, which is less than half of the collocation occurrences of *will*. In these instances, as well as in the majority of other occurrences of *would*, *would* signals a more predictive, hypothetical reality, as it commonly does in a variety of language contexts (Biber *et al.*, 1999). And, in approximately 20% of these instances, *would* collocates with *be*, emphasizing the conditional nature of the claims.

Politely implicit self-volitional control of action/event/victim

- *I <u>would</u> like you to investigate a serious issue which is against all the company values.* (DEF)

- *I <u>would</u> highly suggest for your sake retiring as soon as possible.* (DEF)

- *As follow up to our last request for your intervention, we <u>would</u> also like to bring up to your attention that we have confirmed upon investigation that Peter is currently having a romantic relationship with one of his employees, Michelle.* (DEF)

- *We <u>would</u> like you to know that you are not appreciated in the Medical Center,and the reason for this is that we <u>would</u> like you to leave so we can remain the the same* (HAR)

- *I <u>would</u> hope that this matter could be resolved favorably for all without any further substantial time consuming contributions required from me.* (DEF)

<u>Conditional, hypothetical reality</u>

- *Bitch, if only you could look into the future and see how you are going to die! you <u>would</u> kill yourself, because a quick death would be better to what I have in store for you.* (STLK)

- *If youwere here know I <u>would</u> give you a taste by ramming my pork stick in your throat and hold ing you down by your jew long hair.* (STLK)

- *You probable think us ruthless, but we are not. We are disgusted, if we were this letter <u>would</u> be on its way to Rob's wife.* (DEF)

- *I would have sent you pictures but you <u>would</u> be nasty enough to trace them back to developer & then to me, so I shall describe my masterpiece to you.* (VIOL)

- *I THiNK I <u>WOULD</u> BE GREAT WiTH A GUN, SOME EXPLOSiVES, AND SOMEONE TO BLOW UP LIKE OR KiLL AND MUTiLATE UNTiL THEY WERE AS UGLY AS A PiLE OF DOG SHiT.* (OTH)

- *If you'd had any brains you would have realized that there are a lot of people out there who resent bitterly the way techno-nerds like you are changing the world and you <u>would</u>n't have been dumb enough to open an unexpected package from an unknown source.* (OTH)

C: Necessity Modals

As discussed above, while necessity modals occur with the least frequency in threats, the distribution of the four main modals in this category is interesting. As aforementioned, Biber (2006: 102) found that *must*, when used to indicate personal obligation, "leaves no room for negotiation" and in face-to-face situations, "can be perceived as face threatening and impolite." In the genre of *written* threats, then, where authors are most oftentimes anonymous out of fear of retaliation, punishment, and/or social sanction (Mardigian, 2009, p.c.), it would be expected that modals of necessity would be *more* rather than *less* face-threatening. However, as was seen in Figure 4.7 above, this is definitely not the case, where *should* and *have to*, which are more polite and less face-threatening, occur at roughly twice the frequency as *must* and *need to*. Upon closer examination, as seen with prediction modals, there are some moderately strong collocation patterns with pronouns; however, in this case *should* and *have to* most frequently occur with *you* 29% of the time, which is followed by *I/we* in 15% of the cases. Within context, it can be seen that *you should* and *you have to* are oftentimes used in situations where a traditional power hierarchy clearly exists (e.g., student to professor) regardless of the anonymity of the author, in situations of defamation wherein the threatener softens his tone in order to persuade the recipient to align with his negative opinion of the defamed victim, and in instances wherein a stalker, who is, on occasion, known to the victim, hopes to endear herself to the victim, thereby furthering the possibility of a future relationship (e.g., in the first stalking example below, the author, who is known to the victim, has been stalking him for over a decade and therefore uses face-saving language with the hopes of forming

a more intimate relationship). In each case, the traditional face-saving role of these

modals is still the primary function.

<u>Face-saving politeness towards the victim or recipient</u>

- *You <u>should</u> be ashamed to take our tuition money for "teaching" PR!* (HAR)

- *You <u>should</u> care about your patient and not let them take the fall for you and come foreward yourself instead of having me have to find a subject like I had to.In other words you should pay your own dues.and not dump it on everyone else.* (HAR)

- *You <u>should</u> be very concerned with the suspicious money transactions that are result of direct mandates from Managing Partner Carter.* (DEF)

- *I thought you <u>should</u> know, and give you opportunity to protect your company from Johnstone, and from the fall out if any government department client finds out about him from other sources.* (DEF)

- *I'm sorry you <u>have to</u> hear this like this, and I only wish I could tell you in person. But as I'm sure you understand, I'm afraid of what would happen if Rich found out, as apparently he is very conniving.* (DEF)

- *You're rotten to the core! That's really so cruel! You <u>should</u> burn in hell. Hope you're happy with yourself.* (STLK)

- *I feel you <u>should</u> be honest with me and tell me if you are living together… I fee you <u>should</u> explain your intentions about me one way or another.* (STLK)

However, while *must* and *need to* occur with *you* approximately 27% of the time,

the pronoun distribution is more equally balanced with *I/we* occurring 24% of the time. In

these cases, though not as frequently occurring as the previous functions, the modals are

used to emphasize a conditional aspect of the threat when collocated with *you* (i.e., if the victim does not wish for the threatened action to occur, he or she is required to perform some other action) or the justification for the threat when collocated with *I/we*, thereby highlighting the lack of personal choice open to the threatener, which ultimately mitigates his or her role.

Conditional requirement on the victim

- *You <u>must</u> comply exactly with our instructions or Chavez will automatically die.* (OTH)

- *She is safe and unharmed and if you want her to see 1997, you <u>must</u> follow our instructions to the letter.* (OTH)

- *All of you <u>must</u> be baptized strongly by the Holy Spirit to chase out all the dirty evil spirits causing the problems.* (HAR)

- *Paul, you <u>need to</u> call me immediately or I'm coming to visit you. This is Amelia's husband. I have your address and know where you live.* (HAR)

Lack of threatener volition which mitigates his/her role

- *As a fellow devote Catholic and a member of your profession, I feel I <u>must</u> warn you about Seamus.* (DEF)

- *I finally came to the decision that I <u>must</u> report these activities, not only to True Assurance Life corporate, but to outside agencies as well, so hopefully a full-scale investigation will be launched immediately.* (DEF)

- *SHE IS THE DEVIL! YOU ARE A CHRIST CHILD! I <u>MUST</u> DESTROY HER! OR YOU WILL MEET HER AND SHE WILL TARNISH YOU, BECAUSE SHE COMPLETES YOU LIKE NO ONE ELSE CAN.* (STLK)

D: Summary of Modals Marking Stance in Threats

The three main modal categories in threats roughly mirror the distribution patterns found in other genres and registers (Biber *et al.*, 1999; Biber, 2006); specifically, prediction modals occur with the most frequency, which are followed by possibility modals and necessity modals, respectively. In the category of possibility modals, *can*, *could*, and *may* were found to occur with relative frequency, with *can* exhibiting interesting collocational and functional patterns, as summarized in Table 4.8 below. In the necessity category, the more polite *should* and *have to* occurred with greater frequency—in 65% of the instances—than the more forceful *must* and *need to*. Finally, in the category of prediction modals, *will* and *be going to* surpassed the use of *would* by collectively comprising 70% of the modals therein, which is logical due to their ability to serve as predictors of future events as well as indicators of self-volition. Excluded from frequent use in threats (i.e., those not occurring more than .5 times per 1000 words) are the necessity semi-modals *be supposed to*, *got to*, *(had) better*, and *ought to*; the prediction modal *shall*; and the possibility modal *might*. The remaining distribution patterns and functions of modals within threats are summarized in Table 4.8 below.

Table 4.8: Summary of Modal Forms and Functions Found in Threats

Semantic Category	Most Frequent Forms	Stance Functions
possibility	*can (be, get, have), could, may*	Mitigating the threatener's role through passive participation
	can (do, take), could, may	Emphasizing the recipient's role through active participation
	can (see, understand), could, may	Emphasizing shared understanding and/or compassion between the threatener and the victim
	can/could/may/might + (be)	Emphasis on hypothetical action

prediction	*(I/we) will/be going to*	Firmly explicit self-volitional control of action/event
	(you) will/be going to	Firmly explicit self-volitional control of victim
	(I/we) would	Firmly implicit self-volitional control of victim
	(you) would + (be)	Overly politely explicit self-volitional control of action/event/victim which mitigates the control
		Conditional, hypothetical reality
necessity	*(you) should/have to*	Face-saving politeness towards the victim or recipient
	(you) must/need to	Conditional requirement on the victim
	(I/we) must/need to	Lack of threatener volition which mitigates his/her role

4.3: LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES ABOUT THREATENING LANGUAGE

It's not really the words, but how the words are used that is interesting.

—R. Stephen Mardigian, Vice President[56], the Academy Group, Inc. (2008)

As "speakers ultimately make linguistic choices in order to take stances" (Kiesling, 2009: 179) and an examination of the *function* of language form has been shown to be highly valuable in the study of human behavior (Pennebaker *et al.*, 2003), this section shifts focus from an emphasis on the grammatical forms outlined above to the interpersonal stance functions revealed through the investigation of those forms in threats. Table 4.9 below summarizes the functions and their corresponding forms found to be frequent in threats from 4.2 above; the functions are organized by shared or similar purpose within the genre.

---

[56] As of January 1, 2010, Steve Mardigian is the President of the Academy Group, Inc.

Table 4.9: Summary of Stance Functions and Forms in Threats

Stance Function	Grammatical Category	Lexical Marker
Certainty about/belief in the actuality of the threat	certainty adverbials	*never, really, always*
Certainty about/belief in the actuality of the threat justification	certainty adverbials	*never, really, always*
Self-addressed index of certainty about the threat justification	certainty verbs + *that* clauses	*(I/we) know/understand*
Other-directed index of awareness about the problem and indirect reference to threat justification		*(you, he/she, they) know/ understand*
Mitigating the responsibility or role of the threatener	certainty adverbials	*never*
Mitigating the threatener's role through passive participation	possibility modals	*can (be, get, have), could, may*
Lack of threatener volition which mitigates his/her role	necessity modals	*(I/we) must/need to*
Conditional softening agent	likelihood verbs + *that* clauses	*think, believe*
Emphasis on hypothetical action	possibility modals	*can/could/may/might + (be)*
Conditional, hypothetical reality	prediction modals	*(you) would + (be)*
Conditional requirement on the victim	necessity modals	*(you) must/need to*
Distancing attribution	speech act verbs + *that* clauses	*say/tell*
Strengthening attribution	speech act verbs + *that* clauses	*say/tell*
Indirect directives on behalf of the threatener	intention verbs + *to* clauses	*want*
Mitigation of the threatened action	intention verbs + *to* clauses	*(I neg) want*
Directives involving the threatened action	causation verbs + *to* clauses	*try*
Emphasizing the recipient's role through active participation	possibility modals	*can (do, take), could, may*

Firmly explicit self-volitional control of action/event/victim	prediction modals	*(I/we) will/be going to*
Firmly implicit self-volitional control of action/event/victim		*(you) will/be going to*
Overly politely explicit self-volitional control of action/event/victim which mitigates the control	prediction modals	*(I/we) would*
Emphasizing shared understanding and/or compassion between the threatener and the victim	possibility modals	*can (see, understand), could, may*
Face-saving politeness towards the victim or recipient	necessity modals	*(you) should/have to*

When taken as a collective description of the ways in which grammatically marked stance functions in threats, two distinct interpersonal sets of functions arise—one set of functions that strengthen the threatener's commitment towards, role in, or responsibility for the threatened action and one set that weakens each of those interpersonal functions. Functions that placed an emphasis on the level of certainty of the threat, demonstrated implicit or explicit control, and placed either the threatener and/or the victim in an active role were considered strengthening; those that mitigated the threatener's role or responsibility in the threat by focusing on the threat justification, demonstrated a lack of control, emphasized conditional or hypothetical actions, and utilized polite, face-saving language were considered weakening. In addition to utilizing the literal meaning of each function (e.g., those functions utilizing certainty verbs supported and strengthened the threatener's level of certainty), these functional divisions were collectively based upon Givón's (1990) linguistic devices for weakening manipulative strength (e.g., the use of subjunctive modals to emphasize hypothetical

actions); Biber's (2006) discussion of polite language, which oftentimes serves to soften

potentially face-threatening requests; and Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal

framework, which, among other functional distinctions, calls upon Bakhtin's (1981)

notion of dialogic interaction, whereby heteroglossic utterances are either contracted and

closed to further negotiation or expanded and open to further debate and interpretation—

the former serves to strengthen the threatener's stance, while the latter functions to

weaken the stance by leaving room for other voices to vie for control. Tables 4.10 and

4.11 synthesize these results with Table 4.10 offering those primary functions that serve

to strengthen the threatener's stance and Table 4.11 providing those primary functions

that serve to weaken the threatener's stance.

Table 4.10: Synthesis of Strengthening Stance Functions in Threats

Stance Function	Grammatical Category	Lexical Marker
Demonstration of certainty about/belief in the actuality of the threat	certainty adverbials	*never, really, always*
Firmly explicit/implicit self-volitional control of action/event/victim	causation verb + *to* clause prediction modals	*try* *(I/we) will/be going to* *(you) will/be going to*
Strengthening/supporting the threatener's and/or victim's active role	speech act verb + *that* clause possibility modals	*say, tell* *can (do, take), could, may*

Table 4.11: Synthesis of Weakening Stance Functions in Threats

Stance Function	Grammatical Category	Lexical Marker
Mitigation of threatener's role/ responsibility through certainty about/belief in the actuality of the threat justification and/or awareness of threat justification	certainty adverbials possibility modals	*never, really, always* *can (be, get, have), could, may*
	certainty verb + *that* clause	*(I/we) know/understand* *(you, he/she, they) know/ understand*
	necessity modals speech act verb + *that*	*(I/we) must/need to* *say, tell*

		clause
Lack of threatener control over action/victim or overly polite self-volitional control of action/event/victim	intention verb + *to* clause	*want, (I neg) want*
	prediction modals	*(I/we) would*
	necessity modals	*(I/we) must/need to*
Emphasis on hypothetical and/or conditional action or requirements	possibility modals	*can/could/may/might + (be)*
	prediction modals	*(you) would + (be)*
	necessity modals	*(you) must/need to*
	likelihood verb + *that* clause	*think, believe*
Face-saving politeness/shared compassion and/or understanding towards the victim or recipient	necessity modals	*(you) should/have to*
	possibility modals	*can (see, understand), could, may*

While the set of functions that strengthen the position of the speaker is not surprising, what is rather unexpected is the large number of functions that serve to *weaken* the role, responsibility, or position of the threatener, i.e., the threatener's stance. As seen in Tables 4.10 and 4.11, there are demonstrably *more* ways that threateners mitigate their role in the action, demonstrate a level of compassion for the victim, or downplay the actuality of the proposed threat than those that strengthen the threatener's stance. Interestingly, these findings are somewhat mirrored in the examination of stance-shifting in the language used by sex offenders to describe their acts (Lord *et al.*, 2008). What Lord *et al.* found is that across the four MTC:R3 typologies used to classify sex offenders—opportunistic, pervasively angry, sexual, and vindictive—each type of offender adopted various levels of agency and shifted stances in order to reassign blame for the perverse action in different manners. Opportunistic offenders, for example, were found to justify their actions by placing blame on another assailant, on an addiction to crack, and on having "an unfortunate background" (*ibid.*, 375). In the case of vindictive

offenders, blame was levied on an assailant's alter-ego, 'the Murderer,' and on the victim

for trying to escape. Across their findings, while the offenders' use of personal agency

varied from one of volitional control to one of distance, each eventually employed a shift

in stance expressly for the purpose of mitigating or weakening his or her role in the

sexually-illicit act (*ibid.*). And while Lord *et al.*'s results are primarily based on the

language of offenders' pre-trial statements, which would be expected to include more

language deflecting personal responsibility for the illegal act in the face of an impending

trial, when compared to the interpersonal functions identified for threateners in Tables

4.10 and 4.11 above, it can be seen that threateners, who are largely anonymous, still

employ similar deflection strategies as well as other ways of mitigating their overall

stance even without the threat of an impending trial.

Additionally, upon closer examination of the grammatical markers that occur with

each set of stance functions, the issue of context addressed in chapters 1 and 2 is once

again highlighted. Specifically, *never, really,* and *always*, as adverbial markers of

authorial stance, are seen to function in both a strengthening capacity—when they are

used to demonstrate certainty about the threat—and in a weakening capacity—when they

are used to mitigate the threatener's role and/or responsibility in the threat. *Never*, which

was found to place additional emphasis on the threat justification, signals to the reader

that the author is taking an extreme position with relation to the proposition that follows

the lexeme, on which its interpersonal meaning depends. For example, in the following

utterance: *I never deserved the treatment that you gave me through the years...* (STLK),

never is used to demonstrate that the writer had no choice in the matter and therefore, the

threatened action she proposes earlier in the text—to file a formal complaint against the

recipient that could get *really ugly*—is not her fault. Like vindictive sex offenders (Lord

et al., 2008), this use of *never* mitigates her role in the action by deflecting blame onto

the victim. If *maybe* were substituted for *never*, it would lessen the distance between the

threatener and the action, serving to strengthen the threatener's responsibility in the

overall event. In contrast, in the utterance: *I will <u>never</u> capitulate, the system will crash…*

(DEF), *never* serves to strengthen the threatener's certainty about his or her commitment

to the action. In this case, if *maybe* were substituted for *never*, it would have the opposite

effect to that seen in the previous example, i.e., it would weaken the demonstration of

authorial commitment to carrying out the act. Thus, as argued earlier, *all* evaluative

meaning is contextually-dependent and based on the understanding of the socially

organized individuals participating in the semiotic exchange—i.e., there are no "neutral"

or contextually-independent words (Bourdieu, 1991: 40). Furthermore, in the case of

grammatical markers of stance, this context intimately depends on the proposition it

marks as well as the interpersonal function that proposition serves. As exemplified here

through the use of *never*, there is *not* a one-to-one correspondence between the language

forms identified herein and the interpersonal function they serve in threats.

Finally, when we compare these findings about threatening language to the

language ideologies from scholars, practitioners, and students presented in chapters 1 and

3, it can be seen, when the ideologically-based functions are highlighted over form and

synthesized by general purpose, that similar sets of functions—one set that strengthens

and one that weakens the threatener's stance—appear. However, in the case of the

ideologically-based functions, the distribution between strengthening and weakening

functions and forms is much less evenly balanced than was seen above in threats. The

following two tables present the synthesized strengthening (Table 4.12) and weakening

(Table 4.13) functional sets from the tripartite collection of language ideologies.

Table 4.12: Synthesis of Strengthening Stance Functions in Language Ideologies

Stance Function	Linguistic Category	Lexical Marker
Emphasizing threatener's commitment to threat and/or demonstration of intent	"forceful" modals	*will, must, shall, have got to*
	adverbs	*really, honestly, truly*
	lack of qualifiers	*I think, kind of, I believe*
	time frame*[57]	*your time is at hand*
Supporting/focusing on the threatener's active role	active voice/future tense	*I will, I'm gonna*
	first person pronouns	*I, me*
Focusing on the behaviors for which a victim needs punishing	concept nouns*	*cheating, stealing*
Threatener control over victim through direct intimidation, personal fixation, and monoglossic statements	profanity*	*shit, fuck*
	sexist and racist language*	*Chink, gook*
	insults*	*You are a complete ass…*
	pejorative language*	*dogs, beasts*
	second person pronouns	*you, you all*
	cold, angry, distraught tone*	
	rhetorical questions*	*Do we not deserve better?*
	commands*	*Wipe that grin off your face.*
	violent physical action verbs	*kill, die, hurt, beat, destroy*
	time frame*	*tomorrow, soon, by 2pm*
	lexical markers of hopelessness, weapons, fantasies, suicide*	

---

[57] While the focus here is on function as opposed to form, it should be noted that forms marked with an * were not examined in this chapter as they do not grammatically mark stance. These features were either examined in the pilot study in chapter 3 (e.g., time frame, profanity), or will be examined, where relevant to threats, in the discourse analysis in Chapter 5. However, each of the *functions* herein addressed was, to some degree, associated with *grammatical* markers of stance.

Table 4.13: Synthesis of Weakening Stance Functions in Language Ideologies

Stance Function	Linguistic Category	Lexical Marker
Emphasis on conditionality	conditional clauses	*if you don't do this, this will happen*
Mitigating the threatener's role through impulsivity, difficulty committing to decisions, denial, and a focus on the reason for the threat	retractors* negatives concept nouns* religious invocation*	*but, although, however, nonetheless* *not, no, never, nothing* *it is my right* *because you angered God…*

What these tables demonstrate is that our culturally-based impressions about threatening language tend to focus more heavily on those functions that strengthen the role, responsibility, and commitment level of the threatener, while those functions that weaken the threatener's role—conditionality, impulsivity, denial, and reasoning—are only represented by a relatively small set of linguistic features. Additionally, while the notion of conditionality is mirrored in both sets of weakening functions in Tables 4.11 and 4.13, there is a distinct lack of functions in the ideological list that refer to the interpersonally polite, compassionate, and face-saving functions found in threats—i.e., those functions that adhere to Brown and Levinson's (1987) negative and positive politeness strategies wherein the threatener requests forgiveness, minimizes the imposition of the threat, mitigates his or her role in the act, attends to the victim's needs, and avoids or mitigates disagreement. Likewise, while the ideologically-based notion of denial and that of reasoning can be related to an emphasis on the threat justification, which serves to mitigate the threatener's role—i.e., the threatener denies responsibility for the action and places blame elsewhere in order to justify the threatened act—there is no mention in the weakening ideological set of a function that focuses on the *lack* of threatener control. Rather, our ideologies assume that in the case of threats, the threatener

is firmly in control of the victim, the act, and, ultimately, the outcome. This lack of

controlling language may be attributed to the threatener's desire to provide a counter

balance to the communication's face-threatening nature in order to maintain an

interpersonal relationship with the victim—even if from an anonymous perspective—or

to deflect the possible social sanction (Martin and White, 2005) associated with threats,

e.g., arrest, prosecution, and jail time. In either case, the threatener encodes the

communication in a way that does not completely damage his or her social identity or

"face," i.e., "the public self image that every member of society wants to claim for

himself," which is a normal convention of all human communication (Brown and

Levinson, 1987: 66). Thus, while our ideologies about threatening language do reflect

these strengthening and, to a slight degree, weakening functions found in this pragmatic

act, they do not reflect the balanced nature of these sets of functions or the full range of

functions within the weakening category.

As stated above, we oftentimes "tend to notice unusual occurrences more than

typical occurrences" in language use (Biber *et al.*, 1998: 3). While this notion is not

strictly true in the case of threatening communications, since the more profane, forceful,

and monoglossic language reflecting a threatener's powerful stance was found to exist

with relative frequency[58], our ideologies do heavily reflect or "notice" that language

which violates the culturally-accepted face-saving norms of society, thus relegating these

occurrences to the "unusual" category in a social rather than a frequency sense. What we

are missing, i.e., the "typical occurrences," are those occurrences that do *not* violate these

---

[58] As demonstrated in chapter 3, profanity, which was assumed to exist by all three COP to some extent (i.e., profanity was associated with threatening language by 73% of the students; however, since practitioners and scholars were not surveyed in the same manner, the percentage-based findings can only be generalized to the student respondents), was only found in 24% of the communications, so not *all* of the assumed language forms were usual.

culturally-accepted societal norms. Yet, without the language of mitigation or politeness, interpersonal meaning may not always be transmitted or interpreted accordingly. In the case of threats, it is this cooperative and more socially-acceptable nature of language that allows the illocutionary meaning to be successfully transmitted, even though it is the socially-sanctioned language that we have ideologically identified as the threat. Ultimately, then, it is the negotiation of multiple layers of interpersonal meaning in threats—i.e., the juxtaposition of weakening and strengthening functions that adhere to and reject personal and social norms, respectively—that gives threats their underlying meaning and pragmatic force.

Guided by these functional patterns, the following section (4.4) examines the grammatical markers of stance and their corresponding functions that are significant and/or salient to threatening communications; this investigation further identifies how interpersonal meaning is negotiated within threats as opposed to how meaning is negotiated in similar communications that are not threatening (e.g., a threatening email in a business setting forcefully requesting that someone quit his or her job vs. a routine business email requesting that a report be finished by the end of the day), as well as in threats that were carried out vs. those that were not. The findings, which confirm that our language ideologies mask some of the ways in which threateners threaten in these various contexts—a process known as erasure (Irvine and Gal, 2000), will be further discussed.

4.4: STANCE FORMS AND FUNCTIONS SALIENT TO THREATS

Framed within this larger functional description of stance in threats, this section focuses on identifying significant and/or salient[59] grammatical forms and their functions as they specifically occur within threats and within two threat-internal categories—realized and non-realized threats[60]. In order to identify stance functions with relevance to a particular category, grammatical markers—adverbials, complement clauses, modals—with either a significance value < .05 or a heightened salience to a particular threat category are examined in more depth. Salient features are herein defined as those occurring at least more than two times as often in one sub-corpus than in the other *and* those occurring at least .5 times per 1000 words in one or both of the corpora being compared. The details of the two corpora created for comparison purposes, CTARC, the Communicated Threat Assessment Reference Corpus, and the K-corpus, the Known-document Corpus, which are discussed in more detail in chapter 3, are summarized in Table 4.14 below.

Table 4.14: Summary of Comparison Corpora

CTARC	K-corpus
470 threatening communications	556 non-threatening communications
152,078 words	158,789 words
139 separate writers	109 separate writers

What is important to recall is that the communications in the K-corpus are those that were submitted to AGI along with the threatening communications for purposes of potential

---

[59] Most grammatical variables considered in this study had large standard deviations, reflecting the fact that there is extensive variation for these features among the letters within each of the two sub-corpora. At the same time, there were relatively large differences in the mean scores for many of these features between the two corpora, indicating that there are general linguistic differences between the two despite the extensive range of variation among letters within each category. To capture these latter differences, I have employed alternative methods of comparison other than the traditional tests of significance.

[60] Related work (Gales, in progress) examines the stance forms and functions salient to different threat types: defamation, harassment, stalking, and violence (see Appendix D).

authorship identification. Because these communications primarily come from the same population of speakers as the threateners—in many cases, the threatener's own non-threatening texts may be included in the K-corpus—and from the same written registers as the threats (mainly emails and business-style letters), they provide a good comparison for examining grammatical forms that mark stance in CTARC.

In terms of realization sub-corpora, only 22% of the cases in CTARC possess a known status; i.e., cases wherein the end result, whether realized or not realized, is definitively known—an acknowledged frustration among many who work within threat assessment and law enforcement (Mardigian, 2009, p.c.)[61]. Therefore, while it has been demonstrated that as few as ten texts per category can offer a representative sampling for most grammatical features (Biber, 1990; Biber *et al.*, 1998), it is readily acknowledged that the analysis performed below is preliminary; the results do not meet the Daubert criteria requiring a particular level of scientific validity and a known error rate to be accepted as evidence in U.S. courts of law (Dumas, 1990). However, it is hoped that the interpersonal functions identified herein may serve as a foundation for further work on threat cases where the end status is definitively known and as a catalyst for changing the ways in which we ideologically frame threatening language.

---

[61] In many threat cases, if the threat is not carried out within a reasonable time frame of the threat being made, it can be assumed that they are non-realized. However, for the purposes of this research, only those threats with a definitively known status of being carried out or not carried out (e.g., when the threatener was caught and admitted that the threat was only a hoax and it was never intended to be carried out) are included. Unfortunately, these only comprise approximately 22% of the cases in CTARC, as oftentimes in public cases, law enforcement officers will not have time to follow up on the status of old threat cases, and in private cases, threat assessors may not be given the final details of how the events eventually played out (Mardigian, 2009, p.c.).

Table 4.15 below lists those grammatical features marking stance that were found

to be significant or salient to the genre of threats and/or one of the threat realization

categories. Where p = ns, the feature was not significant, but met both salience criteria.

Table 4.15: Significant and Salient Grammatical Features Marking Stance

Grammatical Category	Threats	Threat Realization Category
all modals	p < .001	non-realized, p < .05
prediction modals: *will*, *be going to*	p < .001	non-realized, p < .05
possibility modal: *can*	p = ns	
necessity modal: *have to*	p = ns	
certainty adverbials		realized, p = ns
style adverbials		non-realized, p = ns
certainty verbs + *that* clauses		non-realized, p = ns
likelihood verbs + *that* clauses		realized, p = ns
speech act verbs + *that* clauses	p < .05	realized, p = ns
causation verbs + *to* clauses		realized, p = ns

The following sections examine each of the features presented in Table 4.15, highlighting

the interpersonal ways in which these features function to mark the threatener's stance in

threats vs. non-threats (4.4.1) and in realized vs. non-realized threats (4.4.2).

4.4.1: Threats vs. Non-threats

Within the CTARC, there are only two broad stance categories that meet the

requirements herein proposed: all modals, especially modals of prediction, which are

examined along with the individual modals *can* and *have to* as they met the salience

requirements in 4.3.1a, and speech act verbs controlling *that* clauses, which are examined

in 4.3.1b. Style adverbials do demonstrate a difference in distribution over 50% between

threats and non-threats, but overall, style adverbials only occur less than .26 times per

1000 words; therefore, they will not be examined in more detail here. 4.3.1c summarizes

the functions and grammatical forms that occur with heightened frequency in genre of threats as opposed to non-threats.

4.4.1a: Modals

The first significant category in threats is the all modals category, which is compared to the other grammatical categories in Figure 4.8 below. As stated above, modals are significant to the category of threats (p < .001).

Figure 4.8: Distribution of Grammatical Stance Categories by Genre
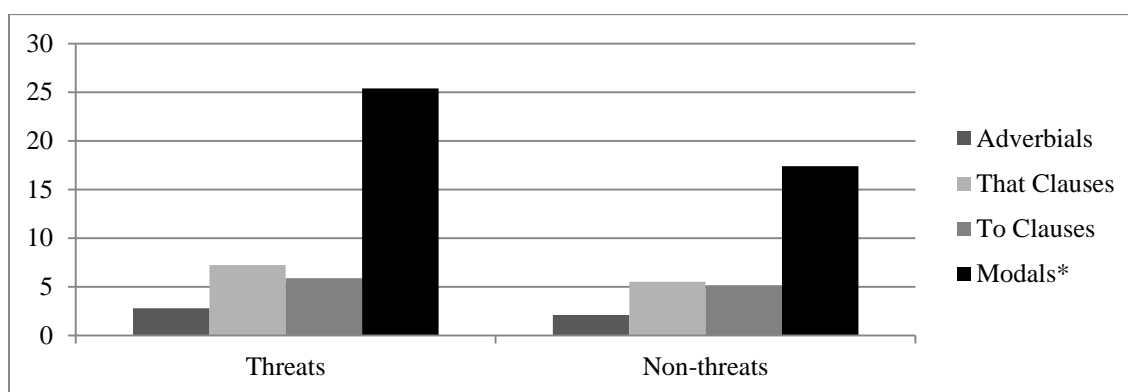
Frequency per 1000 Words, N = 202, *p < .001 (modals)

Upon closer examination of the three modal categories, it can be seen in Figure 4.9 that prediction modals, as opposed to modals of possibility or necessity, are also significant to threats (p < .001).

Figure 4.9: Distribution of Modals by Genre
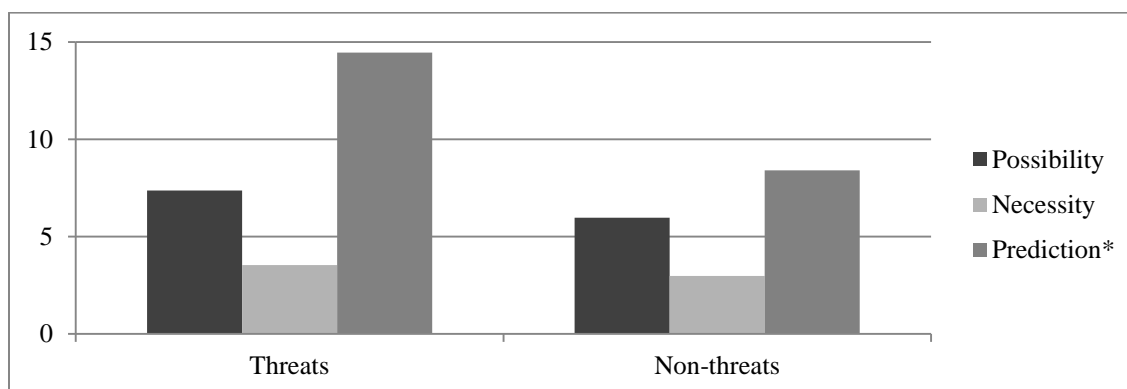
Frequency per 1000 Words, N = 202, *p < .001 (prediction)

However, since all modals were shown to be significant to threats in Figure 4.8, it is

logical to assume that at least some modals verbs in other categories occur with

heightened frequency in addition to prediction modals. Figure 4.10 offers the distribution

of the most common modals outlined above in section 4.2.3 in threats and in non-threats.

Figure 4.10: Distribution of Most Common Modals by Genre
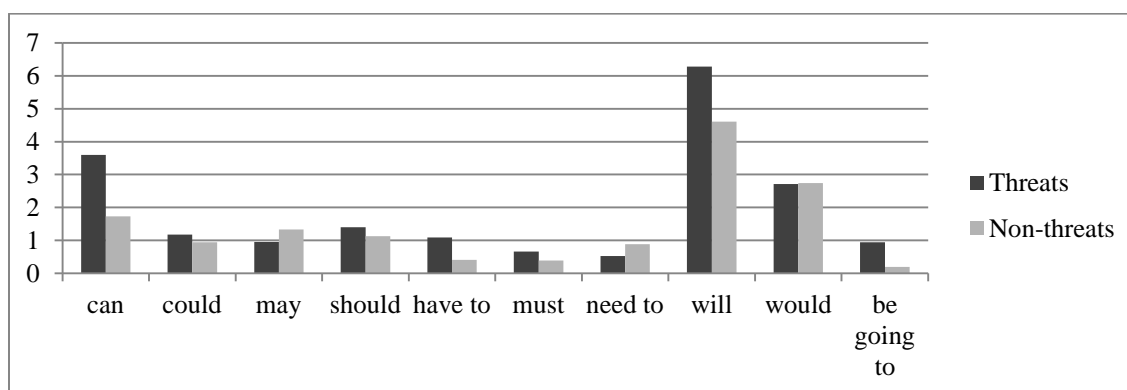
Frequency per 1000 Words, N = 202

It can be seen that in addition to prediction modals, in which category *will* and *be going

to* collectively occur with far greater frequency than *would*, the possibility modal *can* and

the necessity modal *have to* also occur with heightened regularity in threats as opposed to

non-threats (i.e., more than twice as often in threats than in non-threats). Therefore, since

these additional modals meet the salience criteria outlined above, the functions of these

four particular modals will be examined more closely in sections A-C below.

A: Functions of will/be going to in Threats vs. Non-threats

As discussed above in section 4.2.3B, *will* and *be going to* comprise 70% of the

occurrences of prediction modals in threats. Additionally, *will* and *be going to* are found

to possess both epistemic, predictive meaning (e.g., *Big Daddy will bail us out.* (DEF))

and deontic, volitional meaning that is explicitly (e.g., *I will cruse around all weekend*

killing lone people in the night then move on to kill again, untill I end up with a dozen

people over the weekend. (VIOL)) and implicitly (e.g., *Your blood will run through the*

streets in the coming months. (HAR)) controlled by the threatener. In the case of deontic

meaning, however, *will* and *be going to* occur with heightened regularity and serve to

highlight the power hierarchy that exists between the threatener and his or her victim.

Specifically, these two modals collocate with *I/we* in 26% of the occurrences and

demonstrate the threatener's explicit control over the action, event, or victim, and *you* in

18% of the instances, wherein the threatener implicitly exerts his or her control over the

victim by using a predictive stance to suggestively imply what he or she has the power to

do. The specific functional patterns for these two modals as well as their collocating

features are summarized for reference from section 4.2.3B in Table 4.16 below.

Table 4.16: Summary of Forms and Functions of *will/be going to* in Threats

Grammatical Category	Lexical Marker	Stance Function
prediction modals	*(I/we) will/be going to*	Firmly explicit self-volitional control of action/event
		Firmly explicit self-volitional control of victim
	(you) will/be going	Firmly implicit self-volitional control of

to	victim

In comparison, in non-threats these two modals roughly comprise 60% of the modals in the predictive category. And while *will* and *be going to* possess both epistemic and deontic meaning, as seen in threats, the heightened focus on the interpersonal relationship in threats is not as highly frequent in non-threats. Rather, those occurrences possessing deontic, volitional meaning—or meaning that is both deontic and epistemic— are more focused on subjective or objective control over an *event or process* (e.g., *June and I will turn these documents around and return them for filing next week.* (E-M)) as opposed to control over *another person* as was seen in threats.

Likewise, in non-threats *will/be going to* collocate with *I/we* 26% of the time, which is the same distribution as was found in threats. And while there are instances of this collocation pattern functioning in a subjective manner to control another person's knowledge, actions, or abilities (e.g., *I'll let you know when these are finalized.* (BL-M)), in the majority of deontic uses of *will/be going to* in non-threats, the primary self-volitional focus is, once again, on controlling events or objects as opposed to controlling people (e.g., *I won't make any changes to the letter.* (E-F); *We will continue investing in our research and development area in the future.* (BL-M)).

Another difference between threats and non-threats is in the distribution of collocation patterns of *will/be going to* with *you*, which occur in only 3% of the cases in non-threats as opposed to 18% in threats. And, in most of these non-threat cases, the predictive, epistemic meaning (e.g., *I truly believe you will lead an organization one day.* (E-M); *PS.... billy, one day you will come to Dubai* (E-M)) overshadows the deontic meaning that was seen in threats, wherein the statement is implicitly under the control of

the speaker or writer. In these non-threat examples, there is no understanding of authorial control. Therefore, only the functions oriented towards controlling another person (i.e., the victim in threats) remain salient to the genre of threats. These findings are presented in Table 4.17 below.

Table 4.17: Summary of *will/be going to* Functions Salient to Threats

Grammatical Category	Lexical Marker	Stance Function
prediction modals	*(I/we) will/be going to*	Firmly explicit self-volitional control of victim
	(you) will/be going to	Firmly implicit self-volitional control of victim

B: Functions of can *in Threats vs. Non-threats*

As outlined in 4.2.3A above, *can* represents 60% of the possibility modals in threats and can possess each of its three literal interpretations: permission, possibility, and ability. In threats, though, *can* was found to represent epistemic (possibility) rather than deontic (permission) meaning with far greater frequency; in these cases, it was used to indirectly indicate the threatener's level of likelihood or certainty about a threat. Additionally, *can* was found to function in a variety of interpersonal ways when collocated with particular verbs in threats. These functions and their corresponding linguistic forms are summarized for reference in Table 4.18 below.

Table 4.18: Summary of Forms and Functions of *can* in Threats

Grammatical Category	Lexical Marker	Stance Function
possibility modals	*can (be, get, have)*	Mitigating the threatener's role through passive participation
	can (do, take)	Emphasizing the recipient's role through active participation

can (see, understand)	Emphasizing shared understanding and/or compassion between the threatener and the victim
can (be)	Emphasis on hypothetical action

Specifically, *can* collocates with three primary sets of verbs, each of which functions in a slightly different manner. *Can* followed by *be*, *get*, or *have* mitigates the role of the threatener by placing him or her in a more passive role (e.g., *YOU CAN'T BE ALLOWED TO TEACH HER STRENGTH LIKE YOUR EVIL MIND HAS.* (STLK)), whereas *can* followed by *do* or *take* emphasizes the victim's or recipient's role in the threat by placing him or her in an active position (e.g., *Any White Man, CaN do ANyThing And get a Way with it…* (HAR)). *Can* followed by *see* or *understand* demonstrates a level of shared knowledge, understanding, and/or compassion between the threatener and his or her victim (e.g., *Well,I can see that things are heating up at home.* (STLK)). Finally, *can*, in addition to other possibility modals, frequently collocates with *be* and functions in a slightly different interpersonal manner. In this usage, *can + be*, not only places the threatener in a more passive role, as indicated above with the *can + be/get/have* pattern, but it also highlights the threatened action as possibly being hypothetical as opposed to real, opening up the possible interpretations to uncertainty (e.g., *I know you can be found…* (STLK)).

In non-threats, on the other hand, *can* represents 40% of the total possibility modals and is more equally distributed with *may*, which only occurs at a third of the rate of *can* in threats. Furthermore, the lexical collocation patterns with *can* in non-threats are not as equally distributed as in threats. Specifically, while *can* frequently collocates with *be*, *get*, *do*, and *see* in non-threats, it is only found with *have* and *take* a total of three

times each and it never occurs with *understand* in this corpus. Functionally, the collocation patterns that do occur with *can + be/get/do/see*, serve fairly similar roles as those outlined above in threats; however, in some cases, there are a few distinctions.

In threats, *can be/get* frequently functions to mitigate the threatener's role through passive participation and *can be* also suggests that the stated action may be hypothetical rather than real. In non-threats, there are many instances where *can be* functions in the hypothetical manner (e.g., *While personnel changes <u>can</u> be disruptive, they must be communicated in a timely fashion along with a plan of action.* (BL-M); additionally, while there are far fewer instances where *can be/get* mitigates the subject's role in the action, they do occur with relative regularity (e.g., *You <u>can get</u> me via email or my direct line.* (E-M); *Unless we have precedent which is worthy of discussion, the only one I <u>can get</u> comfortable with is paying in Euros.* (E-M)).

The collocation pattern *can do*, in threats, emphasizes the recipient's role through active participation, but while this function is found in non-threats, it is infrequent (e.g., *My quick assessment is that while you <u>can do</u> many jobs on our trading floor, the highest and best use of your skill set is in that area.* (E-M)). Rather, the interpersonal function more frequently found in non-threats is that of a polite offer on the part of the writer (e.g., *Let me know if there's anything I <u>can do</u>.* (E-M); *Anything we <u>can do</u> to help support you would be my pleasure.* (E-M)).

With *can see* in non-threats, the function that emphasizes a shared understanding between parties in threats is readily apparent (e.g., *I am sure that over the past few years you have met people that can use our services as you <u>can see</u> I have aligned myself with the best.* (BL-M)). However, the function in threats demonstrating compassion, whether

honest or ironic, is absent in non-threats. Thus, Table 4.19 below summarizes the two

collocational and two functional patterns with *can* that remain salient to the genre of

threats.

Table 4.19: Summary of *can* Functions Salient to Threats

Grammatical Category	Lexical Marker	Stance Function
possibility modals	*can (do, take)*	Emphasizing the recipient's role through active participation
	can (see, understand)	Emphasizing compassion between the threatener and the victim

C: Functions of **have to** *in Threats vs. Non-threats*

As demonstrated in the discussion about *have to* in section 4.2.3C above, *have to* and

should function as face-saving devices, which, in threats, is unexpected due to the

anonymity of the majority of communicated threats. However, as summarized for

reference in Table 4.20 below, the main function associated with *have to* in threats is that

of face-saving politeness towards the victim or third party recipient of a threat.

Table 4.20: Summary of Forms and Functions of *have to* in Threats

Grammatical Category	Lexical Marker	Stance Function
necessity modals	*(you)have to*	Face-saving politeness towards the victim or recipient

Also noted with *have to* are the moderately strong collocation patterns with pronouns.

Specifically, when *have to* and *should* are considered collectively, as they were above,

they collocate with *I/we* 15% of the time and *you* 29% of the time. *You have to* patterns

are used in situations where a traditional power hierarchy exists, where threateners soften

their tone to persuade the recipient to align with their stance, or where a threatener, usually a stalker, hopes to endear himself or herself to the victim. In each of the instances noted, the functional role played by the grammatical form is that of saving face.

In non-threats, *have to* collocates with *I/we* 45% of the time and *you* in 12% of the occurrences. And, in order to compare the same percentages as were laid out in threats, *have to* and *should* collectively collocate with *I/we* in 62% of the cases and *you* in 13% in non-threats, demonstrating the shift in focus from *you* in threats to *I/we* in non-threats. Functionally, when examining the instances of *have to* that collocate with *you* in non-threats, as those were of interest for face-saving purposes in threats, it can be seen that the primary role of *you* + *have to* in non-threats is of a more obligatory nature between the writer and recipient (e.g., *I know when we spoke, we (you and I) decided the best way to approach this would be to go in on a lower level, but I think you have to go in at the top.* (E-M); *Yeah, I suppose you don't have to mention silk.* (E-M)) than one of politely saving face.

Therefore, since the primary function of *have to*, especially when collocated with *you*, in non-threats is that of obligation rather than face-saving request, the necessity modal *have to* maintains its function of face-saving politeness in threats, as summarized in Table 4.21.

Table 4.21: Summary of *have to* Functions Salient to Threats

Grammatical Category	Lexical Marker	Stance Function
necessity modals	*(you) have to*	Face-saving politeness towards the victim or recipient

4.4.1b: Speech Act Verbs Marking Stance + *that* **Clauses**

The distribution of speech act/communication verbs controlling *that* clauses, while less frequently occurring than certainty verbs—which do not meet both salience criteria—is significant to the genre of threats, as seen below in Figure 4.11.

Figure 4.11: Distribution of Verbs Marking Stance + *that* Clauses by Genre
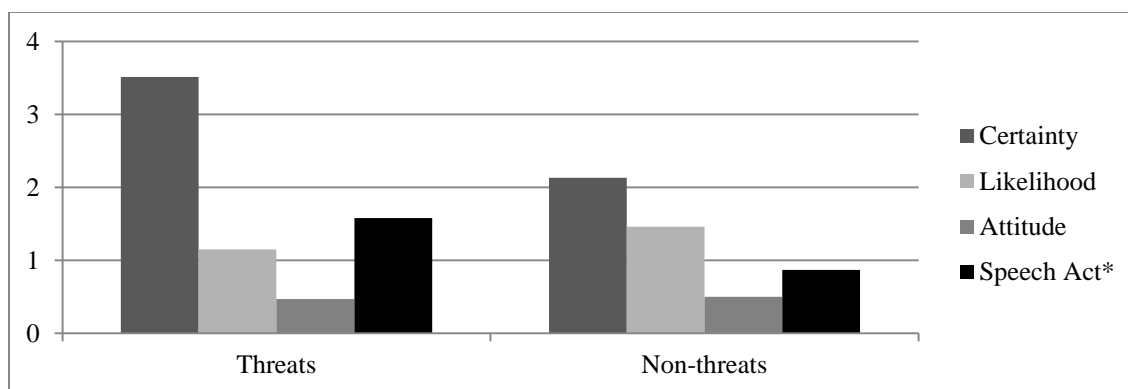
Frequency per 1000 Words, N = 202, *p < .05 (speech act/communication verbs)

In section 2.3.2aC above, the most common speech act verbs controlling *that* clauses were found to be the more informal, conversational verbs *say* and *tell*, which occurred with equal frequency in threats. The primary function these verbs were found to serve in threats is that of attribution, with the added interpersonal functions that either distance the writer from a claim, proposition, or improper action or strengthen the writer's stance. In instances of distancing, the writer uses attribution to state something negative about another person or to justify his or her actions (e.g., *As I said earlier in my letter it is not my intention to damage our company.* (VIOL)). In the case of strengthening attributions, the writer draws on the voice of another to support or bolster his claims or propositions (e.g., *I told you God said were're short Handed.* (HAR)). These functions are summarized for reference in Table 4.22.

179

Table 4.22: Summary of Forms and Functions of Verbs + *that* Clauses in Threats

Grammatical Category	Lexical Marker	Stance Function
speech act verbs + *that*	*say/tell*	Distancing attribution Strengthening attribution

In non-threats, as seen in Table 4.23, the most common speech act verbs controlling *that* clauses are the more formal *note*, *report*, and *state/suggest*, the latter two of which appear with equal frequency.

Table 4.23: Most Frequent Verbs Marking Stance + *that* Clauses by Genre

Semantic Category	Threats	Non-threats
speech act/communication	*say/tell*	*note* *report* *state/suggest*

In terms of function, the most common verbs in non-threats, while more formal, can be seen to function in a similar manner to the more informal verbs in threats. Specifically, instances of distancing can be seen (e.g., *During the meeting Gary stated that some of the things he said were taken out of context.* (BL-M)) as well as strengthening (e.g., *In addition, neither of the two commercial mortgage-backed securities, which were the subject of the irregularities reported by Mr. Jamieson, had been re-marked in the company's books and records.* (BL-M)). Furthermore, when examining the functions of *say* and *tell* in non-threats, which occur at roughly half the rate of the more common speech act verbs noted above in that corpus, the same kinds of attributions are found—strengthening (e.g., *As John has said, the firm should view our needs for resources as important as every other area in the company.* (E-M)) and distancing (e.g., *As I said earlier, we need to properly identify the skills & experience with the roles and responsibilities required for the group.* (E-M)). Therefore, while strengthening and

distancing attributions occur with heightened frequency in threats, they do occur

regularly with a range of speech act verbs—typically those of a more formal nature—in

non-threats as well. Therefore, while frequently occurring in threats, these functions are

not uniquely salient to that genre.

4.4.1c: Summary of Functions and Forms Salient to Threats

In threats, then, while there are many grammatical forms and stance functions that occur

with heightened frequency, as outlined in section 4.2 above, only modals are seen to

function in ways that are somewhat distinctive to threats. These findings are reported, by

similarity of function, in Table 4.24. And while it *must* be recognized that these

collocation patterns and functions are also found in non-threats, to a degree, and are not,

therefore, reliable measures of defining what is and what is not a threat, the frequency

with which they occur in *threats* ultimately helps hone our understanding of the ways in

which threateners attempt to construct interpersonal relationships, exert and maintain

control, and demonstrate commitment towards a potentially dangerous proposition.

Specifically, then, threateners strengthen their stance through an implicit and/or explicit

control over the victim and an emphasis on the victim's active participation in the threat;

they weaken their stance by demonstrating a level of compassion for the victim and

saving face through the use of more polite language. The juxtaposition between these sets

of strengthening and weakening functions will be discussed in more detail in the

following section (4.3.2).

Table 4.24: Summary of Stance Functions and Forms Salient to Threats

Stance Function	Grammatical Category	Lexical Marker	Strengthening/ Weakening
Firmly explicit self-	prediction modals	*(I/we) will/be going*	strengthening

volitional control of victim		*to*	
Firmly implicit self-volitional control of victim		*(you) will/be going to*	strengthening
Emphasizing/supporting the recipient's role through active participation	possibility modals	*can (do/take)*	strengthening
Emphasizing compassion between the threatener and the victim	possibility modals	*can (see/understand)*	weakening
Face-saving politeness towards the victim or recipient	necessity modals	*(you) have to*	weakening

4.4.2: Realized Threats vs. Non-realized Threats

This section moves from identifying stance functions salient to threats as a genre to examining interpersonal stance functions salient to categories within threats, specifically the categories of realized vs. non-realized threats. As was discussed in more detail above, the texts that comprise each of these two sub-corpora were either demonstrably realized or clearly not realized. In the cases where the threats were not realized, they were composed by authors who, through arrest or self-admission, declared that they never had the intention, the means, or the commitment to carry out the threat. These threats were admittedly written for the purpose of instilling fear and/or panic in order to get revenge, regain control, or gain some kind of personal reward. No cases with an unknown or assumed realization status were included in this section of the research.

Thus, while these two sub-corpora are smaller in population size—again, they only comprise 22% of the total cases in CTARC—and the patterns are *not* to be taken as

indicative of *all* realized or non-realized threats, there are still several grammatical forms that are either significant or salient to one of the two sets of texts, as seen below in Table 4.25, which is a more focused version of Table 4.15 that was presented earlier.

Table 4.25: Significant and Salient Grammatical Features Marking Stance by Threat Realization

Grammatical Category	Threat Realization Category
all modals	non-realized, p < .05
prediction modals: *will*, *be going to*	non-realized, p < .05
prediction modals: *would*	realized, p = ns
certainty adverbials	realized, p = ns
style adverbials	non-realized, p = ns
certainty verbs + *that* clauses	non-realized, p = ns
likelihood verbs + *that* clauses	realized, p = ns
speech act verbs + *that* clauses	realized, p = ns
causation verbs + *to* clauses	realized, p = ns

Specifically, this section will investigate the ways in which the following grammatical forms and their stance functions are used in each of the realization categories: all modals, especially prediction modals (4.3.2a), certainty and style adverbials (4.3.2b), certainty, likelihood, and style verbs + *that* clauses (4.3.2c), and causation verbs + *to* clauses (4.3.2d). Section 4.3.2e summarizes the forms and functions found to be salient to one of the threat realization categories.

Starting with a broad view of the distribution patterns of grammatical stance features in realized vs. non-realized threats, Figure 4.12 demonstrates that modals, specifically in the sub-corpus of non-realized threats, are the only significant or salient grammatical category as a whole. Therefore, section 4.3.2a will begin with an examination of modals, drawing upon the functions found to be salient to the genre of threats above.

Figure 4.12: Distribution of Stance Categories by Threat Realization
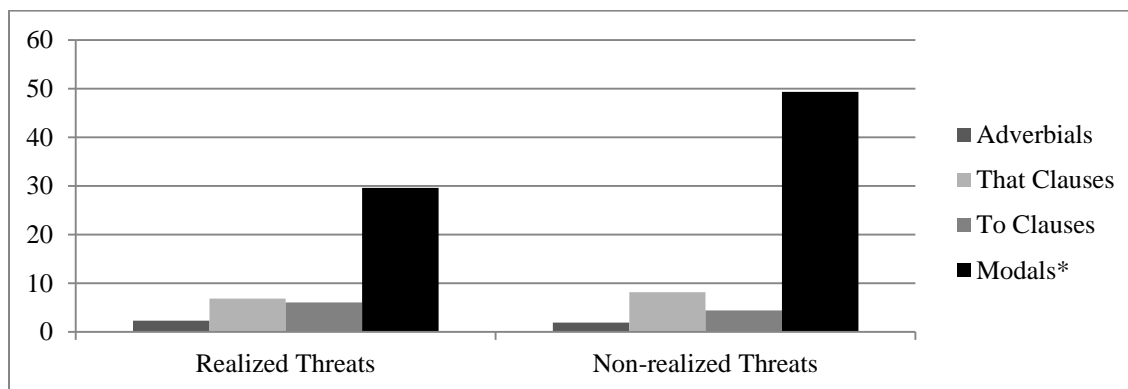
Frequency per 1000 Words, N = 22, *p < .05 (modals)

4.4.2a: Functions of Modals by Threat Realization

Looking at the patterns of modals more closely as they occur within realized vs. non-realized threats, it is seen in Figure 4.13 that modals of prediction, once again, are not only the most frequent class of modals, but are also significant to the category of non-realized threats.

Figure 4.13: Distribution of Modals by Threat Realization
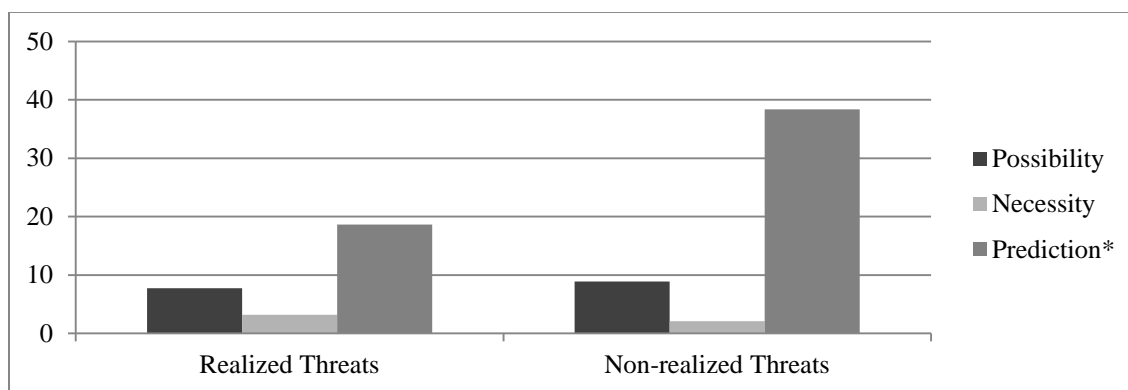
Frequency per 1000 Words, N = 22, *p < .05 (prediction)

Interestingly, within the prediction category, *will/be going to* and *shall*[62] occur with more

frequency in non-realized threats, whereas *would* occurs with about twice as much

frequency in realized threats, as seen in Figure 4.14 below.

Figure 4.14: Distribution of Prediction Modals by Threat Realization
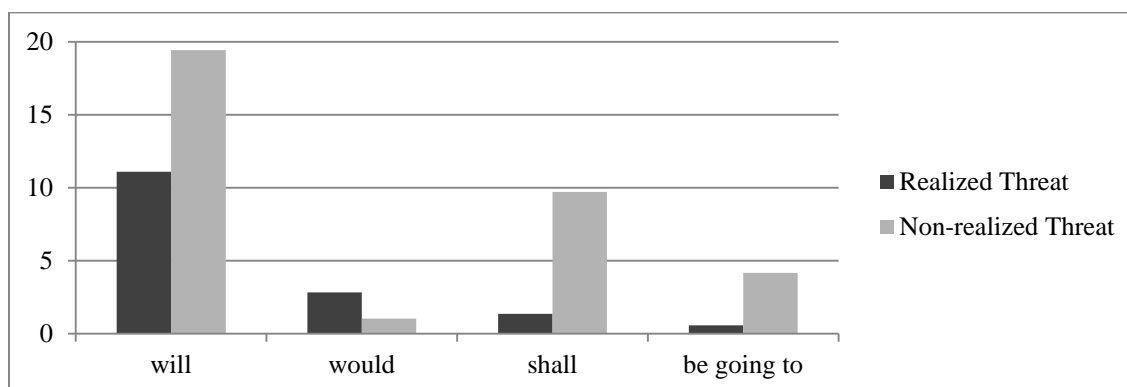
Frequency per 1000 Words, N = 22

As demonstrated earlier, *will* is seen to function as a predictive marker as well as

an interpersonal marker of power between the threatener and the victim, specifically in

terms of explicit and implicit self-directed volitional action towards and control over the

victim. Here, while both of these functions exist within the threat realization categories

and are therefore not differentially salient, there are other functional differences that do

appear. In realized threats, where *will* makes up approximately 70% of the prediction

category, *will* is frequently used in a conditional sense, which places emphasis on the

threat type (i.e. whether it is direct, conditional, or veiled). In non-realized threats, on the

other hand, where *will* comprises roughly 56% of the prediction modals, it more often

---

[62] I wish to express my gratitude to Sali Tagliamonte for her insightful comments about the frequency of *shall* at the 2009 American Association of Corpus Linguistics Conference. While there are 66 occurrences of *shall* in my overall threat corpus, upon closer examination of each of its numerous instantiations in the more focused category of non-realized threats, where it occurs with heightened frequency, I can safely conclude that *shall* shall remain relegated to the category of moribund lexical items, as the occurrences therein primarily came from four writers, two of whom were highly prolific users of *shall*. Therefore (and unfortunately), it will not be further discussed here.

functions in a directly declarative sense. As discussed previously, *be going to* also functions here in a similar manner to *will*.

Conditional *will/be going to* in realized threats

- *If you do not comply Smith's body <u>will</u> be displayed.* (OTH)

- *if I do not see this note in your paper, I <u>will</u> do something nasty, which you know I'm capable of doing* (VIOL)

- *Any delays <u>will</u> result in his automatic execution.* (OTH)

- *When taped ot a gun barrel, the bullet <u>will</u> strike exactly in the center of the black dot in the light.* (VIOL)

- *If you cops think I<u>m going to</u> take on a bus the way I stated I was, you deserve to have holes in your heads.* (VIOL)

- *I <u>was going to</u> take her away for a while there, but I don't know. I am so sick I can't even do that.* (STLK)

- *It's just <u>gonna</u> be insanity, if I even make it through the first few days.* (STLK)

Direct declarative *will/be going to* in non-realized threats

- *On that day a minimum of 20 people <u>will</u> die there.* (VIOL)

- *The explosions <u>will</u> be near simultaneous…* (VIOL)

- *This school <u>will</u> be Bombed November 12 (This is not a joke.)* (VIOL)

- *HUNDREDS <u>WILL</u> DIE. WE ARE INSIDE. YOU CANNOT STOP US.* (VIOL)

- *WHAT YOU JUST BREATHED IN <u>WILL</u> KILL YOU WITHIN 10 DAYS.* (VIOL)

- *<u>IM GONNA</u> BOMB this school* (VIOL)

- *Unfortunately, I found out that a group of people from Tijuana that I don't konw what cartel they belong to, have a family member that apparently hates you and*

they assured my friends that they <u>are going to</u> kill you… they <u>are</u> really <u>going to</u> give it to you. (VIOL)

Would, which occurs more frequently in realized threats than in non-realized threats, is seen to function in realized threats as an excuse or justification for the threatened action—weakening the threatener's stance as the action was one taken out of necessity rather than choice, which removes personal responsibility—whereas in non-realized threats, *would* only occurs one time (*The 22nd of October will mark the final day of Ramadan as it <u>would</u> fall in Mecca.* (VIOL)). This usage is unusual since the fact, which appears to be hypothetical due to the use of *would*, is actually true; therefore, *would* could be removed completely from this utterance as it does not serve a comprehensible function (e.g., *The 22nd of October will mark the final day of Ramadan as it <u>falls</u> in Mecca.*).

<u>Emphasis on threat justification in realized threats</u>

- *Jodie, I <u>would</u> abandon the idea of getting Reagan in a second if I could only win your heart and live out the rest of my life with you, whether it be in total obscurity or whatever.* (STLK)

- *We had hoped that it <u>would</u> not be necessary to hold Martinez for a long period, but we may have been wrong.* (OTH)

- *I don't think she <u>would</u> be missed Im shure she <u>would</u>n't be missed.* (VIOL)

- *If you had followed the first directions Schwartz <u>would</u> have been home long ago. If you had followed the second he <u>would</u> have been released in conjunction with the end of the Earth Festival in Seattle.* (OTH)

- *Most people there are OK and I <u>would</u> never have a shoot 'em up there.* (OTH)

Because none of the other modal categories, as seen in Table 4.13 above, met the significance or salience criteria, Table 4.25 summarizes the salient uses of modals, specifically those of prediction, in realized and non-realized threats.

Table 4.25: Summary of Prediction Modal Functions Salient to Threat Realization Categories

Grammatical Category	Lexical Marker	Stance Function	Threat Realization Category
prediction modals	*will/be going to*	conditionality direct declarative	realized threats non-realized threats
prediction modals	*would*	emphasis on threat justification	realized threats

4.4.2b: Functions of Adverbials by Threat Realization

In the category of adverbials, as seen below in Figure 4.15, certainty adverbials in realized threats occur at four times the rate of the same adverbials in non-realized threats. Furthermore, style adverbials in non-realized threats occurred more than five times as often as those in realized threats. While these two categories are not significant to either realization category, they do meet the salience criteria and will be further examined.

Figure 4.15: Distribution of Adverbials by Threat Realization
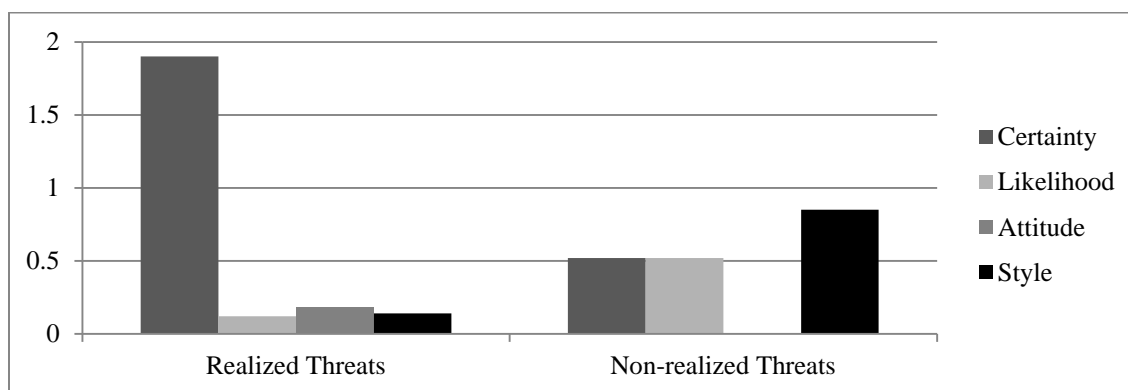
Frequency per 1000 Words, N = 22

As stated in the discussion of threats earlier, *never* is the most frequently occurring certainty adverbial. In realized threats, *never* comprises over half of the adverbial tokens alone, and, in this category, as was seen above, they place emphasis on the certainty of the threat justification, thereby distancing the threatener from the action by demonstrating that he or she is not responsible as there is no other alternative. In contrast, *never* does not occur at all in this sub-corpus of non-realized threats.

Emphatic certainty about the threat justification in realized threats

- *I know I will <u>never</u> enjoy life.* (OTH)

- *I've got a little list, of society offenders who might well be underground who would <u>never</u> be missed…* (VIOL)

- *My dad <u>never</u> (not once) talked to me or asked about my life's details and tell me what he knew.* (OTH)

- *Although we talked on the phone a couple of times I <u>never</u> had the nerve to simply approach you and introduce myself.* (STLK)

In terms of style adverbials, which have been called "relatively rare overall" (Biber, 2006: 104), they occur more frequently than any other adverbial category in non-realized threats, as seen in Figure 4.15 above. According to experienced threat assessors, one possible explanation for this rate of occurrence is that some threateners, especially those who may not have the means or intention of carrying out the threatened action, use particular language to bolster their credibility (Mardigian, 2009, p.c.); in this case, particular style adverbials such as *honestly*, *genuinely*, and *truly* would serve that function. However, upon closer examination of style adverbials in non-realized threats, only one instance of these bolstering adverbials—*truly*—occurs. In this instance, as was

recorded in the case file upon his arrest, the threatener did indeed wish to call attention to his earnestness, which was falsely expressed in order to mislead investigators. But unfortunately, as there was only one occurrence of these bolstering adverbs, we cannot further generalize the use of this function as it specifically occurs with style adverbials (i.e., the bolstering function may occur with other lexical or grammatical markers, but it is not frequently used with style adverbials).

Bolstering of authorial intent or level of seriousness in non-realized threats

- *I AM <u>TRULY</u> SORRY THAT I HAVE RUINED DR. RAMOS' LIFE.* (OTH)

Thus, as the remaining style adverbials in these two categories (e.g., *according to*, *mainly*, *usually*) did not present any further patterns of distinction, Table 4.26 below summarizes the forms and functions salient to realized and non-realized threats.

Table 4.26: Summary of Certainty Adverbial Functions Salient to Threat Realization Categories

Grammatical Category	Lexical Marker	Stance Function	Threat Realization Category
certainty adverbials	*never*	Emphatic certainty about the threat justification	realized threats

4.4.2c: Functions of Verbs controlling *that* Clauses by Threat Realization

Of heightened interest in the category of verbs controlling *that* clauses are certainty verbs in non-realized threats, which occur more than three times as often as certainty verbs in realized threats; likelihood verbs, which occur more than twice as often in realized threats, although with far less frequency than certainty verbs; and speech

act/communication verbs, which are found in realized threats almost three times as often.

These distribution patterns are presented in Figure 4.16.

Figure 4.16: Distribution of Verbs Marking Stance + *that* Clauses by Threat Realization
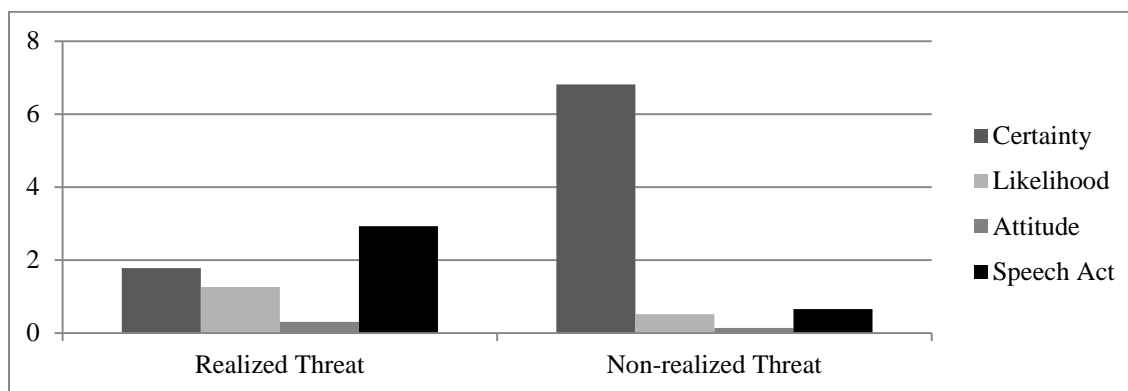
Frequency per 1000 Words, N = 22

Beginning with certainty verbs in non-realized threats, where they are highly frequent, they are oftentimes seen to collocate with some kind of grammatical or lexical negation (e.g., <u>un</u>*fortunately* or <u>not</u> *fortunate*, respectively). And while the pattern of negative polarity also occurs in realized threats with certainty verbs, it does not do so when certainty verbs are paired with *that* clauses—whether *that* is present or omitted—which is a necessary component in the grammatical marking of stance. In non-realized threats, this pattern serves as an interpersonal function that indirectly mitigates the certainty of the threat, i.e., the certainty of its completion, the certainty of the threatener's desire to participate in the act, the certainty that the victim will fulfill his or her part of the plan—all of which are seemingly appropriate as this mitigating function occurs with threats that are *not* realized.

<u>Mitigating the inherent certainty of the threat through negation in non-realized threats</u>

- *Unfortunately, I <u>found out</u> that a group of people from Jalisco that I don't konw what cartel they belong to, have a family member that apparently hates you and they assured my friends that they are going to kill you.* (VIOL)

- *THEY COULD <u>NOT</u> EVEN <u>FIGURE OUT</u> THAT ALL OF THE ERRORS IN MY LAST LETTER WERE DELIBERATE TO HIDE MY IDENTITY.* (OTH)

- *yes i <u>know</u> that this proposal is <u>incomplete</u>.* (VIOL)

- *It's because they do<u>n't</u> even <u>know</u> they are packing.* (VIOL)

Similar to verbs of certainty, verbs of likelihood literally demonstrate how likely a writer thinks a proposition is of occurring, but in this case, the verb indicates a lower level of certainty. One of the most common functions of these verbs in threats, as a whole, is simply to lessen the possibility of a proposition in declarative statements such as: *You are not the only fat cat around so don't <u>think</u> that killing will be difficult.* (OTH), wherein the verb offers room for other voices to comment on the likelihood of the proposition occurring. Likelihood verbs were also found to occur with relative frequency in threats in a more subjunctive, conditional sense, wherein questions, conditional clauses, and subjunctive modals, working in frequent conjunction with likelihood verbs, function as additional softening agents in that they add another layer of uncertainty to the proposition (e.g., *Did you ever <u>think</u> that what you were told to do could backfire on you?!* (STLK); *I would <u>think</u> that anyone with your tenure as a manager, if they had a fiber of caring or integrity, would have taken a different path than you have chosen.* (HAR)). However, upon closer examination of these two functions in realized and non-realized threats, while likelihood verbs occur with twice as much frequency in realized threats and are primarily found therein with the verb *think*, followed by *believe* and *guess*,

both functions occur in each realization category; no other distinctive patterns can be seen.

In the category of speech act verbs, which are surprisingly the most frequent verb category with *that* clauses in realized threats, seen in Figure 4.16 above, the two more common functions found in threats as a whole were attributive—strengthening and distancing. However, in realized threats, the attributive function of distancing only appears once in: *I got the gun back and I wrote a letter to the editor of the Sun Gazzett that weekend* <u>explaing</u> *that I was ordered to do gods work…* (OTH)—and this case can be viewed ambiguously as the author both distances himself by justifying his reasoning and strengthens himself by attributing his work to god. And the strengthening attributive function, (e.g., *Warren Hoge of the New York Times can* <u>confirm</u> *that this letter does come from FC.* (OTH)), while slightly more common, still occurs rather sparingly in realized threats. Ultimately, the same general distribution patterns are mirrored in non-realized threats as well.

However, while admittedly infrequent in comparison to some of the other identified functional patterns, another interpersonal pattern emerges in realized threats with speech act verbs, one that presents the threat as more formal and declarative. In these cases in realized threats, speech act verbs are frequently used to emphasize a claim, command, or request that was previously made by or at the bequest of the threatener(s) but, as understood through context, was either ignored or not carried out due to unforeseen circumstances. The verbs *tell/say/state* occur with fairly equal frequency with this function in realized threats, and they serve to support or ultimately strengthen the threatener's request or demand. In contradiction to this finding, this function only occurs

twice in non-realized threats, and, when examined in closer detail, both occurrences were from the same author.

<u>Emphasis of previous claim or request in realized threats</u>

- *We again <u>advised</u> that the police and press involvement was Counterproductive and the speculation linking your husbands Disappearance to an environmental group was irresponsible.* (OTH)

- *Certain instructions were given and we <u>said</u> that we would contact them soon with delivery instructions...* (OTH)

- *If you cops think Im going to take on a bus the way I <u>stated</u> I was, you deserve to have holes in your heads.* (VIOL)

- *AFTeR FiVE MiNUTE I SEND A TEXT MASSAGE TO THEM I <u>SAiD</u> I WiLL CALL THE POLiCE…* (OTH)

- *Probably 99% of the people who know me well don't even think I was this crazy. <u>Told</u> by at least 100 girls/women over the years I was a "nice guy".* (OTH)

- *As we previously <u>told</u> you we are organized so that the various units are unknown to each other.* (OTH)

In sum, certainty verbs, which were found to mitigate the level of certainty about a threat, occurred in non-realized threats, while likelihood verbs did not offer distinctive functions. Speech act verbs, which are significant to the category of threats, added a new function in realized threats, wherein they place emphasis on a threatener's previous claim or request. These forms and stance functions are summarized in Table 4.27.

Table 4.27: Summary of Verbs Marking Stance + *that* Clause Functions Salient to Threat

Realization Categories

Grammatical Category	Lexical Marker	Stance Function	Threat Realization Category
certainty verbs + *that*	(neg) + certainty verb	Mitigating the inherent certainty of the threat through negative polarity	non-realized threats
speech act verbs + *that*	*tell/say/state*	Emphasis of previous claim or request, strengthening demand	realized threats

4.4.2d: Functions of Verbs controlling *to* Clauses by Threat Realization

As seen in Figure 4.17 below, causation verbs plus *to* clauses are the only class of verb in this grammatical category that is salient to one of the categories under investigation—in particular, to realized threats. In fact, causation verbs occur almost three times as often in realized threats than in non-realized threats.

Figure 4.17: Distribution of Verbs Marking Stance + *to* Clauses by Threat Realization
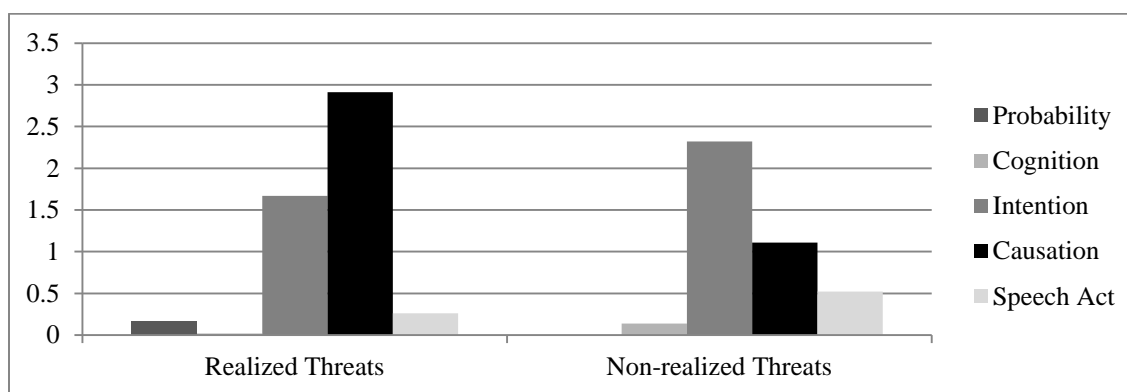
Frequency per 1000 Words, N = 22

As demonstrated in the discussion of threats above, causation verbs most oftentimes express literal causal meaning in threats (e.g., *But he's so scared everyone will be out interviewing, that it <u>causes</u> him to act the paranoid way…* (DEF)), but they are

also used as interpersonal directives involving the threatened action (e.g., *You may show this note, only to the persons who shall be <u>required</u> to authorise the release of the money required.* (HAR)). The same functions are found in both realized and non-realized threats to an approximately equal degree of frequency. However, when examined more closely, a different functional pattern emerges in realized threats—that of conditionality. In these instances, an added level of conditionality can be seen to accompany the directive nature of the threats (i.e., the conditionality is explicitly or implicitly apparent). In these instances, the verb *try* is found in almost half of the occurrences. In contrast, while conditional directives are observed in non-realized threats, they occur with far less frequency overall and occur on par with unconditional directives (e.g., *THE LORD ORDERED ME TO HARVEST THE WICKED RACIST ONES OF THIS TOWN.* (OTH)); additionally, the verb *try* is not found at all with this functional use in non-realized threats.

<u>Conditional directives involving the threatened action in realized threats</u>

- *You stand a 99% chance of killing your daughter if you <u>try</u> to out smart us.* (OTH)
- *<u>Try</u> to catch us withdrawing at least you will have less body bags.* (VIOL)
- *In avoiding death you are forced to conform, if you <u>fail</u> to conform, you suffer mentally and physically.* (OTH)
- *We hope that you will cooperate and <u>allow</u> us to release him, but you must make full payment and comply fully with our instructions.* (OTH)
- *He better not <u>try</u> to smile; lest his face might crack.* (OTH)

Within the grammatical category of stance verbs controlling *to* clauses, then, only causation verbs occur with salience to the threat realization categories—specifically to

realized threats. Functionally-speaking, while many of the verbs with *to* clauses served

strictly literally purposes, those in realized threats were also utilized in a conditional

manner, offering a new interpersonal element to the threat. This function is summarized

in Table 4.28 below.

Table 4.28: Summary of Verbs Marking Stance + *to* Clause Functions Salient to Threat

Realization Categories

Grammatical Category	Lexical Marker	Stance Function	Threat Realization Category
causation verbs + *to*	*try*	Conditional directives involving the threatened action	realized threats

4.4.2e: Summary of Salient Forms and Functions by Threat Realization

The two tables below present the functions and corresponding forms found to be salient

to either realized (Table 4.29) or non-realized (Table 4.30) threats. As we are more

interested in highlighting language function as opposed to linguistic form, this table is

organized by function, with similar functions grouped together. Functions are also

marked with their strengthening or weakening status, as determined by the criteria

previously discussed.

Table 4.29: Summary of Stance Forms and Functions Salient to Realized Threats

Stance Function	Grammatical Category	Lexical Marker	Strengthening/ Weakening
Emphasis on threat justification Emphatic certainty about the threat justification	prediction modals certainty adverbials	*would* *never*	weakening
Emphasis of previous claim or request, strengthening demand	speech act verbs + *that*	*tell/say/state*	strengthening

Conditionality Conditional directives involving the threatened action	prediction modals causation verbs + *to*	*will/be going to* *try*	weakening

Table 4.30: Summary of Stance Forms and Functions Salient to Non-realized Threats

Stance Function	Grammatical Category	Lexical Marker	Strengthening/ Weakening
Direct declaratives Mitigating the inherent certainty of the threat through negative polarity	prediction modals certainty verbs + *that*	*will/be going to* (neg) + certainty verb	strengthening weakening

What these two tables once again demonstrate is that first, all evaluative language is context-dependent, i.e., there is not a one-to-one correspondence between linguistic form and language function, as highlighted by the occurrence of *will/be going to* in both the strengthening and weakening categories. In the first instance, *will/be going to* can be used to mark conditionality, signaling that the threatener is open to negotiation; whereas in the second instance, when used in a declarative sense, *will/be going to* marks firm commitment to the action, disallowing for debate. Moreover, as this section identified stance functions salient to each threat realization category, this lack of singular correspondence crosses behavioral lines as well, supporting Lord *et al.*'s (2008: 375-376) findings with the language of sex offenders:

> Just as there is no one-to-one correspondence between any single feature of language, including those language features indicating a particular stance with the presence of deception, there is no similar correspondence between any single feature of language or shift in stance with rapist behaviours.

And while more work is called for on the classification of threateners according to their linguistic behavior, it is clear that forms without reference to their contextual functions

cannot provide an accurate one-to-one correspondence between threateners and their behavior.

Second, both threat realization categories, like threats in general, function in ways that strengthen and, at times, weaken the threatener's overall stance. In the case of realized threats, the threateners strengthened their responsibility, role, or claim by highlighting a previously stated request, which serves to show that they are committed to seeing the request fulfilled. At the same time, however, threateners who carried out their threats mitigated them by emphasizing the reason for the threat (i.e., they displaced personal responsibility for the action) and by using more hypothetical, conditional language, ultimately detracting from the certainty of the threatened act and allowing room for negotiation and debate. By opening up the threatening space with less domineering language and room for interpersonal negotiation, the threatener adheres more closely to the socially accepted norms of politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1987), weakening his or her position of absolute power. Similarly, in non-realized threats, threateners emphasized the threatened action through direct commands, strengthening their role by demonstrating unwavering commitment to the act, while at the same time they mitigated the threat by negating some aspect of it, placing a level of uncertainty on their once strong claims.

Drawing once again from the language ideologies presented earlier, this juxtaposition of strengthening and weakening functions within each threat realization category is somewhat contrary to how we intuitively-construct the language of realized and non-realized threats. The following examples are a sampling of those from the previous community of practice surveys that specifically address categories of threat

realization in some form or functional manner. Ideologies are grouped by realization category and threat level status; specifically, realized threats, or those expected to be realized, are associated with high-level threat status, while non-realized threats, or those that are not expected to be carried out, are associated with low-level threat status (ST = student, SC = scholar, PR = practitioner).

Ideologies about Realized/High-level Threats

- *Language (profanity and action verbs) is used to convey that the speaker is serious.* (ST)

- [Language] *to demonstrate that the speaker has more power and to assert their dominance so the other person will comply.* (ST)

- *Impolite language…* (SC)

- *The most serious level is when the threat is direct, specific, and credible.* [The threat] *establishes a time-certain deadline, specific detail, and a specific act to be undertaken.* (PR)

Ideologies about Non-realized/Low-level Threats

- *There is usually a lack of specific time because most threats are to illicit fear and action but don't actually want to be or are intended to be carried out.* (ST)

- *Generally fairly vague…* (ST)

- *Most threats are pretty veiled… it doesn't seem like the person making them intends to follow through.* (ST)

- *This level is guided by the threat's vagueness, usually signified by nonspecific language or the lack of detail to strengthen (i.e., weaken)… the threatener's*

credibility. ...there will be an absence of any valid indication of follow through...
(PR)

- *Language will generally be included that weakens the seriousness of the threat. ...characteristics of a low-level threat include... conditional phrases, the inclusion of 'may' (I may get) or 'perhaps' (perhaps we will).* (PR)

These ideologies present a clearly divided picture of threat realization categories. Realized threats, in sum, are serious, powerful, dominant, impolite, direct, specific, and detailed (i.e., strong); non-realized threats, on the other hand, are fairly vague, veiled, nonspecific, void of follow through, conditional, and mitigated (i.e., weak). Yet, as seen in Tables 4.29 and 4.30, as in the larger category of threats discussed in section 4.3, there is actually an interplay between functions that strengthen and those that weaken *within* both threat realization categories—presenting a picture that is far from dichotomous. However, as language ideologies are "a totalizing vision," the linguistic facts or sociolinguistic phenomena "that are inconsistent with the ideological scheme," those phenomena which are most oftentimes related to the 'other,' are rendered "invisible" (Irvine and Gal, 2000: 38). This process of linguistic 'erasure' can be applied here to threateners as the socially-deviant 'other.' By participating in this process of linguistic leveling, wherein our folk linguistic (Preston, 2007) ideologies about threatening language continually mask, or erase, some of the ways in which threateners demonstrate intent, mitigate claims, and negotiate meaning in threatening language—i.e., the ways in which they ultimately present their stance—we face the risk of misunderstanding the intended stance, and in the case of threats, this misunderstanding may result in dire consequences.

4.5: Conclusion

As "one of the most important things we do with words is take a stance" (du Bois, 2007:
139), it is essential to understand how stance functions in a variety of language situations.
In terms of the pragmatic act of threatening, understanding *how* threateners threaten—
i.e., how threateners use stance in ways that both follow and violate social norms—is
central to the examination of this discursive practice. Table 4.31 synthesizes the functions
and their forms that were found to be salient to threats as a genre and to each particular
threat realization category.

Table 4.31: Synthesis of Stance Functions and Forms Salient to Threats and Threat
Categories

Stance Function	Grammatical Category	Lexical Marker	Strengthening/ Weakening	Threat Category
Firmly explicit/implicit self-volitional control of victim, making direct declaratives	prediction modals	*(I/we) will/be going to (you) will/be going to will/be going to*	strengthening	threats non-realized
Emphasizing and/or supporting the victim's role through active participation	possibility modals	*can (do/take)*	strengthening	threats
Emphasizing compassion between the threatener and the victim	possibility modals	*can (see/ understand)*	weakening	threats
Demonstrating face-saving politeness towards the victim and/or recipient	necessity modals	*(you) have to*	weakening	threats
Emphasis	prediction	*would*	weakening	realized

on/certainty about the threat justification	modals certainty adverbials	*never*		
Emphasis and/or strengthening of previous claim or request	speech act verbs + *that*	*tell/say/state*	strengthening	realized
Conditionality and conditional directives involving the threatened action	prediction modals causation verbs + *to*	*will/be going to try*	weakening	realized
Mitigating the inherent certainty of the threat through negative polarity	certainty verbs + *that*	(neg) + certainty verb	weakening	non-realized

Collectively, these forms and functions fall into two broad functional patterns that occur with regularity in threats—one that strengthens the threatener's stance and one that mitigates it. However, as further demonstrated in this chapter, our ideologies about threatening language, which have been constructed through various social and cultural frames, present a highly dichotomous picture of what threatening language is and how threateners demonstrate their intent to carry out a threatened act. This process of erasure, wherein a linguistic phenomenon is made invisible in order to match the ideological frames of an individual or social group (Irvine and Gal, 2000), has barred us from perceiving threatening language in its entirety. The fact is that threatening language is a complex, contextually-dependent balance of forceful, violent language that demonstrates authorial intent, commitment to the proposition, and a level of seriousness *and* of polite, conditional language that mitigates the threatener's role and provides a more personal connection between the threatener and the victim. This juxtaposition of dichotomous functions allows the threatener to reject social norms and take a powerful, threatening

stance, while saving face and adhering to those norms that allow successful interpersonal communication between two social actors. Ultimately, it is this interplay of strengthening and weakening functions that gives threatening language its pragmatic force. These empirically-grounded functions, then, when taken collectively and in context, provide a more holistic picture of how commitment and intent are demonstrated, how interpersonal relationships are negotiated, and how meaning—meaning that is socially- and ideologically-constructed—is created in this discursive act.

One final note must be made about one of the corpus-specific questions posed at the beginning of this research that was not addressed elsewhere in this chapter: Are any interpersonal functions of stance reliable in helping to determine the level of intent in a threat? The notion of reliability in U.S. courts of law is broadly defined according to the Daubert criteria, which set the bar for the standards of admissible evidence. These criteria include, among others, an examination of the expertise of the testifying witness, the reliability and validity of the methodology used to produce the evidence, and the scientist's ability to demonstrate the technique's known error rate (Dumas, 1990; Olsson, 2004). While the corpus-based methods used herein are reliable and valid, this research has demonstrated that interpersonal stance is context-dependent and, therefore, cannot be used to provide a one-to-one form-function relationship in threats that is linked to behavior in a statistically significant way. However, due to continued interest in finding forms linked to behavior that will satisfy the statistical requirements set forth by the Daubert criteria, combinations of the individual forms marking stance were also tested for significance within the separate threat realization categories. Specifically, Pearson correlation coefficients were computed and the significance of the more commonly

occurring pairs of features was tested. What was found did not offer any significant indicators of threat realization category; however, with r^2 values in the range of .50-.70 for several combinations of features (e.g., in realized threats: second person pronouns and verbs + *to* clauses (.65), necessity modals and adjectives + *to* clauses (.50); in non-realized threats: first person pronouns and certainty verbs + *that* clauses (.59), style adverbials and likelihood verbs + *that* clauses (.67)), an investigation into these linguistic trends may provide fruitful for future research, especially within a larger corpus of known-status threats.

This chapter investigated three sets of grammatical markers—adverbials, complement clauses, and modals—in order to uncover interpersonal functions of stance within a large corpus of authentic threats; in order to further the investigation of the functions uncovered herein—the two broad sets of functions that strengthen vs. weaken the threatener's stance—Chapter 5 utilizes the discourse analytic Appraisal framework to examine, on a more intimate level, how these seemingly contradictory functions are used to communicate an author's stance in three individual threat texts.

CHAPTER 5: AN APPRAISAL ANALYSIS OF STANCE

This chapter explores the manifestations of authorial stance that occur at a lexical, clausal, and intra-textual level in threatening communications. Specifically, through the discourse analytic systems of Appraisal—attitude, engagement, and graduation (Martin and Rose, 2003; Martin and White, 2005)—interpersonal meaning is uncovered through lexical markers of stance and is examined as it occurs individually and prosodically[63] across three authentic threat texts.

This examination of "interpersonal" meaning moves beyond traditional work that focused on discursive turn-taking (e.g., Halliday, 1984; Martin, 1992; Eggins and Slade, 1997) and follows the framework laid out by Martin and Rose (2003) and Martin and White (2005). Within their tripartite system of Appraisal, interpersonal meaning encompasses the overt encoding of authorial attitudes as well as the means through which authors "more indirectly activate evaluative stances and position readers/listeners to supply their own assessments" (attitude); the traditional expression of authorial "certainty, commitment, and knowledge" as well as the ways in which the "textual voice positions itself with respect to other voices and other positions" (engagement); and the articulation of this evaluative language in ways that are more or less forceful and focused (graduation) (Martin and White, 2005: 2). This interpersonal meaning is situated dialogically (Bakhtin, 1981), in that all utterances reflect, respond to, and anticipate those of "actual, potential, or imagined readers/listeners" (Martin and White, 2005: 92). Thus, it is in this sense that interpersonal meaning is explored in this chapter in order to reveal

---

[63] As defined by Halliday (2002: 205), 'prosodic' herein refers to interpersonal meaning that is "strung throughout the clause as a continuous motif or colouring… the effect is cumulative."

how threateners express emotions, offer judgements[64] of offensive behavior, demonstrate their level of commitment to fulfilling a threatened act, and attempt to negotiate the intricate relationship of power between themselves and their victims.

In section 5.1, the three systems of Appraisal are outlined in an authentic stalking threat, highlighting how this method of discourse analysis complements and enhances the functional findings from the corpus analysis in chapter 4. Second, section 5.2 is divided into two analytic parts. Section 5.2.1 examines a non-realized threat of violence (the Lampley Hollow threat), which reflects and builds upon the functions that were found to be salient to non-realized threats in chapter 4. Specifically, the threatener strengthens his position through the use of direct declaratives, but weakens his intent to carry out the threat by negating a certainty verb + *that* clause construction. Additional strengthening and weakening functions are uncovered through the system of engagement, which allows the threatener to open up or close off the dialog to disagreement or debate, thereby reflecting his or her level of control and commitment. Section 5.2.2 analyzes a realized threat of violence (the Army of God threat), which exemplifies and reiterates the fact that not all texts possess the form-based functional patterns revealed by the corpus analysis of CTARC (the Communicated Threat Assessment Reference Corpus) in chapter 4. Instead, as Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) views all grammatical choice from the overarching level of function, this section moves away from an examination of stance based on the identification of forms and approaches the text from a perspective that emphasizes the interpersonal connection *between* function and form, i.e., it emphasizes

---

[64] Due to the fact that the Appraisal framework includes a system of "judgement," which describes authorial attitudes about "people and the way they behave" (Martin and White, 2005: 52), the British spelling of *judgement* will be utilized herein for the sake of consistency.

language as a socially-situated meaning-making resource (Halliday, 1978); the results uncover functional patterns related to those that were previously identified through the corpus analysis, thus honing the description and enhancing our understanding of how interpersonal stance is manifested in realized threats. Finally, section 5.3 synthesizes these functional findings as they relate to violent threatening communications[65].

5.1: SITUATING APPRAISAL

Through the corpus analysis performed in chapter 4, which examined grammatical markers of stance, two dichotomous sets of functions were revealed—one set that weakened the stance of the threatener and one set that strengthened it. The interpersonal functions occurring in and/or salient to threats as a genre were divided between those that, on the strengthening side, demonstrated a threatener's certainty about the threat, established the writer's volitional control over the victim, highlighted the active participation of the threatener and the victim, and emphasized a request or claim previously made by the threatener and, on the weakening side, distanced the threatener by emphasizing the justification for the threat, displayed a lack of control over the victim through a heightened level of politeness, situated the threat as one of a conditional nature, revealed compassion between the threatener and victim, and mitigated the threatener's level of certainty about fulfilling the threatened action through negative polarity (Martin and Rose, 2003). Table 5.1 below summarizes these interpersonal functions and the grammatical categories through which they are manifested in CTARC.

---

[65] The analyses performed in this chapter on Texts 5.2 and 5.3 were restricted to threats of violence for comparative purposes. More work is needed on other threat types (e.g., defamation, stalking, etc.) in order to confirm and/or enhance the description of how stance functions and is manifested in an array of threat types.

Table 5.1: Summary of Stance Functions found in and/or salient to Threats[66]

Stance Function	Grammatical Category	Strengthening/ Weakening
Demonstration of certainty about/belief in the actuality of the threat	certainty adverbials	strengthening
Firmly explicit/implicit self-volitional control of action/event/victim, making direct declaratives	causation verbs + *to* clause prediction modals	strengthening
Emphasizing and/or supporting the threatener's and/or victim's role through active participation	speech act verbs + *that* clause possibility modals	strengthening
Emphasis and/or strengthening of previous claim or request	speech act verbs + *that* clause	strengthening
Mitigation of threatener's role/responsibility through emphasis on/certainty about/belief in the actuality of the threat justification	certainty adverbials possibility modals certainty verbs + *that* clause necessity modals speech act verbs + *that* clause prediction modals	weakening
Lack of threatener control over action/victim or overly polite self-volitional control of action/event/victim	intention verbs + *to* clause prediction modals necessity modals	weakening
Emphasis on hypothetical and/or conditional action or requirements, conditional directives	possibility modals prediction modals necessity modals likelihood verbs + *that* clause causation verbs + *to* clause	weakening
Face-saving politeness/shared compassion and/or understanding towards the victim or recipient	necessity modals possibility modals	weakening
Mitigating the inherent certainty of the threat through negative polarity	certainty verbs + *that* clause	weakening

---

[66] Table 5.1 includes the functions found in threats as a genre from chapter 4, section 4.3 and those functions salient to the genre of threats (vs. non-threats) or to a particular threat category (realized vs. non-realized threats) from chapter 4, section 4.5.

Text 5.1a below, a stalking threat that was originally found in the form of a cut-and-paste letter on the desk of a Midwestern high school teacher, utilizes a likelihood verb + *that* clause and a speech act verb + *that* clause construction to demonstrate how these grammatical markers weaken and strengthen a threatener's stance, respectively. The grammatical form marking the strengthening stance is emboldened, while the form marking the weakening stance is italicized.

> Text 5.1a: I have just a crush—grammatical markers of stance
> *If you think* I have just
> a crush no It's better
> ..or is there more to it?
> YOU ARE The best
> I Love You Very Much
> **Remember Don't tell** I AM Serious
> Tsk, Tsk, Tsk,
> ADIOSlove YOUR Something Special.

In this threat, the use of *Remember Don't tell [that]* strengthens the threat by recalling and emphasizing a previous request purportedly made by the threatener, thereby demonstrating the seriousness of intent. However, with the use of *If you think [that]*, emphasis is placed on a hypothetical and/or conditional action, leaving room for another voice to contradict or doubt that of the threatener. Ultimately, this weakens the threatener's stance by making it unclear whether he or she intends to follow through with the threatened claims. As demonstrated in chapter 4, grammatical markers such as these, which first present the stance and are then followed by "the proposition framed by that stance" (Biber *et al.*, 1999: 969), can be systematically identified through appropriate tagging programs[67] in order to uncover how interpersonal patterns of stance function and are distributed across a large collection of texts. Yet, when Text 5.1a is examined in

---

[67] See chapter 3 for information on tagging programs.

closer detail, individual words reveal an additional layer of evaluative meaning—one that is infused, or inscribed (Martin and White, 2005), in many of the lexical tokens such as *best*, *love*, and *serious*. This indicates that corpus-based analyses of stance are only capturing part of the evaluative picture. And while there are automated programs that can count lexically-infused language marking authorial stance in large corpora (e.g., Precht's (2007: 3) StanceSearch, which can decipher between "pretty" as an adjective meaning "attractive" and "pretty" as an adverb meaning "somewhat"), as argued in chapter 2, there are no "neutral" or contextually-independent *words* (Bourdieu, 1991: 40). Specifically, "purely lexical expressions of stance depend on the context and shared background for their interpretation… [they are] dependent on the addressee's ability to recognize the use of value-laden words" (Biber *et al.*, 1999: 969); thus, automated programs cannot be relied upon to accurately identify *all* instances of lexical stance.

In Text 5.1a, for instance, depending on the context, *adios* could mark the writer's stance as one of neutrality, warmth, or aggression. According to Hill (2007), *adios* typically signifies a neutral farewell between native speakers of Mexican Spanish; however, when used by Anglo native English speakers who use Spanish in causal speech—what Hill has termed Mock Spanish—the message may be interpreted differently. When spoken between good friends, it may signal warmth as in *goodbye, I'll miss you*; yet, when used between discursive participants who harbor animosity, *adios* may be interpreted as an insult full of contempt as in *goodbye, for good!* (*ibid.*).

Additionally, due to the importance of context in interpreting lexical markers of stance, automated programs cannot fully capture the wealth of prosodic harmony with which features can occur. In Text 5.1a again, the combination of *crush*, *Don't tell*, and

Tsk, Tsk, Tsk signals that the writer is establishing his or her position as one of youth, as a *crush* is something common between teenagers, *don't tell* is something typically said to a younger brother or sister to avoid accepting responsibility for a childhood wrongdoing, and *tsk, tsk, tsk* is something that might be said by a mother to her child as a gentle warning. Without being able to collectively view and contextualize these tokens across the entire text, the youthful positioning of the author as he or she attempts to negotiate his or her relationship with the text's recipient may be missed. Thus, in order to reveal a more complete image of stance in threatening communications, in addition to large scale corpus analyses of grammatical markers of stance, a closer form of discourse analysis, one which allows for the identification of multiple forms of evaluative language *in context*, is necessary. The following sections outline the tripartite framework of Appraisal: attitude, engagement, graduation (Martin and White, 2005).

5.1.1: Attitude

The system of attitude maps feelings within texts through three primary categories. First, the category of *affect* encodes positive and negative emotions of happiness, security, and satisfaction. Second, *judgement* focuses on ethics, or attitudes about behaviors; these judgements include evaluations of how normal, capable, resolute, truthful, or ethical someone is. Finally, *appreciation* marks aesthetic evaluations and values of things, phenomena, or processes (Martin and White, 2005). Collectively, these linguistic resources function in a prosodic manner across a text to create and construe attitudinal meaning (*ibid.*). For example, in text 5.1b below, which builds upon Text 5.1a's previous grammatical markers of stance, the writer's affect, or emotional state, is clearly expressed

through his or her use of the lexically-infused tokens: *love*, *serious*, and *special*. Additionally, as discussed above, *adios*, as an example of Mock Spanish (Hill, 2007), may also be interpreted as a contextual signal of the writer's feelings. Here, as it is collocated with *love*, which is used as a closure to the text, it may be interpreted as a sign of warmth; yet, as the text does possess a low level of threat in its warning tone, *adios* could also be interpreted in the more aggressive, insulting manner. However, in either sense, it can be understood to mean more than the neutral farewell used by native speakers of Mexican Spanish (*ibid.*), and therefore, it possesses emotional meaning as part of the system of affect.

In terms of judgement, the writer utilizes *best* and *tsk, tsk, tsk* to demonstrate his or her assessment of the victim's behavior. In this case, the victim is the *best*—at what is unclear—but this could be interpreted as the writer's judgement of how special or capable the victim is. The warning, however, juxtaposes the previous positive evaluation, as it is offered as a form of reproach—again, for what is unclear. Through these two tokens, the author indicates that the victim is special, yet in need of a mild form of reproach.

Finally, the writer demonstrates his or her aesthetic appreciation of the situation through the use of *crush* and *better*. As mentioned above, the word *crush* is infused with meaning that is inherently youthful and less serious than true love. Thus, the writer contextualizes the situation as one of positive, yet inconsequential value. With the following use of *better*, the writer upgrades the situation of having a simple crush to one with more value—i.e., positive, consequential value. These collective tokens of attitude

(**affect₁**, **judgement₂**, **appreciation₃**) are emboldened and numbered in Text 5.1b below,

which demonstrates the increasing number of markers of authorial stance in this text.

> Text 5.1b: I have just a crush—markers of Attitude
> *If you think* I have just
> a **crush₃** no It's **better₃**
> ..or is there more to it?
> YOU ARE The **best₂**
> I **Love₁** You Very Much
> **Remember Don't tell** I AM **Serious₁**
> **Tsk, Tsk, Tsk,₂**
> **ADIOS₁love₁** YOUR Something **Special₁**.

5.1.2: Engagement

The second system of the Appraisal framework, engagement, characterizes how writers,

as social actors in a text (van Leeuwen, 1996), dialogically (Bakhtin, 1981) position

themselves in order to "adopt a stance towards the value positions being referenced by

the text and with respect to those they address" (Martin and White, 2005: 92). Following

this approach, utterances can be either monoglossic or heteroglossic. In the first instance,

utterances are monoglossic when there is no reference made to viewpoints other than the

author's. These include utterances of bare assertion, i.e., those that assume the audience is

in alignment with the speaker. Martin and White (2005: 100) further describe these

assertions as possessing a "taken-for-grantedness" or those assertions that fall within the

category of "presupposition." On the opposite side, utterances that reference other

perspectives and viewpoints are taken to be heteroglossic in that they reveal, refer to,

reflect, and/or negotiate the stances of those who came before, while at the same time

they anticipate the forthcoming stances of new audiences (*ibid.*). This includes utterances

that are presented as bare assertions, but are proffered to an audience that is assumed to

be in *dis*alignment with the author—as is often the case in threats, wherein the threatener is naturally poised against his or her intended audience. The linguistic resources utilized to create heteroglossic utterances can expand to allow other voices to participate in the discourse or, as in the latter case, contract to attempt to close off debate about the issue. However, in both heteroglossic situations, the voices of others—past, present, and future—are acknowledged, ultimately opening the door to debate, discussion, and a negotiation of power (*ibid.*).

In Text 5.1c below, for instance, all utterances can be interpreted as heteroglossic. While an utterance such as *I am serious* may be intended as monoglossic (i.e., a bare assertion) by the writer, the fact that the recipient may disagree with this claim or proceed to argue it upon receipt of this text situates it as heteroglossic, as it engages the voice of the recipient. This utterance does, however, contract the discussion in that it declares or proclaims how the writer feels through the use of a simple present tense declarative, leaving no room for debate and strengthening the position of the threatener. Additional heteroglossic contraction is shown through *no it's better*, wherein the author acknowledges the existence of an audience through the interactive style of discourse, but closes off negotiation through firm denial of the previous utterance followed by the proclamation that the situation is *better*; through *you are the best* and *I love you*, wherein the author directly acknowledges the recipient through the second person pronoun *you*, but leaves no room for discussion about the propositions as, once again, they are presented as simple present tense declaratives; and through *don't tell*, wherein the author uses negative polarity with an imperative command to acknowledge the possibility that

the recipient *will* tell someone about the threat, but peremptorily commands her not to.

This latter contraction highlights the heart of the veiled threat.

Expansion is demonstrated in this text through the author's use of *if you think*, *or is there more*, *remember*, and *adios*, wherein he or she opens the text to other voices through a rhetorical question, a friendly reminder, and an interactive farewell. In each case, the author entertains alternate voices and allows room for further discussion and interaction, ultimately weakening his or her position as the one in complete control. These examples of engagement are in brackets in Text 5.1c below.

> Text 5.1c: I have just a crush—markers of Engagement
> [*If you think*] I have just
> a **crush$_3$** [no It's **better$_3$**]
> [..or is there more to it?]
> [YOU ARE The **best$_2$**]
> [I **Love$_1$** You] Very Much
> [**Remember**] [**Don't tell**] [I AM **Serious$_1$**]
> **Tsk, Tsk, Tsk,$_2$**
> [**ADIOS$_1$**]**love$_1$** YOUR Something **Special$_1$**.

5.1.3: Graduation

Finally, as "a defining property of all attitudinal meanings is their gradibility," authors can scale up or down the strength of their utterances through the third system of Appraisal: graduation (Martin and White, 2005: 135). Within the first system of Appraisal, attitude, authors utilize graduation in order to demonstrate greater or lesser degrees of positive or negative feelings (e.g., the adjectives *happy*, *joyous*, and *ecstatic* are graded on a cline of happiness with *ecstatic* being the most happy). Within the system of engagement, writers utilize graduation in order to intensify or diminish their level of involvement or investment in the discourse (e.g., the three phrases *Maybe she lied*,

Probably she lied, and *She definitely lied* are graded on a cline of investment, wherein the author entertains alternative voices in each case, but is more personally invested in the final claim with the use of *definitely*) (*ibid.*). Ultimately, through the main linguistic resources of forceful and focused graduation—quantification, intensification, and repetition—writers contribute to the prosodic realization of evaluative meaning in their discourse (*ibid.*).

In Text 5.1d below, for instance, lexical intensification is demonstrated through *crush*, *better*, *best*, *love*, *serious*, and *special*, while *more* and *much* offer examples of quantification. The repetition of *tsk, tsk, tsk* emphasizes the warning and the dual mention of *love*, a lexically-intensified word, heightens the focus on that emotion. Finally, the use of *just* and *very* offer focus on the lexeme following. *Just* downplays the crush, while *very* upgrades *much*, which refers to the level of the writer's love. These tokens are underlined in Text 5.1d.

> Text 5.1d: I have just a crush—markers of Graduation
> [*If you think*] I have just
> a **crush**$_3$ [no It's **better**$_3$]
> [..or is there more to it?]
> [YOU ARE The **best**$_2$]
> [I **Love**$_1$ You] Very Much
> [**Remember**] [**Don't tell**] [I AM **Serious**$_1$]
> **Tsk, Tsk, Tsk,**$_2$
> [**ADIOS**$_1$]**love**$_1$ YOUR Something **Special**$_1$.

Thus, through these three interwoven systems of Appraisal as seen in the fully encoded threat in Text 5.1d, authorial stance in threats can be revealed on a more intimate level—a lexical, clausal, and intra-textual level—thereby complementing the examination of grammatical markers of stance provided by large scale corpus analyses. Additionally, through the systems of attitude, affective stance, or stance relating to the emotions of the

writer are outlined, while through the system of engagement, epistemic stance, or stance relating to the writer's level of commitment or personal investment are highlighted. Graduation plays a role in both systems, serving to downgrade or heighten each form of evaluative meaning in context. Ultimately, the resources provided by Appraisal offer a theoretically-grounded framework that allows us to examine the construction of meaning, the negotiation of power, the intersubjective positioning of social participants, and the ways in which they are prosodically construed across whole texts.

5.2: ENACTING APPRAISAL

This section focuses on the analysis of two authentic threats; both are threats of violence—bomb threats, specifically—and occurred after a pattern of realized violence. The threats were selected for comparison due to their similarities in rhetorical structure, which falls into the typological category of narrative[68]. As a typological framework, narrative has been called "the most highly valued of the story genres" (Rothery and Stenglin, 1997: 231) and has been categorized as "an adventure" (*ibid.*: 239), which is especially apt when used in relation to threats. Section 5.2.1 below analyzes the Lampley Hollow threat, which was not realized, and section 5.2.2 analyzes the Army of God threat, which was realized.

5.2.1: Lampley Hollow

---

[68] Rothery and Stenglin's (1997) four typological categories of 'story' are recount, narrative, exemplum, and observation.

The first threat of violence, seen below in Text 5.2 and hereafter referred to as the

Lampley Hollow[69] (LH) threat, was sent to multiple police departments after several

minor bombs had exploded at various locations around the region. Fortunately, no one

was injured in these minor bombings and the large-scale bombing described in the threat

did not occur, i.e., it was not realized. A single male[70] over 40 years of age was identified

through fingerprints found on one of the bombs and he was subsequently arrested

(Fitzgerald, 2010, p.c.).

Text 5.2: Lampley Hollow (Non-realized, VIOL)
Hello asshole. This is the eve of the bloodiest day in the history of Lampley Hollow!
        You fucks want to step outside the law to show us how much of a fuck your mother is? Well, you have attacked innocent people, and now innocent people will pay, on your behalf. And a few cops trying to stop us.
        Sunday is the final day of Founders Day. On that day a minimum of 20 people will die there.
        Here is how it will happen: Your department will receive a phone call ten minutes to the top of an hour, to announce the countdown. At the hour, the first explosion* will occur. Approximately six will die, mainly family members, and the bomber. This will start a panic, with people running in all directions. One of those directions will be toward the second bomber. Six seconds after the first explosion the second will occur, a distance from the first. Six more dead.
        NOW for the big one. Two groups of people will collide, while escaping their respective explosions. At that time and place the third, largest explosion will occur. Eight dead, at least.
        You wonder why we have people willing to do this and die over you? It's because they don't even know they are packing. And you cannot find them.
        The people that die will even the score, and we start fresh. Don't fuckup or it will happen again. Perform your job with respect and dignity for the people you serve and you will save their lives. We regret this but feel an example of death is the only way to make you understand.
        *You remember the bomb in the planter last summer? That's right, the iron pipe bomb, with an electronic igniter. It was powered by four AA batteries in an Electronic Supply pack, with a time delay. Don't count on a misfire this time. We worked out the ignition problems with that design.
        It's a great day coming.

---

[69] As elsewhere, all identifying names (e.g., people, places, companies, etc.) have been changed. Only those that are in public record, as in the AG threat in Text 5.3, have kept the identifying information intact.
[70] Due to the fact that a male was arrested and charged with the crimes related to this threat, the pronouns associated with this text will be masculine. This is not to be taken as an indication of guilt on the part of the writer, as, at the time this chapter was being written, his case was still pending federal prosecution.

As exemplified in Table 5.2 below, the narrative framework for this text can be outlined as follows: *the eve of the bloodiest day* sets the scene for the reader; this is the orientation of the story. With the inquiry of *you fucks want to step outside the law…* and the attacking of *innocent people*, the complication, or the disruption or the normal activity, is offered. The writer then proffers his lengthy evaluation of the situation beginning with *on that day a minimum of 20 people will die there*, which is signaled, in this case, by the projection of future events (Rothery and Stenglin, 1997). The writer's personal evaluation, or prediction, of what *will* occur comprises the bulk of the text through *eight dead, at least*. At this point, the writer interrupts this evaluation to pose a rhetorical question: *You wonder why…*, and a second complication begins—that of unwary people being willing to die for this cause. This is quickly followed once again by the writer's evaluation that *The people that die will even the score….* The resolution comes for both complications with *perform your job…*, which herein refers to how the complications *can be* resolved. The use of the future marker *will* in the resolution stage is fairly unusual for narratives in that it predicts how the complication will be resolved rather than actually states how these events were resolved (*ibid.*); however, as Labov (1997) demonstrated, speakers and writers can resolve their stories in a variety of ways depending on their narrative intent. In the case of threats, the resolution of the complication will only come *after* the reader has reacted to the threat. Finally, the writer reorients the reader by recalling the previous bombs he ignited last summer, offering credibility for his claims (*ibid.*), and then concludes with the fact that *it's a great day coming*.

Table 5.2: Functional Stages of the LH Narrative

Functional Stages	Text
orientation	*Hello asshole. This is the eve of the bloodiest day in the history of Lampley Hollow!*
complication 1	*You fucks want to step outside the law to show us how much of a fuck your mother is? Well, you have attacked innocent people, and now innocent people will pay, on your behalf. And a few cops trying to stop us.*
evaluation 1	*Sunday is the final day of Founders Day. On that day a minimum of 20 people will die there. ... Eight dead, at least.*
complication 2	*You wonder why we have people willing to do this and die over you? It's because they don't even know they are packing. And you cannot find them.*
evaluation 2	*The people that die will even the score, and we start fresh. Don't fuckup or it will happen again.*
resolution	*Perform your job with respect and dignity for the people you serve and you will save their lives. We regret this but feel an example of death is the only way to make you understand.*
reorientation	**You remember the bomb in the planter last summer? That's right, the iron pipe bomb, with an electronic igniter. It was powered by four AA batteries in an Electronic Supply pack, with a time delay. Don't count on a misfire this time. We worked out the ignition problems with that design.*
coda	*It's a great day coming.*

In order to examine the ways in which the writer positions himself towards the recipient, negotiates control over the situation, maintains his credibility, and offers his feelings, judgements, and opinions about the propositions within the text, it is useful to start by recalling the interpersonal stance functions identified through the large scale corpus-based analysis from chapter 4. Table 5.3 summarizes the stance functions and their corresponding forms that were found to be salient to non-realized threats[71].

---

[71] There were many more functions that were found to exist within threats, in general, but since the focus in this section is first, on a non-realized threat (section 5.2.1) and second, on a realized threat (section 5.2.2), those functions salient to each category will be examined in more detail here.

Table 5.3: Summary of Stance Functions and Forms Salient to Non-realized Threats

Stance Function	Grammatical Category	Lexical Marker	Strengthening/ Weakening
Direct declaratives Mitigating the inherent certainty of the threat through negative polarity	prediction modals certainty verbs + *that*	*will/be going to* (neg) + certainty verb	strengthening weakening

Interestingly, this text frequently utilizes the direct declarative function that offers strength to the writer's threatening claims. Table 5.4 outlines those examples of direct declaratives found with modals of prediction, the most salient grammatical marker of this stance in non-realized threats.

Table 5.4: Strengthening through direct declaratives with *will/be going to*

1	*On that day a minimum of 20 people <u>will</u> die there.*
2	*Here is how it <u>will</u> happen:*
3	*Your department <u>will</u> receive a phone call ten minutes to the top of an hour, to announce the countdown.*
4	*At the hour, the first explosion* <u>will</u> occur.*
5	*Approximately six <u>will</u> die, mainly family members, and the bomber.*
6	*This <u>will</u> start a panic, with people running in all directions.*
7	*One of those directions <u>will</u> be toward the second bomber.*
8	*Six seconds after the first explosion the second <u>will</u> occur, a distance from the first.*
9	*Two groups of people <u>will</u> collide, while escaping their respective explosions.*
10	*At that time and place the third, largest explosion <u>will</u> occur.*
11	*The people that die <u>will</u> even the score,*

And while there are other instances of *will* in the LH threat, they are not direct declaratives; they are either dependent on the previous clause (e.g., *you have attacked innocent people, and now innocent people <u>will</u> pay*; *Perform your job with respect and dignity for the people you serve and you <u>will</u> save their lives.*) or conditional (e.g., *Don't fuckup or it <u>will</u> happen again.*). However, 11 of the 32 utterances in this threat are direct declaratives—i.e., approximately 1/3. The abundant use of the direct declarative serves to

strengthen the writer's stance by demonstrating his unwavering commitment to the stated

acts, which is interesting since, in the end, the threat was not realized[72].

On the other hand, while the prolific use of direct declaratives allows the

threatener to assert his position as the one in control of the situation, there is only one

instance of the weakening function uncovered through the corpus analysis—that

mitigating the inherent certainty of the threat through negative polarity. In his case, the

claim that *they do_n't_ even _know_* [that] *they are packing* mitigates the certainty of whether

or not the victims will fulfill their part of the plan, i.e., if these participants are *not*

knowledgeable about their role, there is no way to be sure that they will fulfill it in the

predicted manner. Furthermore, the use of negation counters the authoritative, declarative

voice of the author by suddenly referencing two voices—the author's and the reader's. In

this utterance, the author utilizes the resource of negative polarity to peremptorily close

off an expected disagreement from the reader, thereby acknowledging and reacting to the

expected stance of the other discursive participants (Martin and Rose, 2003).

Like the occurrence of *will* in the previous function, there are other instances of

certainty verbs in the LH threat that do not fit the grammatical marking or salience

requirements of this stance function; i.e., they are either not accompanied by *that* clauses

and therefore do not mark a stance (e.g., *You fucks want to step outside the law to _show_*

us how much…; *you cannot _find_ them*; *You _remember_ the bomb in the planter last*

---

[72] The person accused of writing the threat was arrested after the stated day of attack, so the threat was truly not realized.

summer?) or are not accompanied by lexical or grammatical negation (e.g., *...an example of death is the only way to make you <u>understand</u>* [that…][73]).

Thus, while each of the previously identified stance functions exists in this non-realized threat, as was exemplified through the analysis of the cut-and-paste threat in Texts 5.1a-d above, there are many other ways in which interpersonal stance can be revealed in a text. Sections A-C below highlight the pertinent findings[74] from each of the three systems of Appraisal. Specifically, section A examines the three systems of Attitude: *affect*, which encodes an author's positive and negative feelings of <u>security</u>, <u>satisfaction</u>, and <u>happiness</u>; *judgement*, which encodes an author's positive and negative judgements of people's behaviors in terms of their <u>normality</u>, <u>capacity</u>, <u>tenacity</u>, <u>veracity</u>, and <u>propriety</u>; and *appreciation*, which encodes an author's positive and negative evaluations of things or phenomenon in terms of the intended <u>reaction</u> to them, their <u>composition</u>, and their aesthetic <u>value</u>. Section B examines the system of Engagement, wherein utterances can be monoglossic or heteroglossic. Heteroglossic utterances can be divided into two subsections—those that contract and those that expand the discourse. Through contraction, authors can either *proclaim* a statement by <u>concurring</u> with something they previously said, <u>pronouncing</u> it as fact, or <u>endorsing</u> a claim made by a third party, or *disclaim* an utterance previously made through <u>denial</u> or strategies of

---

[73] Arguably, this example could be considered to accompany *semantic* negativity with the use of *regret*. That is, when the author states: *We regret this* with the referent of *this* being 'the example of death that will bring understanding,' it could be argued that *understand* is preceded by semantic negativity. However, for the purposes of exemplifying the present analysis, which is based on the corpus findings from chapter 4 that were limited to the lexical and grammatical encoding of negativity that immediately collocated with the search term, only explicit markers of lexical or grammatical negativity are being considered. It is important to note that limitations such as these further support the use of multiple analytic methods. In this case, as will be seen throughout the remainder of this chapter, this kind of semantic negativity will be highlighted and incorporated into the analysis through the Appraisal framework, which, while missing the generalizability of large-scale corpus analyses, allows for more fine-grained semantic analyses of individual texts.

[74] The complete Appraisal analysis for each text can be found in Appendix E.

countering. Through expansion, authors can either *entertain* the voices of others through language such as 'perhaps' or 'maybe' that mitigates their stance or *attribute* utterances or knowledge to others, both of which allow other voices to participate in the discourse. Section C examines the system of Graduation, which allows an author to turn up or down the volume of an utterance through *quantification* of <u>number</u>, <u>mass</u>, or <u>extent</u> of space or time; *intensification* of lexis <u>infused</u> with evaluative meaning such as 'beautiful' and 'ugly' or lexis that grammatically <u>isolates</u> evaluative meaning as in '*greatly* diminished' and '*quite* smart'; and *repetition* of <u>metaphorical</u> imagery, <u>semantic</u> themes, and <u>collocational</u> patterns of lexical tokens (Martin and White, 2005)[75]. Section D summarizes the functions identified through the analysis.

A: Attitude

First, when examining attitude in a text from a critical perspective, it is useful to focus on the hierarchical relationships between the social actors (Fairclough, 1989, 2003; van Dijk, 1991; van Leeuwen, 1996). In this case, the main social actors are represented by *we* as the author of the text, *you* as the recipient of the text, and *people* as the unknowing third party participants. According to van Leeuwen (1996: 67), there are "principled ways in

---

[75] The Appraisal labels used herein are taken from the closed set presented in Martin and White (2005), which was compiled from and honed by over two decades of cross-genre research on the language of evaluation. Each category above includes the complete list of labels for that particular level of analysis (e.g., Engagement is broken down into two subsets: Monoglossic and Heteroglossic utterances. From there, Monoglossia stands alone, while Heteroglossia is further divided into utterances that contract or expand the discourse, etc.); however, in some cases (e.g., in the system of Graduation), the full Appraisal framework possesses more levels of labels and a wider network of relationships between the various categories. This complex analytic resource allows for a highly detailed, well-structured analysis of evaluative meaning, while still allowing the analyst the freedom to focus on particular aspects within the framework that may be more or less relevant to the text at hand. In this chapter, the systems utilized are those that revealed the most interesting findings as they relate to threatening communications, but, as with any discourse analytic framework, it is readily acknowledged that analyses focusing on other areas of the framework may provide additional fruitful results.

which social actors can be represented in discourse," including being active or passive,

personalized or impersonalized, positively- or negatively-lexicalized, and foregrounded

or backgrounded. In this case, an image is created wherein the recipient and the third

party participants are the primary, foregrounded actors, while the author, who seldom

participates in this threat, is backgrounded (Fairclough, 2003). This rhetorical strategy

highlights and focuses in on the text's recipient and third party participants—those whose

behaviors are punishable in the eyes of the threatener—and, at the same time, distances

the writer from any wrongdoing by downplaying his role in the event. This sentiment is

enforced through his feelings of regret in lines 12 and 13, which are the only two times

the author participates in the text. Here, as seen in Table 5.5, wherein the author could

present positive or negative feelings of security, satisfaction, or happiness, in general, he

expresses his dissatisfaction with the situation through *regret*, but he *feels* secure in the

knowledge that he is doing the right thing.

Table 5.5: Tokens of Affect—*We*

	Attitude Token	Affect	Appraised
12	regret	-satisfaction	we
13	feel	+security	we

When examining the writer's portrayal of the recipient, it can be seen that he

holds a firmly negative stance towards the recipient's past behaviors, but positively shifts

these judgements when describing how the recipient must behave in order to assuage the

situation. An assessment of the recipient's behaviors in terms of their positive or negative

normality, capacity, tenacity, veracity, or propriety is seen in Table 5.6 below.

Table 5.6: Tokens of Judgement—*You*

	Attitude Token	Judgement	Appraised
14	asshole	-propriety	recipient
15	fucks	-propriety	you

16	step outside the law	-propriety	you
17	fuck	-propriety	your mother
18	attacked	-propriety	you
19	trying to stop us	- capacity	a few cops
20	(cannot) find	(neg) +capacity	you
21	(don't) fuckup	(neg) -tenacity	you
22	respect	+propriety	your job performance
23	dignity	+propriety	your job performance
24	save lives	+capacity	you
25	(don't) count on a misfire	(neg) +tenacity	you

Specifically, in lines 14-18, the author views the past behaviors of the recipient (including that of his or her metaphorical *mother*) as improper. Lines 19 and 20 shift the writer's stance from a focus on the recipient's lack of propriety to his or her lack of ability to find the bombers and stop the threat from happening. In the first instance, this is demonstrated through the *trying* done by a few cops, of which group the recipient is a part, which is followed by the confirmation in line 20 that the *trying* was not a success with the lexical negation of *find*. Similarly, in lines 21 and 25, the writer uses lexical negation to offer his evaluation about the recipient's level of dependability—or lack thereof—through firm warnings, which implies that the writer expects the recipient to *fuckup* and *count on* a misfire. As noted above, the writer shifts his stance towards the recipient's behavior when it refers to his or her *projected* behavior rather than his or her *past* behavior. In lines, 22-24, this stance is lexically encoded; here, the writer believes that the recipient will be capable of saving lives if he or she begins to act with propriety, i.e., with *respect* and *dignity*.

Finally, when exploring the writer's judgements of the third party participants in the text, it can be seen that he shifts his evaluation of these actors as they move from *innocent* victims who were wrongly killed by the recipient and other police officers to

bombers, or people who kill—those who deserve their punishment due to their
dishonesty. As seen in Table 5.7 below, the third party actors slowly move from proper,
innocent human participants in lines 26-28 to improper, nominalized participants in 29
and 31 and deceitful referential participants in line 32. In this latter stage of judgement,
even the people's reaction in line 30 is negatively construed as a *panic*.

Table 5.7: Tokens of Judgement—*people*

	Attitude Token	Judgement	Appraised
26	innocent	+propriety	people
27	innocent	+propriety	people
28	family members	+normality	people who will die
29	bomber	-propriety	person who kills
30	panic	-normality	people's reaction
31	bomber	-propriety	person who kills
32	are packing	-veracity	they (people who kill)
33	even the score	+capacity	people who die

Through this subtle slide down the animacy hierarchy, the writer shifts the
readers' view of the people from that of innocent actors who were attacked by the
recipient to that of guilty participants who deserve to die by the hand of the threatener;
this process serves to justify the threat, which, as seen in the end in line 33, *will even the
score*.

One final note about the author's attitude can be seen in his overall appreciation
of the day, which frames the threat, as seen in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8: Tokens of Appreciation—*day*

	Attitude Token	Appreciation	Appraised
34	bloodiest	-reaction	day in history
35	great	+reaction	day

In the beginning, the day is the *bloodiest* day in history—meant, presumably, as a truly
negative foreshadowing of the day for the recipient of the threat. This is in line with the

negative judgements of the recipient's past behaviors, the portrayal of the people as innocent victims, and the threatener's dissatisfaction with the state of affairs. However, in the end, after the score has been settled, revenge has been taken on the deceitful people, and the threatener is finally feeling satisfied with the results, the day is *great*—presenting a completely positive picture of the outcome.

B: Engagement

While the previous analysis of attitude uncovered the writer's personal feelings, value judgements about the recipient's behavior, and assessments of abstract concepts, entities, or processes, i.e., his affective stance, the system of engagement reveals the threatener's level of commitment and investment in the threat, i.e., his epistemic stance. This system provides the closest link to the strengthening and weakening functions identified in chapter 4, as, through the resources of engagement, an author can make assertions that are to be accepted as fact, can close off the discourse to contradictory voices, or can open up the dialog for further negotiation, thereby strengthening his position of power, distancing himself from the threat, or weakening himself in the eyes of the recipient, respectively (Martin and White, 2005).

As noted above, utterances can either be monoglossic or heteroglossic. Broadly-speaking, monoglossic utterances are those that do not reference other voices, do offer bare assertions, and do assume an audience that is in alignment with the utterance; heteroglossic utterances are those that reference multiple voices, allow for further discourse, and assume disalignment with the audience (Martin and White, 2005; White, 2005). However, in a Bakhtinian (1981, 1986) sense, every "utterance is a link in a very complexly organized chain of other utterances" (1986: 69) and thus, no utterance can be

free from alternative voices; furthermore, as "no utterance is free from subjective

presencing of the speaker" (Thibault, 1997: 53), no utterances can be monoglossic under

this framework. Yet, even under this strict Bakhtinian definition of heteroglossia…

> we are reminded that even the most 'factual' utterances, those which are
> structured so as to background interpersonal values, are nevertheless
> interpersonally charged in that they enter into relationships of tension with
> a related set of alternative and contradictory utterances. The degree of that
> tension is socially determined (White, 2005).

Thus, while this strict Bakhtinian notion of heteroglossia is acknowledged and, for the

most part, adopted herein, this research departs from these strict heteroglossic

categorizations in the case of utterances that would conceivably produce *no* social tension

between a writer and a recipient; in these instances, the utterances have been encoded as

monoglossic. In an examination of stance in *threats*, in particular, this distinction is

deemed important, as assertions that are indeed bare will play no role in the authorial

stance being offered; however, assertions that may, on the surface, appear to be

monoglossic but create tension due to disalignment with the audience will mark authorial

stance—and through the use of contracted, monoglossic forms, a deeper awareness of the

author's underlying intent and assumed level of commitment can be gained.

Table 5.9 below offers the only two utterances that were deemed to produce zero

tension in the LH text; therefore, they were coded as monoglossic.

Table 5.9: Monoglossic Utterances

36	Sunday is the final day of Founders Day.
37	It was powered by four AA batteries in an Electronic Supply pack, with a time delay.

In line 36, for example, the fact that Sunday is the last day of this particular festival is an

assertion with which the audience, even one being threatened, would presumably agree.

Similarly, in line 37, the threatener utters what can be understood to be a bare assertion as he expects that the recipient has intimate knowledge of the bombing incident from the previous year. However, throughout the remainder of the threat, following more closely to Bakhtin's notion that all utterances are dialogic, the utterances have been encoded as heteroglossic in that they reference other voices, assume disalignment with the audience—thus raising tension—or invite further dialog, all of which play a role in strengthening or weakening the author's stance.

Referring once again to the strengthening and weakening functions found in chapter 4, the heteroglossic utterances here that fulfill the strengthening function are those that contract the discourse, i.e., those that close off the space to further debate or discussion, allowing the threatener to control the scene. As seen in Table 5.10 below, which categorizes each instance of contraction by its interpersonal function of *disclaiming* a previous statement through denials or strategies of countering or *proclaiming* an utterance through concurrences with previous statements, pronouncements of fact, or endorsements of information from others, the majority of utterances in the LH threat are of a contracting nature.

Table 5.10: Heteroglossic Utterances of Contraction

	Engagement Marker	Disclaim/ Proclaim	Deny/Counter Concur/Pronounce/ Endorse
38	This is the eve	proclaim	pronounce
39	you have attacked innocent people	proclaim	pronounce
40	and now innocent people will pay	proclaim	concur
41	and a few cops trying to stop us	proclaim	concur
42	20 people will die	proclaim	pronounce
43	Here is how it will happen	proclaim	pronounce
44	Your department will receive a phone call	proclaim	pronounce
45	explosion will occur	proclaim	pronounce

46	six will die	proclaim	pronounce
47	This will start a panic	proclaim	pronounce
48	directions will be toward the second bomber	proclaim	pronounce
49	the second will occur	proclaim	pronounce
50	Six more dead.	proclaim	pronounce
51	NOW for the big one.	proclaim	pronounce
52	people will collide	proclaim	pronounce
53	explosion will occur	proclaim	pronounce
54	eight dead	proclaim	pronounce
55	And you cannot find them	proclaim	concur
56	The people that die will even the score,	proclaim	pronounce
57	and we start fresh	proclaim	concur
58	Don't fuckup or it will happen again.	disclaim	counter
59	Perform your job… and you will save their lives	proclaim	pronounce
60	We regret this but death is the only way	disclaim	counter
61	You remember the bomb	proclaim	pronounce
62	That's right	proclaim	pronounce
63	Don't count on a misfire	disclaim	counter
64	We worked out the ignition problems	proclaim	pronounce
65	It's a great day coming	proclaim	pronounce

In the majority of cases herein, the utterances are proclamations made by the threatener, which, taken from another perspective, might have been viewed as bare assertions. However, the fact that the recipient will presumably not be in alignment with the threatened act positions these utterances as firm pronouncements made on the part of the threatener. Through these heteroglossic statements, he retains command of the discourse and allows no room for negotiation, while his "authorial voice is explicitly foregrounded, declaring its role as the inter-subjective source of the utterance in question" (White, 2005: 23). These statements provide the most strength or support for the threatener's stance as one of unwavering commitment, volitional control, and certainty about the threatened act. This set of pronouncements also fits within the function of direct declaratives discussed earlier and adds to the ways in which they are lexically and grammatically manifested in this threat. Finally, while the authorial voice of

the threatener is foregrounded through these contracting forms, as noted above in section 5.2.1.A, the threatener's role in the act is backgrounded to that of the other participants. Through this strategic positioning, the threatener sets up a scenario wherein his voice controls the threat, but his role is of little consequence.

In lines 40, 41, 55, and 57, the threatener changes his direct declaratives, or pronouncements, to concurrences. In these cases, the concurrence, or affirmation, is signaled by the conjunction *and*, which serves to conjoin two clauses. This both emphasizes and strengthens the conjoined clause. For example, in lines 40 and 41, the threatener affirms the fact that *now innocent people will pay, on your behalf* and *a few cops trying to stop us* because *you have attacked innocent people*. Here, the threatener indicates that the victim deserves punishment based on his or her previous behavior. Interestingly, while this conjunction strengthens and supports the conjoined clause through the previous direct declarative, the fact that the threatener justifies the threatened act due to the recipient's prior behavior also serves to distance him from the act by shifting responsibility away from himself and placing it on the victim; this diminishes or weakens his level of participation in the overall threat (Lord *et al.*, 2008). In line 55, the conjunction once again affirms and strengthens the fact that *you cannot find* the people who *are packing* and therefore, the recipient will not be able to stop the attack. Finally, the conjunction in line 57 emphasizes that *we start fresh* when the *score* is *even*, once again signaling that revenge is necessary in order to regain balance.

Alternatively, while still contractions that close off dialog between the two parties, lines 58, 60, and 63 significantly weaken the threatener's stance. In these instances, the threatener disclaims rather than proclaims his utterances through negation

and disjunctions, which allows doubt to be raised about the situation. In line 58, for example, the fate of the victim's future is in his or her own hands rather than those of the threatener, i.e., the threatener is willing to forego further killing on the condition that the recipient does not *fuckup* again. This demonstrates that the threatener is open to negotiation. In line 60, the fact that the threatener shows *regret* but still feels it necessary to carry out his plan of death signals that he may not be as firmly fixated on his plans as previously proclaimed. Here, specifically, the recipient may doubt the threatener's intent—if he regrets, there is hope he may not follow through with his actions, as this demonstration of empathy weakens the threatener's perceived commitment level (Lord *et al.*, 2008).

Also weakening is the threatener's use of heteroglossic expansion, wherein the discourse is opened up to other voices, dialog, and potential for disalignment. As seen in Table 5.11, which offers the text's instances of expansion, three of the four utterances are those that entertain alternative voices, while the fourth, in line 69, attributes what is assumed to be known, or in this case unknown, to the third party participants—that *they are packing*.

Table 5.11: Heteroglossic Utterances of Expansion

	Engagement Marker	Entertain/ Attribute
66	Hello asshole.	entertain
67	You fucks want to step outside the law… ?	entertain
68	You wonder why	entertain
69	It's because they don't even know	attribute

In line 66, while the threatener's evaluation of the victim is framed by the use of profane language, the use of *hello* as a greeting positions the text as an intersubjective communication between two parties, thereby acknowledging and opening up the

discourse to further response from the recipient. In lines 67 and 68, the writer utilizes rhetorical questions, which have been found to function in narratives as strategies of avoidance when a writer wishes to mask overt portrayals of his or her feelings or attitudes (Macken and Slade, 1993; Cheng, 2008), as markers of intersubjective disagreement (Schleppegrell, 2001), and as a method of engagement wherein a writer expressly desires to arouse curiosity or interest in the audience (Winter *et al.*, 1991). When aggressive behavior is involved, as was discussed in chapter 1, rhetorical questions that are used to engage the audience can also function in a confrontational manner (Weintraub, 1989, 2003). In the case of the LH threat, the writer uses rhetorical questions in this latter sense—as a method of arousing conflict between himself and the recipient. Here, he offers the questions as a direct challenge to the recipient.

As demonstrated, heteroglossic expressions both contract and expand the discourse, serving to strengthen and weaken the threatener's epistemic stance towards the threat, the victim, and other social participants. Specifically, utterances that were pronounced as direct declaratives and affirmed through conjunction strengthened the threatener's perceived level of commitment to his vengeful act. These utterances closed off the discourse to further argument or debate. However, utterances wherein the threatener countered direct declaratives with disjunctions and negation weakened the threatener's overall stance by allowing room for doubt, negotiation, and empathy. These utterances opened the discourse to other voices, personal feelings, and the possibility of shared power.

C: Graduation

As previously mentioned, all evaluative meaning can be graded—attitudinal meaning can exhibit various levels of positive or negative affect, judgement, or appreciation, whereas markers of engagement can be graded along a scale of authorial investment, intensity, or commitment (Martin and White, 2005). Gradings can primarily occur through intensification and quantification and, in each case, graded lexemes can occur in a series, which is categorized as repetition. In the LH threat, while there are instances of intensification (e.g., *collide* is lexically intensified as it is infused with more force than 'hit' and *innocent* intensifies *people* by isolating which kind of people are being attacked), the graduation that occurs with the most frequency is quantification of extent of time or space, number, and mass, as seen in Table 5.12 below.

Table 5.12: Tokens of Graduation—quantification

	Graduation Token	Extent/Number/Mass
70	the eve of	extent
71	in the history of	extent
72	how much of a fuck	mass
73	now	extent
74	a few cops	number
75	the final day	extent
76	a minimum of	number
77	20 people	number
78	ten minutes	number
79	to the top of an hour	extent
80	at the hour	extent
81	first explosion	number
82	six [people]	number
83	all directions	number
84	one of those directions	number
85	second bomber	number
86	six seconds	number
87	first explosion	number
88	second [explosion]	number
89	first [explosion]	number

90	six more [people]	number
91	now	extent
92	the big one [explosion]	mass
93	two groups of people	number
94	third largest explosion	number
95	largest explosion	mass
96	eight [people]	number
97	happen again	extent
98	the only way	number
99	last summer	extent
100	four AA batteries	number
101	this time	extent

Within the LH threat, the most frequent classifications of quantification are numbers, which include numeric tokens (e.g., *ten minutes* in line 78) and lexical tokens (e.g., *all directions* in line 83), and extent, which includes markers of proximity (e.g., *the eve of* in line 70) and distribution (e.g., *happen again* in line 97). Lines 72, 92, and 95 are quantifications of mass, which describe the size or amount of the token (e.g., *the big one* in line 92 and *how much of a fuck* in line 72, respectively). While the actual quantifications are not of individual interest, the overall pattern, or lexical cohesion (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004), created by the repeated use of quantifiers in this text is interesting to note. The texture produced by this cohesion is methodical, calculated, and precise, adding order and systematicity to the progression of the threat. Thus, these markers strengthen the credibility of the threatener, as threateners who exhibit this level of careful planning, organization, and calculation are taken to be more prepared for and committed to their threatened act (Baker, 2008, p.c.).

D: Summary of Stance Functions in LH

Authorial stance in the LH threat is presented in several ways. First, the writer's

epistemic stance—that which indicates his level of commitment and personal

investment—is represented through the generous use of direct declaratives marked by

will and the single instance of mitigated certainty marked by the negated certainty verb

know, both of which are functions drawn from the corpus analysis findings in chapter 4.

Additionally, through the prosodic use of quantification, a resource of graduation, the

threatener strengthens his credibility by creating a methodical, calculated texture to his

text, a trait that demonstrates forethought and planning. Finally, through the resources of

engagement, the writer supports and strengthens his level of commitment through

contracting language, which most frequently closes off the discourse to outside voices,

opinions, or debate. Specifically, pronouncements, in the form of bare assertions that are

assumed to produce interpersonal tension, function as direct declaratives and

concurrences emphasize and reaffirm previously stated claims through the use of the

conjunction *and*.

On the other hand, contracting language that counters the direct declaratives

through negation and disjunctions such as *or* and *but* ultimately weaken the threatener's

level of personal investment by allowing room for doubt and thus possible negotiation.

The engagement resources of expansion further contribute to the weakening functions, as

greetings, rhetorical questions, and attributions of knowledge to other sources open up the

discourse for further debate and negotiation. These epistemic functions are summarized

in Table 5.13.

Table 5.13: Summary of Epistemic Stance Functions in LH Threat

Stance Function	Linguistic Resource	Strengthening/ Weakening
Direct declaratives, contracting pronouncements	prediction modal *will* bare assertions that produce tension	strengthening
Strengthening credibility by demonstrating organization and preparation	quantification	strengthening
Contracting concurrences that emphasize and reaffirm previously stated claims	conjunctions *and*	strengthening
Mitigating the inherent certainty of the threat	(neg) + certainty verb *know*	weakening
Contracting counters to direct declaratives that allow for doubt and possible negotiation	negation disjunctions *or*, *but*	weakening
Expanding language opens up discourse to debate, negotiation, and further dialog	greetings rhetorical questions attributions of knowledge	weakening

Second, the threatener's affective stance is revealed through the resources of attitude, which demonstrate the threatener's feelings, judgements towards the behavior of others, and assessments of non-animate objects and processes. In this threat, the writer offered very few instances of personal affect, which, when expressed, was in the form of empathy through regret; these few instances of displayed emotion served to background the threatener, as his feelings were not the primary focus, while distancing him from any wrongdoing. The threatener's frequent judgements of the other participants' behaviors foregrounded both parties—the recipient of the text and the third party actors—over that of the threatener. The recipient, in particular, was viewed as improper and incapable throughout and only shifted to a more positive position when the threatener described the behavior the recipient needed to enact in order to rectify the situation. The third party

actors, interestingly, went from proper animate participants when they were innocent bystanders to nominalized improper actors when they became bombers involved in the threatened act. Finally, the threatener's appreciation for the whole event framed the threat as the day went from being viewed negatively in the beginning when the threat had not yet been fulfilled to positively at the end after the act would presumably be concluded. These affective stances provide a clearer understanding of the attitudinal position of the threatener as they relate to his position with respect to the other participants, the overall role he desires to play, and his underlying judgements about those involved in the threat.

5.2.2: The Army of God

The second threat of violence, Text 5.3, is one of a series of threatening letters that was sent to media outlets starting in 1997. The series of letters was claimed to have been written by the Army of God, "an underground network of domestic terrorists who believe that the use of violence is appropriate and acceptable as a means to end abortion" (National Abortion Federation, 2010: para 1); after his arrest in May, 2003, Eric Robert Rudolph confessed to being the author of the letters (Fitzgerald, 2010, p.c.). The letter below, hereafter referred to as the Army of God (AG) threat, followed in the wake of the Centennial Olympic Park bombing of July 27, 1996 in Atlanta, Georgia, which happened during the 1996 Summer Olympics; the bombing of a women's health clinic in Atlanta on January 16, 1997; and the February 21, 1997 bombing of the Otherside Lounge, an "alternative lifestyle nightclub" also in Atlanta (U.S. Department of Justice, 1997: 3). In the nightclub bombing, a second bomb was located near law enforcement agents, as claimed in Text 5.3, and defused before it could detonate (*ibid.*). On January 29, 1998, as

predicted by this threat, another bombing took place at the New Women all Women

Health Care Clinic in Birmingham, Alabama, killing one person and severely injuring

another (U.S. Department of Justice, 1998), thereby fulfilling the claims made by this

threat.

Text 5.3: The Army of God[76] (Realized, VIOL)
The bombing's in Sandy Spring's and Midtown where carried out by units of the Army of God.

You may confirm the following with F.B.I. The Sandy Springs device's-gelatin-dynamite-power source 6 volt D battery boxes, Duracell brand, clock timer's. The Midtown device's are similar except no ammo can's, tupperware containers instead-power source single 6 volt lantern batteries. Different shrapnel, regular nail's instead of cutt nails.

The abortion clinic was the target of the first device. The murder of 3.5 million children every will not be "tolerated." Those who participate in anyway in the murder of children may be targeted for attack. The attack therefore serves as a warning: anyone in or around facilities that murder children may become victims of retribution. The next facility targeted may not be empty.

The second device was aimed at agents of the federal government i.e. A.T.F., F.B.I., Marshall's e.t.c. We declare and will wage total war on the ungodly communist regime in New York and your legaslative bureaucratic lackey's in Washington. It is you who are responsible and preside over the mur of children and issue the policy of preversion that destroying our people. We will target all facilities and personnel of the federal government. The attack in Midtown was aimed at the sodomite bar (the Otherside). We will target sodomites, there organizations, and all those who push their agenda.

In the future when an attack is made against targets where innocent people may become the primary causalties, a warning phone call will be placed to one of the news bureaus' or 911.

Like the LH threat, the AG threat follows the general framework of a narrative

(Rothery and Stenglin, 1997). The threat begins with an orientation to the scene; included

are intimate details about past bombings that will raise the threatener's credibility in the

eyes of the recipient (Labov, 1997). This information was also included in the LH threat,

---

[76] While this actual text was accessed through AGI and is used with their permission, the Army of God case is public record; therefore, as noted above, all identifying information in this text has been left intact. The only change that has been made to the text is to the case of lettering. This text was originally received in all capital letters, but for reasons of space and readability, the case here has been changed. All non-standard language use, however, has been maintained.

but it was located at the end and functioned as a reorientation that established the

viability of the threat. The AG threat then proceeds to follow a pattern similar to that of

the LH threat in that it offers a complication—that *the abortion clinic was the target of*

the first device—which is immediately followed by a lengthy evaluation of the

complication, which is again signified through the future tense (Rothery and Stenglin,

1997). This process occurs three times in the AG threat. What is most interesting about

the AG threat is that the resolution—one of Rothery and Stenglin's (1997) traditionally

required stages of a narrative—is missing. What served as an alternative resolution in the

LH text—one that was predictive rather than conclusive since the resolution depended on

the future actions of the recipient—is not part of the realized AG threat. Instead, the AG

text ends with a reorientation that brings the reader back to the present context of the

threat. There are no opportunities for resolution in this realized threat—only

consequences. These stages are outlined in Table 5.14 below.

Table 5.14: Functional Stages of the AG Narrative

Functional Stages	Text
orientation	*The bombing's in Sandy Spring's and Midtown where carried out by units of the Army of God.* *You may confirm the following with F.B.I. The Sandy Springs device's-gelatin-dynamite-power source 6 volt D battery boxes, Duracell brand, clock timer's. The Midtown device's are similar except no ammo can's, tupperware containers instead-power source single 6 volt lantern batteries. Different shrapnel, regular nail's instead of cutt nails.*
complication 1	*The abortion clinic was the target of the first device.*
evaluation 1	*The murder of 3.5 million children every will not be "tolerated." Those who participate in anyway in the murder of children may be targeted for attack. The attack therefore serves as a warning: anyone in or around facilities that murder children may become victims of retribution. The next facility targeted may not be empty.*
complication 2	*The second device was aimed at agents of the federal government i.e. A.T.F., F.B.I., Marshall's e.t.c.*

evaluation 2	*We declare and will wage total war on the ungodly communist regime in New York and your legaslative bureaucratic lackey's in Washington. It is you who are responsible and preside over the mur of children and issue the policy of preversion that destroying our people. We will target all facilities and personnel of the federal government.*
complication 3	*The attack in Midtown was aimed at the sodomite bar (the Otherside).*
evaluation 3	*We will target sodomites, there organizations, and all those who push their agenda.*
reorientation	*In the future when an attack is made against targets where innocent people may become the primary causalties, a warning phone call will be placed to one of the news bureaus' or 911.*

One final note about the narrative structure of this text is that in many of Rudolph's other letters to the media he ended with "...death to the new world order" (National Abortion Federation, 2010, para 7). Like the evaluative coda in the LH threat (*It's a great day coming*), this utterance functions in a similar manner. In this case, the coda offers up the moral of the story (Rothery and Stenglin, 1997), which, in this threat, is that death is punishable by death.

Moving once again from narrative organization to an examination of the salient interpersonal functions and corresponding forms identified in chapter 4 for realized threats, as presented in Table 5.15, it can be readily seen that none of the most frequently occurring forms exist in this realized threat.

Table 5.15: Summary of Stance Forms and Functions Salient to Realized Threats

Stance Function	Grammatical Category	Lexical Marker	Strengthening/ Weakening
Emphasis on threat justification Emphatic certainty about the threat justification	prediction modals certainty adverbials	*would* *never*	weakening
Emphasis of previous claim or request, strengthening demand	speech act verbs + *that*	*tell/say/state*	strengthening

| Conditionality | prediction modals | *will/be going to* | weakening |
| Conditional directives involving the threatened action | causation verbs + *to* | *try* | |

Thus, while the LH threat reflected the functions *and* their corresponding forms found to be salient to non-realized threats through the large scale corpus analysis, the AG threat does not strictly adhere to these conventions of form; ultimately, this once again challenges the notion of a one-to-one correspondence between discrete lexical forms and individual behavior (Lord *et al.*, 2008) and demonstrates one of the main tenets of systemic functional linguistics, within which this research is situated. Specifically, "functionality is intrinsic to language: that is to say, the entire architecture of language is arranged along functional lines" (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 31) and, while the theory of SFL has mapped the structured relationships between the levels of metafunction on the one end and morphological form on the other, "grammar is seen as a network of interrelated meaningful choices," each of which is structured in relation to other "systematic relationships" (*ibid.*). Thus, even though frequently occurring patterns of grammatical and lexical forms can be found within the various systems of language, as was outlined through the corpus analysis in chapter 4, these choices depend on a variety of functional factors—how the threatener portrays experiences, expresses emotion, negotiates interpersonal relationships, organizes information (Martin and Rose, 2003; Martin and White 2005), and presents his or her identity (Blommaert, 2005)—all of which simultaneously depend on the writer's repertoire of semiotic resources (*ibid.*). From this functional perspective, then, not all texts will systematically conform to the same patterns of use.

When examining the threatener's stance, however, we can see that he still fulfills some of the salient functions identified through the corpus analysis through different means. For example, the purpose of the introductory line: *The bombing's in Sandy Springs and Midtown where carried out by units of the Army of God*, in addition to orienting the reader to the scene as part of the narrative, places primary emphasis on previous events of terror, thereby strengthening the threatener's position as one of credibility and commitment. In this case, because the threatener is emphasizing an event that he previously carried out rather than one he *said* or *stated* would be carried out, the speech act forms highlighted in Table 5.15 from the corpus analysis do not appear; however, the function of recalling a previous claim or, in this case, a previously realized threat, still functions to strengthen the threatener's position as one committed to the threatened act by demonstrating his seriousness of intent. Functions such as this, which would have been missed through a corpus analysis but are readily identified through the systems of Appraisal, will be examined in more detail in sections A-C below. Utilizing the same Appraisal labels outlined with the LH threat in section 5.2.1 above, Section A examines the systems of Attitude, Section B investigates the system of Engagement, and Section C highlights features from the system of Graduation relevant to the AG text. Section D summarizes the findings from the AG threat.

A: Attitude

Beginning again with a critical examination of the relationships between social actors in this text (Fairclough, 1989, 2003; van Dijk, 1991; van Leeuwen, 1996), four primary participants are identified: *the Army of God*, of which the writer is a part; *those who*

participate in anyway in the murder of children; *agents of the federal government*; and

sodomites. Table 5.16 outlines the various ways each group is referenced within the text.

Table 5.16: References to social actors in the AG threat

Social Actor	Additional Referents
the Army of God	*units of the Army of God*
	we
	our people
those who participate in the murder of children	*abortion clinic*
	target
	anyone in or around facilities that murder children
	victims of retribution
agents of the federal government	*F.B.I.*
	A.T.F.
	Marshall's
	ungodly, communist regime in New York
	legaslative bureaucratic lackey's in Washington
	personnel of the federal government
sodomites	*the Otherside*
	organizations
	all those who push their agenda
	targets

Throughout the text, the writer refers to himself as part of a larger organization,

whose mission, as previously noted, is to bring *death to the new world order.* By

invoking the name of the Army of God, Rudolph gives biblical value to his cause.

According to Genesis 9:6, which is incited in the Army of God's Manual as a founding

tenet, "whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed" (National Abortion

Federation, 2010, para 13). Based on this creed, the name *Army of God* has been used to

further extremist anti-abortion causes since the 1980s (*ibid.*), bringing retribution—an act

performed by God throughout the bible—to those who disobey this higher law. Thus,

Rudolph aligns himself with an organization and creed of biblical value, which are

positively appreciated in the eyes of its supporters. Then, by utilizing strategies of

inclusion/exclusion (e.g., *We declare and will wage total war*, *It is you who are*

responsible, destroying our people) and specific/generic classifications (e.g., *the Army of*

God vs. *those who participate in anyway in the murder of children* and *the ungodly*

communist regime in New York) (Fairclough, 2003), the threatener sets up a dichotomous

situation between his group and those who deserve to be punished. However, this critical

level of analysis does not provide a complete picture; through an examination of the

threatener's judgements about each party's behaviors, an unexpected perspective that

moves beyond the traditional 'us vs. them' (van Leeuwen, 1996) scenario is revealed.

The tokens of judgement against the offending parties (i.e., the abortion doctors,

government officials, and sodomites), listed in Table 5.17 below, first appear to support

the 'us vs. them' dichotomy. Lines 103-104, 107, and 118 negatively judge the behaviors

of abortion doctors as being improper; lines 121-122 do likewise for sodomite behaviors.

Lines 110-115 utilize graduated repetition, which will be discussed in more detail in

section C below, to negatively portray the veracity and propriety of government officials,

while lines 116-117 utilize grammatical negation to judge the tenacity and ability of these

officials. Lines 119 and 123 criticize the government's creation of this *policy of*

perversion and their supportive role in the *agenda* of *sodomites*. Finally, lines 108, 125,

and 126 normalize the fact that those who frequent abortion clinics or sodomite bars will

become victims of revenge—a negative event for the victims, but a positive one for the

Army of God seeking *retribution*.

Table 5.17: Tokens of Judgement

	Attitude Token	Judgement	Appraised
102	bombing's	-propriety	act performed by the army of god
103	murder of children	-propriety	act done by abortion doctors
104	murder of children	-propriety	act done by abortion doctors

105	attack	-propriety	act of bombing performed by the army of god
106	attack	-propriety	act of bombing performed by the army of god
107	murder of children	-propriety	act done by abortion doctors
108	victims of retribution	+normality	people in or around facilities that murder
109	wage war	-propriety	we
110	ungodly	-veracity	government agents in NY
111	communist	-veracity	government agents in NY
112	regime	-propriety	government agents in NY
113	legislative	-propriety	government agents in DC
114	bureaucratic	-propriety	government agents in DC
115	lackey's	-tenacity	government agents in DC
116	responsible (for murder)	+tenacity (neg)	you
117	preside over (murder)	+capacity (neg)	you
118	mur[der] of children	-propriety	act done by abortion doctors
119	destroying our people	-propriety	policy of perversion you issue
120	attack	-propriety	act of bombing performed by the army of god
121	sodomite	-propriety	people targeted
122	sodomites	-propriety	people targeted
123	push their agenda	-propriety	those in alignment with people targeted
124	attack	-propriety	act of bombing performed by the army of god
125	innocent	+normality	people who die
126	causalties	+normality	innocent people who die

However, when examining Rudolph's judgements of his own group's behavior,

also in Table 5.17 above, even though the Army of God is valued and positively

appreciated in the eyes of extremists and the acts of terror are justified and supported by

the bible, he represents the acts in a negative manner. Specifically, through a repetition of

lexical tokens infused with negativity, he portrays the behaviors as improper in lines 102,

105-106, 109, 120, and 124, which paints a prosodic picture of immoral behavior. Thus,

while there is a dichotomous line drawn between the Army of God and the other

participants in this threat as demonstrated through the critical discourse analysis above, the threatener does not judge his own behavior, even though it is biblically supported, to be any better than that of the offending parties. This stance is contradictory to many 'us vs. them' situations in which clearly-defined groups are separated by a positive/negative asymmetry, respectively (Reynolds *et al.*, 2000).

Additionally, there are no instantiations of personal affect in this text. To recall, in the LH threat, there were two instances of authorial emotion (the threatener expressed his dissatisfaction with the situation through *regret*, but claimed *feel*ing secure in the knowledge that he is doing the right thing). While this emotional contribution was sparse, it did have the effect of demonstrating a small amount of empathy for the recipient of the threat, thereby weakening the threatener's overall appearance of control. In the AG threat, however, Rudolph offers no indication of personal emotion, thereby distancing himself from any sympathetic connection with the targeted victims. This tactic mirrors that of an omniscient narrator, who creates the events from his own perspective, thus dominating and controlling the characters in the scene (Hale, 2006). This lack of emotion further reflects "an aloof, cool verbal style," which has been linked to controlling behavior (Weintraub, 2003: 145). Thus, while the threatener clearly possesses control over the other participants through this unemotional, omniscient style and draws a clear line of separation between himself and the victims, because "perceived religious obligations and/or divine messages transcend social consciousness and social obligations" in cases of religious terrorism (Schbley, 2006: 292), the negatively-infused lexis through which Rudolph represents his own behavior is backgrounded to the importance of the cause.

B: Engagement

Like the LH threat, the AG threat only possesses two instances of what can be interpreted

as tensionless utterances, as seen in Table 5.18. Specifically, in lines 127 and 128, the

threatener offers an intimate description of two of the previously detonated bombs in

order to establish his credibility and signal his status as an inclusive member of the Army

of God. And while prefaced by an utterance of expansion (*You may confirm the following*

with F.B.I.), which invites the recipient to participate in the verification of these details,

these utterances are offered as bare assertions in that they are verifiable facts with which

the recipient would presumably not disagree.

Table 5.18: Monoglossic Utterances

127	The Sandy Springs device's-gelatin-dynamite-power source 6 volt D battery boxes
128	The Midtown device's are similar

Shifting from monoglossic to heteroglossic utterances, the AG threat includes,

like the LH threat, a large number of utterances that appear to be bare assertions, but

would be assumed to produce tension between the threatener and the recipient, as seen in

Table 5.19 below.

Table 5.19: Heteroglossic Utterances of Contraction

	Engagement Marker	Disclaim/ Proclaim	Deny/Counter Concur/Pronounce/ Endorse
129	the bombing's in Sandy Spring's and Midtown where carried out by units of the Army of God.	proclaim	pronounce
130	the abortion clinic was the target	proclaim	pronounce
131	murder of 3.5 million children every will not be "tolerated."	proclaim	pronounce

132	the attack therefore serves as a warning.	proclaim	concur
133	the second device was aimed at agents	proclaim	pronounce
134	we declare and will wage total war	proclaim	pronounce
135	it is you who are responsible and preside over the mur of children and issue the policy of perversion	proclaim	pronounce
136	we will target all facilities and personnel	proclaim	pronounce
137	the attack in Midtown was aimed at the sodomite bar	proclaim	pronounce
138	we will target sodomites, there organizations, and all those	proclaim	pronounce
139	when an attack is made against targets	proclaim	pronounce
140	a warning phone call will be placed	proclaim	concur

The pronouncements made by the threatener in lines 129-131 and 133-139 function in a manner that contracts the discourse, closing off any possibility for negotiation or repositioning. And, while manifestations of pronouncements "are lexico-grammatically diverse," all of the examples above can be categorized as explicitly objective realizations, wherein the threatener's role is obscured and the act is emphasized through a top-level or main clause (Martin and White, 2005: 130). This distances the threatener from the actual threat while foregrounding or emphasizing the proposed act and those targeted. The contracting utterances in line 132 and 140 further support these objective realizations by concurring with declaratives previously made by the threatener that affirm his seriousness of intent. Specifically, by recalling the attack on the abortion clinic from line 130, the threatener affirms the fact that he attacked once, thereby strengthening the warning proffered in line 132; likewise, line 140 supports and affirms the claim in line 139, which implies that another attack will be made in the future.

The most interesting aspect of heteroglossic interaction in the AG threat relates to utterances of expansion. Each of the five instances of expansion, as seen in Table 5.20, are all marked as such in the same manner, i.e., through the use of the modal *may*.

Revisiting the findings from chapter 4, *may* occurred roughly 1 time per 1000 words and was the second *least* frequent modal of possibility after *might*, which only occurred less than .5 times per 1000 words. Within realized threats, in particular, the modal *may*[77] only occurred a total of 9 times, 5 of which are present in this text.

Table 5.20: Heteroglossic Utterances of Expansion

	Engagement Marker	Entertain/ Attribute
141	you may confirm the following with F.B.I.	entertain
142	those who participate in anyway in the murder of children may be targeted	entertain
143	anyone in or around facilities that murder children may become victims	entertain
144	the next facility targeted may not be empty	entertain
145	innocent people may become the primary causalties	entertain

Within Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004) framework of modality, *may* expresses a low level of probability, and in lines 142-145—those with specific relevance to the threatened act—*may* is oriented objectively, i.e., the focus of the act is on the victim rather than the subjective threatener who would be performing the act (*ibid.*). In CTARC, the Communicated Threat Assessment Reference Corpus, only one of the other four instances in realized threats functions in a similar manner: *As some day it <u>may</u> hapen that a victom must be found.* (VIOL); the other instances express permission, as in line 141, rather than possibility. Thus, while this use of *may* is fairly rare in realized threats, it does serve the function of weakening the threatener's claims first, by adding a level of conditionality to the direct proclamation that frames the utterances in lines 142-145—*The murder of 3.5 million children every will not be "tolerated,"* and second, by inserting a level of uncertainty in the otherwise firmly constructed threat. Specifically, in the first

---

[77] Instances of *May* that referred to the month were removed from this count.

case, if the recipient stops the murder of children, he or she can prevent the threat, thereby allowing room for negotiation based on this directly declared condition. This function relates back to the weakening function from the corpus analysis presented in Table 5.15 that utilized prediction modals and causation verbs plus *to* clauses to signal conditionality involved with a direct declarative. However, in the latter case, if the murders do continue, the use of *may* indicates an uncertain level of probability as to whether or not Rudolph will carry out the threatened act. Both functions serve to weaken the threatener's apparent level of commitment.

C: Graduation

The system of graduation uncovers one of most prominent linguistic resources utilized by the AG threatener—repetition (Martin and White, 2005), which occurs in three distinct ways throughout the text. Specifically, Rudolph uses collocational repetition, semantic repetition, and figurative, or metaphorical, repetition in order to support and strengthen his stance.

First, as seen in Table 5.21, the threatener emphasizes his stance by repeating the same lexically-infused collocation: *murder of children. Murder* is lexically intensified in that it is a form of killing done with malice and forethought (Random House College Dictionary, 1988); *children*, while not intensified in the same manner (i.e., it is not *a form of* children), is intensified through its contextual use. Within the abortion debate, those who are in alignment with the right to choose tend to favor the term "fetus," as this term is "more neutral and value-free because of its status as a scientific, medical term," whereas those who are against this right favor more animate terms such as "baby" and "unborn child" (Ferree *et al.*, 2002: 276). Thus, by repeatedly collocating *murder* and

children, the threatener takes a firm stance against those who willfully kill unborn

children.

Table 5.21: Tokens of Graduation—intensification through collocational repetition

	Graduation Token	infusing/isolating
146	the murder of 3.5 million children	infusing
147	the murder of children	infusing
148	facilities that murder children	infusing
149	the mur of children	infusing

The second use of repetition is semantic. In Table 5.22 below, the threatener

creates strings of terms that are related in a semantically negative manner. Specifically,

the threatener begins the string in line 150 with *ungodly*, which we can assume is

negative due to Rudolph's acknowledged dedication to the Army of God; this is followed

in lines 151 and 152 by *communist*, which represents a form of government that is

"generally disapproved of" in Britain and many other Westernized democracies

(Channell, 2000: 46), and *regime*, which, while technically defined as a neutral system of

government, has been shown to be used in situations where the speaker is critical of and

wishes to attack the targeted opponent (*ibid.*). This process of resemanticization, or the

rewriting of a word's meaning (Hasan, 2003), can also be seen with the token in line

154—*bureaucratic*. While technically used to describe a form of government

characterized by a specific hierarchy of employees (Random House College Dictionary,

1988), the first three hits in COCA, the Corpus of Contemporary American English,

were: *hiding behind a <u>bureaucratic</u> answer to this seems to me to be disingenuous; a

laborious and intimidating <u>bureaucratic</u> hurdle that would stop most people in their

tracks;* and *It' s too profit-driven. It' s too <u>bureaucratic</u>. It' s too inaccessible. It' s too

complicated* (2010). After a brief analysis of the examples contained within COCA, it can

be said that these examples are fairly representative of the negative ways in which

bureaucratic is being used in modern American English. Finally, the threatener closes the

string in line 155 with *lackey's*, which inherently possesses subservience in its definition,

and, through this graded process of semantic repetition, even lexical items that may have

had questionable interpretations, such as *legaslative* in line 153, take on the negative tone

of their surrounding tokens.

Table 5.22: Tokens of Graduation—intensification through semantic repetition

	Graduation Token	infusing/isolating
150	ungodly	infusing
151	communist	infusing
152	regime	infusing
153	legislative	infusing
154	bureaucratic	infusing
155	lackey's	infusing

Finally, the threatener uses lexical repetition in a manner that constructs a

metaphorical scene within which the threat is set—that of war, as identified in line 164 of

Table 5.23. Through the prosodic use of primal, militaristic terms that begin with the

threatener's alignment with the *Army* of God in line 156, Rudolph builds upon this image

and uses it to frame his position as that of the soldier hunting his enemy. In lines 157,

158, 162, 168, and 170, for example, the murderers of children, government agents, and

sodomites become *targets* of this hunt—those who Rudolph is *aiming at* in lines 163 and

167 for *attack* in lines 159, 160, 166, and 169. This metaphor is also demonstrated

through the nominalized and oftentimes vague terms used to refer to the opposing parties

(e.g., *those who participate in anyway in the murder of children*, *personnel of the federal

government*, *ungodly communist regime*, *sodomites*, etc.), a strategy often employed

during times of war (Bernard *et al.*, 2003). By dehumanizing those targeted for attack,

they become "nonhuman dispensable items," against which the threatener is able to

defend himself from "painful or overwhelming emotions" (*ibid.*: 64); this process can

help explain Rudolph's use of affectless, contracting language. Rudolph completes the

description of his metaphorical war in lines 161, 171, 172, where the inevitable *victims*

and *innocent causalties* of war are reported.

Table 5.23: Tokens of Graduation—intensification through metaphorical repetition

	Graduation Token	infusing/isolating
156	the Army of God	infusing
157	the target	infusing
158	targeted	infusing
159	attack	infusing
160	attack	infusing
161	victims	infusing
162	targeted	infusing
163	aimed at	infusing
164	wage war	infusing
165	target	infusing
166	attack	infusing
167	aimed at	infusing
168	target	infusing
169	attack	infusing
170	targets	infusing
171	innocent	isolating
172	causalties	infusing

D: Summary of Stance Functions in AG

Like the LH threat, the AG threat encodes authorial stance in a variety of ways. First,

epistemic stance, that most closely related to the strengthening and weakening functions

of commitment, investment, and certainty outlined in the corpus analysis, is represented

primarily through contracting pronouncements, which close off the discourse to further

debate or negotiation, strengthening the threatener's control over the discourse.

Specifically, orienting proclamations immediately emphasized Rudolph's previously

carried out acts of terror, thus instilling his threat with more credibility, and objective

proclamations foregrounded and highlighted the future acts of terror and those who were

targeted for attack over the role played by Rudolph. Similarly, concurrences in the form

of tension-producing bare assertions refocused the readers' attention on the threatener's

previously committed acts, once again strengthening his sincerity in the eyes of the

recipient. However, the threatener also weakened his epistemic stance through the use of

may, a modal expressing a low level of probability (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). In

one of the four instances, Rudolph utilized *may* in a manner that indicated uncertainty as

to whether or not the act would be carried out at all and three times in a way that added a

level of conditionality to his claims (i.e., fulfillment depends on the actions of the

recipient and third party participants); this latter function, through different grammatical

markers, was found to be salient to realized threats in the corpus analysis. These

epistemic functions found in the AG threat are summarized in Table 5.24.

Table 5.24: Summary of Epistemic Stance Functions in AG Threat

Stance Function	Linguistic Resource	Strengthening/ Weakening
Emphasis of previous claim, request, or act strengthening demand	orientation to the scene concurrences with declaratives	strengthening
Proclamations foregrounding/emphasizing proposed act and targeted victims	objective realizations through main clause construction	strengthening
Conditionality placed on the direct proclamation	*may* as possibility	weakening
Uncertainty about the threatener's commitment level	*may* as possibility	weakening

Second, the threatener's attitudinal stance—that which expresses his emotional

state, his judgements of behaviors, and his aesthetic appreciations—is conveyed first and

foremost through his alignment with the Army of God, giving biblical import to his cause. Through a critical analysis, it appears that Rudolph, the threatener, is creating a traditional 'us vs. them' dichotomy between the actors participating in this threat—his Army of God vs. murders of children, sodomites, and government agents who support these groups. And while this dichotomous situation is consistent throughout the text, the prosody of attitudinal markers reveal that Rudolph, while emotionally detached from the act, paints a linguistic picture in which his own behaviors, like those of his enemies, are immoral. This finding is contrary to traditional 'us vs. them' situations wherein there is a positive/negative asymmetric portrayal of the two clearly defined parties, respectively (Reynolds *et al.*, 2000), but in support of previous research on religious terrorists who suppress their own emotions in order to control others in support of what they perceive to be a higher obligation (Schbley, 2006).

Finally, the AG threatener utilizes repetition, a resource of graduation, in a way that both strengthens and supports his authorial stance. Specifically, through repetition of the collocational pattern *murder of children*, Rudolph defines those being punished as *murders* and intensifies his judgement against those who commit this crime. Similarly, through repetition of semantically negative strings of lexemes such as *ungodly communist regime* and *legaslative bureaucratic lackey's*, Rudolph further explicates his judgements against his targets, adding to the clear delineation between his perceived mission from God and the behaviors of the others. Finally, through metaphorical repetition, Rudolph constructs a figurative war zone, wherein he is part of God's army targeting and attacking those who disobey his higher laws. In each case, the threatener's level of perceived commitment is strengthened through his alignment with God's army and his judgements

of the participants' behaviors, which are most oftentimes nominalized to create emotional

distance between the threatener and his victims, are clearly annunciated. Thus, through

the systems of Appraisal, Rudolph's epistemic and affective stances are visibly revealed.

5.3: CONCLUSION

The results from the discourse analyses presented in this chapter can be viewed from an

individual textual perspective and from a larger, genre-based perspective. When

approaching the non-realized Lampley Hollow threat and the realized Army of God threat

from a textual perspective, several similarities can be found. First, both texts conformed

to the typological framework of a narrative—the most valued narrative genre in English-

speaking cultures (Rothery and Stenglin, 1997). As commonly occurs in narratives, the

participants in each threat held adversarial roles (i.e., the threatener vs. the recipient and

other third party participants) and had to struggle through a crisis in order to restore

balance and stability to the scene (*ibid.*). Second, both texts possessed epistemic

functions that strengthened *and* weakened the perceived level of commitment and

involvement of the threatener. This finding supports the corpus analysis from the

previous chapter that emphasized the fact that threateners, even when anonymous, still

conform to some of the more face-saving, socially-accepted forms of interpersonal

communication in Western societies. Finally, both threats contained very little or no

affect on the part of the threatener. Instead, the threatener expressed his position through

prosodic realizations of negative judgement against those whose behavior was targeted

by the threat.

Conversely, the texts also differed in several ways. First, while the LH threat possessed a non-traditional resolution in that the complication would only be resolved at some point in the future, the AG threat possessed no resolution, *perhaps* indicating the threatener's seriousness of intent. More work on the narrative structure of threats may be fruitful for analytic purposes. Next, while the LH threat exhibited and enriched the form-based functions identified through the corpus analysis in chapter 4, the AG threat did not possess any of the functions identified via these grammatical forms. Instead, the AG utilized a range of rhetorical devices to strengthen and weaken the threatener's stance, a point which will be taken up in more detail below. Finally, even though there was very little affect manifested in the LH threat, what instances were there provided the foundation for a sympathetic relationship between the threatener and the recipient, as the primary emotion expressed was one of regret. In the AG threat, however, the complete lack of affect was in line with that of religious terrorists, who separate themselves from their act in support of a higher cause; this lack of emotion can even be seen in cases where religious terrorists do not accept their own behavior as proper (Schbley, 2006), as was lexically-encoded in the threatener's judgements of his own behavior.

When viewing these analyses from the overarching perspective of genre, however, two broad conclusions can be drawn—one theoretical and one methodological. First, the corpus analysis in chapter 4 identified form-based functions of interpersonal stance that were significant and/or salient to the genre of threats and to each of the two sub-categories: realized and non-realized threats. While the LH threat supported the form-based functional patterns salient to non-realized threats (i.e., the grammatical forms marking stance and their corresponding functions identified in chapter 4 were present in

the LH threat), the AG threat did not possess any of the *forms* associated with the salient stance functions for realized threats. However, the AG threat did exhibit several of the epistemic *functions* identified through the previous corpus analysis, though they were manifested through different *forms*. These findings problematize the theoretical notion of a one-to-one form-function relationship in threats, complementing related studies in the disciplines of psychology and criminology, which have questioned the use of linguistic form as a direct indicator of behavior or deception (see, e.g., Lord *et al.*, 2008). Specifically, when investigating authorial stance from a functional perspective, it can be seen that threateners use a plethora of rhetorical strategies to convey interpersonal meaning. And, while functional patterns were found, the expression of epistemic meaning—that demonstrating the threatener's level of commitment and personal investment—and attitudinal meaning—that indicating the threatener's personal emotions, judgements of behavior, and aesthetic appreciations—is lexically and grammatically diverse and depends on the threatener's underlying intent in proffering the threat (e.g., to instill fear, to negotiate interpersonal relationships, to justify an act of retribution, to gain control over another) as well as the semiotic resources available (Martin and Rose, 2003; Martin and White 2005; Blommaert, 2005).

Second, the examination of affective stance demonstrated that critical analyses of interpersonal relationships do not provide a complete picture of an author's underlying attitudes about the threatened act or the threat's social participants. In the AG text, for example, the critical discourse analysis of social actors uncovered an expected 'us vs. them' relationship between the threatener and his targeted victims; however, a closer examination of the attitudinal stance of the threatener through the structured framework

of Appraisal revealed that the threatener did not portray his actions in a traditionally positive light. Instead of a positive/negative asymmetric relationship common in clearly-defined in/out group categorizations (Reynolds *et al.*, 2000), the threatener judged his actions on an equally negative plane. Through the Appraisal framework, this additional layer of meaning was uncovered, aligning this threatener with those possessing similar behavioral characteristics—religious terrorists who subdue their own emotions and judgements in order to serve what they perceive to be a higher objective (Schbley, 2006). This example illustrates the methodological benefits of using the structured framework of Appraisal, which can allow analysts to move past unstructured critical analyses and delve deeper into the underlying affective and epistemic stances of threateners through prosodic realizations interpersonal meaning.

Thus, interpersonal meaning is manifested through a myriad of rhetorical strategies, which intimately depend on the function for which they are employed. But the ways in which this meaning is conveyed in threats, especially as it is revealed through the systems of Appraisal, can uncover invaluable information about a threatener's assumed level of commitment, his or her personal investment in the act, and his or her underlying attitudes about the threat's participants, their behaviors, and the social relationships they enact.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

The construct of stance, or a speaker or writer's personal "feelings, attitudes, value judgements, or assessments" (Biber *et al.*, 1999: 966), is a rich interpersonal resource used to create attitudinal meaning, position social actors, and reveal authorial commitment and intent (Martin and White, 2005). It provides a link between personal identity, social action, and culturally-situated meaning (Jaffe, 2009; Johnstone, 2009). Stances can be expressed through a wide range of lexical and grammatical devices and are made for a variety of purposes—to negotiate relationships with an assumed reader, to gain power over another, to demonstrate commitment to a stated act, to show emotion, to offer judgements about behaviors, and to express personal feelings about other social actors and propositions. These stances are dialogic, always context-dependent, and limited only by the semiotic resources available to the author.

This research has highlighted the ways in which interpersonal stances are manifested and function in CTARC, a corpus of 470 authentic threatening communications. What has been revealed through this investigation is best summarized by revisiting the four primary clusters of research questions posed at the beginning of this work.

6.1: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How does stance manifest and function within threatening language? How do the results inform our understanding of the pragmatic act of threatening, i.e. how do threateners threaten? Are any interpersonal functions of stance reliable in helping to determine the level of intent in a threat?

Through the corpus analysis of three sets of grammatical markers—adverbials, complement clauses, and modals—and the Appraisal analysis of two individual threat texts, it was found that the forms marking stance and their corresponding functions can be divided into two primary sets of interpersonal functions—one set that strengthens the stance of the writer and a second set that weakens the stance of the writer. For example, threateners can strengthen their role in the threatened act through the use of direct declaratives that utilize the prediction modal *will*, as in *I <u>will</u> make you pay if it is the last thing that I do on this earth.* (STLK), while they can weaken their apparent level of commitment through the use of possibility modals such as *may*, as in *it looks like the end <u>may</u> be near, the end for you* (DEF). However, this dichotomy of interpersonal functions does not divide along threat realization lines, as expected according to our ideologies about threatening language, i.e., threats that have been carried out *and* those that have not been carried out are composed of a combination of functions that both strengthen and weaken the threatener's stance (see chapter 3 for a summary of language ideologies and chapter 4 for a summary of these functional patterns).

Threateners, then, regardless of their intent to carry out a threatened act, take stances that both violate and *adhere to* social norms. They demonstrate firm commitment to the threatened act, they show self-volitional control over the scene, and they maintain power over the victim; yet, they also utilize polite, face-saving language, they demonstrate compassion for the victim, and they posit themselves as no more than passive participants in some externally-controlled threatening act. It is through this negotiation of interpersonal meaning in threats—i.e., through the juxtaposition of strengthening and weakening functions—that threateners perform the act of threatening.

Beyond this rather surprising finding, however, this research demonstrated that even though a variety of form-based functional patterns were found to be salient to each category of threat (realized vs. not realized), threateners use a myriad of rhetorical strategies to convey interpersonal meaning, supporting previous studies that have questioned the use of linguistic form as an indicator of behavior (e.g., Lord *et al.*, 2008). Threateners, like all social actors, have access to an array of semiotic resources, which are variously constructed for different purposes and are all dependent on their particular context (Martin and Rose, 2003; Martin and White 2005). Thus, while functional patterns may reveal certain underlying stances of the author, the language of each threat must be examined individually within its own culturally-constructed environment.

2. What can the study of stance on a lexical, clausal, and intra-textual level reveal? Specifically, how can a discourse analytic approach such as Appraisal analysis be utilized to uncover additional layers of interpersonal meaning in threats?

Approaching stance from a close discourse analytic perspective uncovered several additional layers of meaning that were not apparent from the large-scale corpus analysis. First, while the corpus analysis focused on grammatical markers of stance, which primarily encompassed epistemic meaning, the use of Appraisal analysis, which more closely examined meaning at the lexical and clausal levels, additionally highlighted affective stance. In particular, through the system of Attitude, a threatener's personal feelings about others, judgements about behaviors, and aesthetic evaluations were revealed. These attitudinal stances were then mapped across a text in order to reveal its underlying texture (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). Similarly, through the system of Graduation, meaning—meaning that would have been missed through a corpus

analysis—was uncovered through lexical, semantic, and metaphorical repetition, offering a high level of cohesion to the threat (*ibid.*). In each case, the meaning that was revealed shed light on the positioning of the threatener with respect to the victim, the underlying role the threatener wished to play in the threatened act, the feelings the threatener felt, and the judgements he had about the victim's and his own personal behaviors as they occurred *across* whole texts.

Second, as the Appraisal framework utilizes a structured set of categorical labels but does not restrict them to application with particular grammatical categories, interpersonal resources are able to be revealed on a wider scope than available to corpus analyses and on a deeper scope than available to critical discourse analyses. For example, it was found that in addition to weakening their stances through possibility modals and negated certainty verbs + *that* clauses, as identified in the corpus analysis, threateners can weaken their stances through the use of rhetorical question and direct addresses, which open up the discourse for further discussion. Additionally, imperative commands close off the discourse, strengthening the demands of the threatener; this adds to the list of available strengthening devices, which included modals of necessity and certainty adverbials from the corpus findings.

On the other hand, instead of a positive/negative asymmetric relationship commonly identified through critical discourse analyses of clearly-defined in/out group categorizations (Reynolds *et al.*, 2000), the Appraisal framework uncovered a deeper layer of meaning in the Army of God threat. Specifically, while the threatener set up a typical 'us vs. them' scenario, it was found that he judged his actions on an equally negative level, shifting the traditional asymmetric relationship and aligning him with

others possessing similar behavioral characteristics—religious terrorists who subdue their own emotions in order to fulfill what they perceive to be a higher objective (Schbley, 2006).

Thus, the use of the Appraisal system first, allows for a finer analysis of epistemic *and* affective stance through prosodic realizations of interpersonal meaning that are not available through corpus or critical discourse analyses, and second, reveals a broader range of rhetorical devices that are used by threateners to create their desired stances, whether that be to instill fear, to justify an act of revenge, to gain control over another, or, occasionally, to demonstrate commitment to an act that is perceived to fulfill a higher calling.

3. How are these findings of authorial stance in authentic threats reflected by our ideologies of threatening language? What effect do these ideologies ultimately have on the ways in which we organize, interpret, and reify threatening language and threatening language practices in society?

Our ideologies or folk linguistic impressions (Preston, 2007) about threatening language present a highly dichotomous picture of what threatening language is and how threateners demonstrate their intent to carry out a threatened act. As previously discussed, threateners utilize language in ways that both strengthen and weaken their stances, but these dichotomous functions are not split along threat realization lines, i.e., threateners who carry out *and* those who do not carry out their threatened acts employ both kinds of functions. This pragmatic interplay of strengthening and weakening functions, however, was not reflected in the language ideologies of the three communities of practice surveyed. Instead, our ideologies present a picture of threatening language that is rife

with profanity, power, and a commitment to violence. What is occurring is the process of erasure, wherein a linguistic phenomenon is made invisible in order to match the ideological frames of an individual or social group (Irvine and Gal, 2000), and, importantly, this process has barred us from perceiving threatening language in its entirety.

Ultimately, since ideologies are disseminated and maintained between social actors who share semiotic spaces (Bourdieu, 1991), the process of reconstructing this partial image of threatening language is iterative. This masking of features in addition to the ideological division of features along threat realization lines can have implications for those studying and interpreting stance in pragmatic situations, wherein interpersonal meaning is negotiated between two socially-situated parties—especially between a threatener and his/her victim. This was exemplified in the *realized* Army of God threat, which contained linguistic features and interpersonal functions that were exclusively associated with low level threats, such as the use of the possibility modal *may*, which signaled a lower level of commitment. Thus, it is essential to examine threatening language empirically rather than intuitively on folk linguistic impressions of language, since interpersonal stance functions, when taken collectively and in context, provide a more holistic picture of how commitment and intent are demonstrated, how interpersonal relationships are negotiated, and how meaning—meaning that is socially- and ideologically-constructed—is created in this discursive act.

4. How can the triangulation of methods used herein contribute to the cross-disciplinary understanding of stance as a theoretical construct? In particular, can the study of threats as a socially-defined genre contribute to the creation of a

reliable and *unified* description of the lexical and grammatical features marking

stance and the ways in which they function within and across genres?

The triangulation of methods utilized in this research—a survey of language ideologies

about threatening language from three communities of practice (scholars, practitioners,

and students), corpus analysis, and Appraisal analysis—has enabled the investigation of

stance to move fluidly across multiple semiotic planes, starting with ideologies about

authorial stance in threatening language and moving through the lexical and grammatical

forms marking stance to the interpersonal stance functions identified by the prosodic

repetition of evaluative language across a text. This methodological framing has provided

two primary insights about stance as a theoretical construct.

First, we tend to associate certain stances with particular genres. In the case of

threats, threateners were assumed to hold firmly committed stances toward the fulfillment

of violent acts and stances of anger toward the intended victims. However, as

demonstrated through the corpus and Appraisal analyses, what was assumed to exist in

threatening language was only partially accurate—profanity used to signal an angry tone

was only found to occur in 24% of the threats, while the language of politeness and

compassion was found to occur with heightened frequency across the genre. Thus,

stances are broadly occurring, and while functional patterns can be found that are useful

in describing and *informally* delineating genres, as was shown in the threat vs. non-threat

comparison of CTARC and the K-corpus, stances are not relegated to one genre or

another, making them unreliable as markers of any one genre.

Second, just as stances are not genre-specific, stances are not exhaustive. There

can be no complete, *unified* list of stances outside of the corpus under investigation. This

is due to the fact that stances are context-dependent, as was demonstrated with the use of the adverbial stance marker *never*, which could either strengthen or weaken a threatener's stance depending on its wider context. However, as "one of the most important things we do with words is take a stance" (du Bois, 2007: 139), the study of stance is invaluable as it plays such a central role in the creation of interpersonal meaning in discourse.

6.2: FUTURE DIRECTIONS

As with all research, there are many avenues for further study, but the two main areas of primary interest will be highlighted here. First, the field of forensic linguistics is relatively young and, within this field, work on threatening communications is still in its infancy. One area for future research should examine the sociolinguistic variation inherent within threats. This will entail adding texts to CTARC or another threatening communications corpus of known authorship. Work that describes and categorizes the ways in which people of various geographic locations, ages, sexes, and social strata threaten would prove invaluable to ongoing sociolinguistic research as well as to threat assessment practitioners working on cases of unknown authorship, wherein the linguistic clues are all that is available for investigatory purposes.

Second, work on stance, while it has seen a rise in popularity in many disciplines, is still quite new to the genre of threatening communications. Preliminary findings from my corpus analysis suggest that there are highly interesting differences between grammatical stance patterns in the different threat types (i.e., between threats to defame, harass, stalk, etc.). Of heightened interest is the category of stalking, which demonstrated some highly frequent stance markers when compared to the other threat types (see

Appendix D for the distributions of grammatical markers of stance by threat type in CTARC). This avenue of research could provide researchers and practitioners with additional empirical evidence as to how specific kinds of threateners threaten, allowing us to further hone our understanding of the link between threatening as a performative act and the various forms of threatening behavior.

Stance is a social phenomenon, as are threats. Thus, research at the intersection of the two should continue to be carried out *across* social science disciplines. It is through a broader understanding of how authors utilize linguistic resources to negotiate relationships, demonstrate commitment, offer emotion, and command power over others that we can continue to enrich our knowledge of the theoretical construct of stance and illuminate the ways in which it functions on an interpersonal level within the socially-defined genre of threatening communications.

APPENDIX A: THREAT TYPES IN CTARC

Table A.1: Threat Types in CTARC

Threat Type	Primary Category	Secondary Category
Defamation	146	5
Harassment	167	94
Stalking	84	15
Violence	43	20
—Workplace Violence	—5	—14
—School Violence	—8	—1
—Terrorism	—26	—5
—Personal Violence	—4	—0
Other	30	336
—Specific Personal Issues	—5	—135
—Specific Public Issues	—0	—0
—Extortion	—16	—22
—Sabotage	—2	—107
—Kidnapping	—0	—13
—Weapons of Mass Destruction	—0	—1
—Product Tampering	—2	—1
—Nationalism	—1	—7
—Religious	—0	—18
—Environmental	—0	—0
—Political	—0	—2
—Ideological	—2	—27
—Animal Rights	—0	—0
—POMIC	—2	—3
—Other	—0	—0

APPENDIX B: THREATENING COMMUNICATIONS SURVEY

You are being asked to participate in a survey for research purposes. Participation is voluntary and you may decline to participate at any time. If you decide to participate, please do **NOT** put your name on this survey. All responses will remain completely anonymous.

Directions

Take a minute and think of a typical threat you might hear (e.g., on a popular television show such as 24, CSI, the Sopranos, the Wire, etc.). Think carefully about the form of the threat and the kind of language used and then answer the following two questions:

1. What kind of threat do you think is the **MOST COMMON?** Please circle only **ONE** choice.

a. A **DIRECT** threat: the action, time, place, and/or victim are clearly stated—not ALL elements need to be present for it to be DIRECT, but at least two or more need to be present (e.g., "I'm going to beat you up tomorrow at noon!" or "I'm going to blow up your barn very soon!")

b. A **CONDITIONAL** threat: the threat is dependent on the recipient performing some action (e.g., "If you don't give me $1 million, you're going to be sorry!" or "If you don't change your evil ways, I'll tell your boss you've been stealing!")

c. A **VEILED** threat: the action, time, place, and/or victim are not clearly stated and there is no condition the recipient needs to fulfill to stop the threatened action (e.g., "You'd better watch your back!" or "I'm gonna get you!")

2. What kind of language do you think is the **MOST COMMON** in threats? You may list the linguistic name (e.g., proper nouns, first person pronouns, active voice, adverbs of time, profanity, etc.) or you may just list examples of the kinds of language (action verbs like: "kill, hurt, murder"; softening language like "I feel…, I think…, It seems…"; second person pronouns like: "you, ya'll"; etc.). Be creative.

Please try to list at least **3-5** items; if you have a reason for why you think that language is used, please note that as well (e.g., "words like 'must' and 'have to' are used because it shows the author is serious" or "the action is usually named to cause more fear"). Use the back side if you need more room.

Thank you very much for your participation.

APPENDIX C: SUMMARY OF GRAMMATICAL STANCE FEATURES

Biber (2006: 92-93)[78]

1: Modal and semi-modal verbs
—possibility/permission/ability: *can, could, may, might*
—necessity/obligation: *must, should, (had) better, have to, got to, ought to*
—prediction/volition: *will, would, shall, be going to*

2: Stance adverbs
—Epistemic:
Certainty: *actually, always, certainly, definitely, never, of course, obviously, really*
Likelihood: *apparently, evidently, kind of, perhaps, possibly, probably, maybe*
—Attitude: *amazingly, conveniently, hopefully, fortunately, importantly, surprisingly*
—Style: *confidently, generally, honestly, technically, truthfully, primarily, usually*

3: Complement clauses controlled by stance verbs, adjectives, or nouns

3.1: Stance complement clauses controlled by verbs

3.1a: Stance verb + *that* clause
—Epistemic verbs:
Certainty: *demonstrate, determine, find, know, prove, realize, remember, see, understand*
Likelihood: *assume, believe, doubt, guess, hypothesize, predict, presume, suspect, think*
—Attitude verbs: *agree, complain, concede, expect, fear, feel, hope, pretend, wish, worry*
—Speech act/communication verbs: *argue, claim, declare, promise, respond, suggest*

3.1b: Stance verb + *to* clause
—Probability verbs: *appear, happen, seem, tend*
—Cognition/perception verbs: *believe, expect, forget, know, learn, suppose*
—Desire/intention/decision verbs: *choose, hate, hesitate, intend, love, prefer, refuse, wish*
—Causation/modality/effort verbs: *enable, fail, help, manage, permit, require, seek, try*
—Speech act and other communication verbs: *ask, invite, remind, request, teach, warn*

3.2: Stance complement clauses controlled by adjectives

3.2a: Stance adjective + *that* clause
—Epistemic adjectives:
Certainty: *apparent, certain, confident, evident, false, obvious, sure, true, well-known*
Likelihood: *doubtful, likely, possible, probable, unlikely*
—Attitude/emotion adjectives: *afraid, disappointed, hopeful, pleased, shocked, worried*
—Evaluation adjectives: *appropriate, crucial, incredible, lucky, odd, strange, surprising*

---

[78] This Appendix includes the main grammatical stance categories outlined in Biber (2006), but only includes a small sampling of the lexical tokens from each category. For the complete list, see Biber (2006).

3.2b: Stance adjective + *to* clause
—Epistemic adjectives: *apt, guaranteed, liable, likely, prone, sure*
—Attitude/emotion adjectives: *afraid, embarrassed, pleased, proud, puzzled, relieved*
—Evaluation adjectives: *(in)appropriate, convenient, reasonable, silly, stupid, useful*
—Ability or willingness adjectives: *(un)able, eager, hesitant, obliged, ready, reluctant*
—Ease or difficulty adjectives: *difficult, easier, easy, hard, (im)possible, tough*

3.3: Stance complement clauses controlled by nouns

3.3a: Stance noun + *that* clause
—Epistemic nouns:
Certainty: *assertion, conclusion, conviction, fact, knowledge, realization, result*
Likelihood: *assumption, belief, claim, implication, impression, opinion, possibility*
—Attitude/perspective nouns: *grounds, hope, reason, view, thought*
—Communication nouns: *comment, news, proposition, remark, report*

3.3b: Stance noun + *to* clause
agreement, decision, desire, failure, intention, opportunity, promise, responsibility, right

APPENDIX D: DISTRIBUTION OF GRAMMATICAL STANCE CATEGORIES BY THREAT TYPE

As seen in Figures D.1-5 below, a study of threat types in this corpus will also yield interesting descriptive results, which is too broad in scope for the present research to adequately investigate. Future research will focus on distinguishing stance forms and functions among threat types, with a primary emphasis on the two most distinctive types, stalking and violence.

Figure D.1: Distribution of Stance Categories by Threat Type
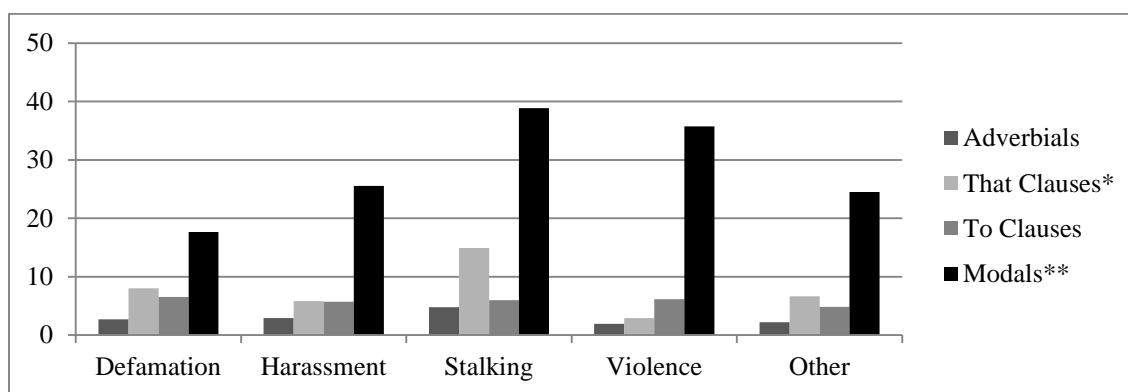
Frequency per 1000 Words, N = 118, *p < .01 (stalking), **p < .001 (stalking, violence)

Figure D.2: Distribution of Adverbials Marking Stance by Threat Type
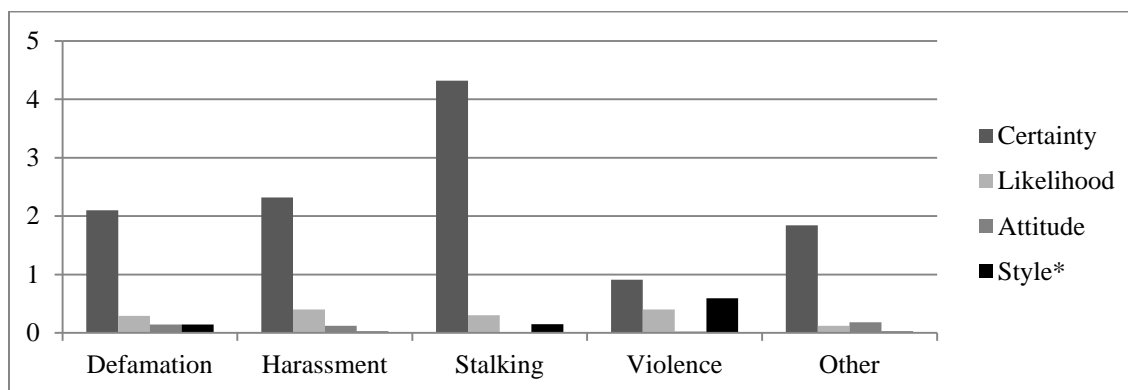
Frequency per 1000 Words, N = 118, *p < .05 (violence)

Figure D.3: Distribution of Verbs Marking Stance + *that* Clauses by Threat Type
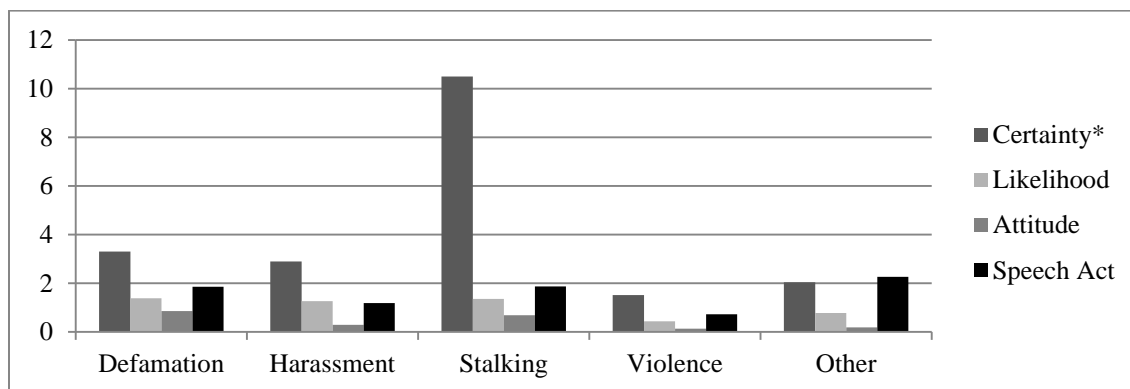
Frequency per 1000 Words, N = 118, *p < .001 (stalking)

Figure D.4: Distribution of Verbs Marking Stance + *to* Clauses by Threat Type
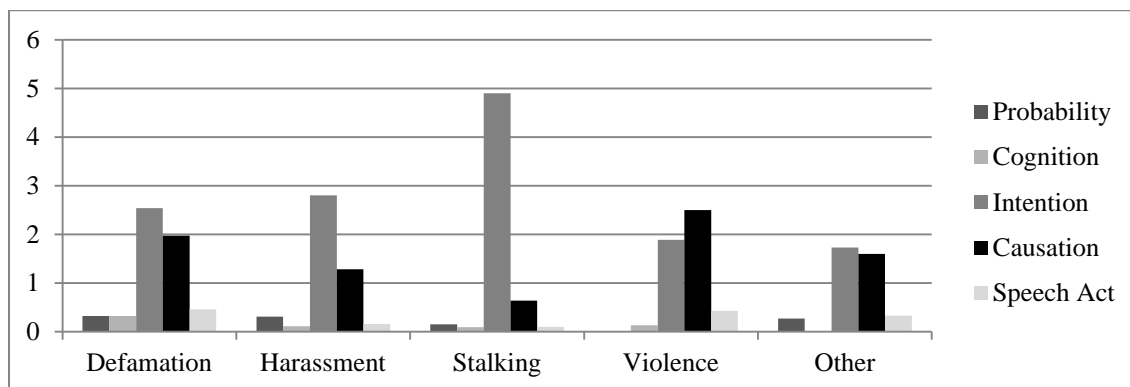
Frequency per 1000 Words, N = 118, p = ns

Figure D.5: Distribution of Modals Marking Stance by Threat Type
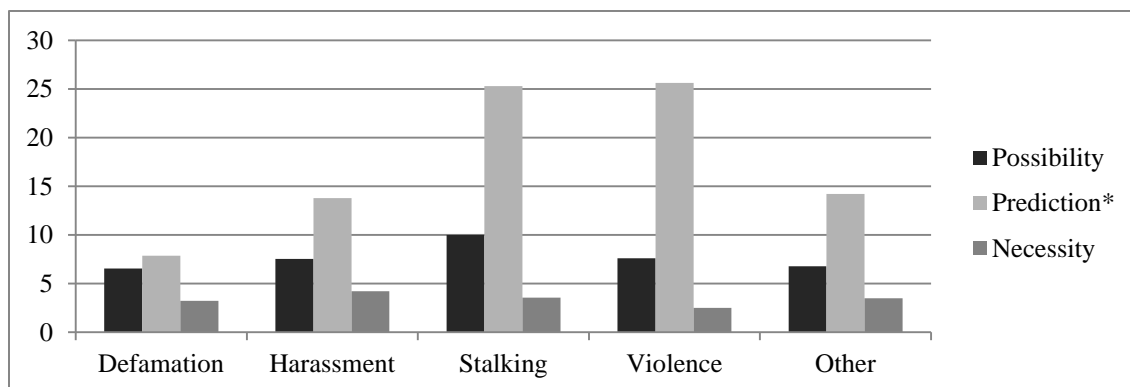
Frequency per 1000 Words, N = 118, *p < .001 (violence, stalking)

APPENDIX E: APPRAISAL ANALYSES

Key to Token Coding:

Emboldened words and phrases are part of the system of **Attitude**.

<u>Underlined</u> words and phrases are part of the system of <u>Engagement</u>.

Italicized words and phrases are part of the system of *Graduation*.

<u>Text E.1: Lampley Hollow Analysis</u>

<u>Hello ***asshole***</u>. <u>This is *the eve of*</u> the ***bloodiest*** day *in the history of* Lampley Hollow!

<u>You ***fucks*** want to **step outside the law** to show us *how much of* a **fuck** your mother is?</u> Well, <u>you have ***attacked innocent*** people</u>, <u>and *now **innocent*** people will pay</u>, on your behalf. <u>And *a few* cops **trying to stop us**</u>.

<u>Sunday is the *final* day</u> of Founders Day. On that day *a minimum* of <u>*20* people will die</u> there.

<u>Here is how it will happen</u>: <u>Your department will receive a phone call *ten* minutes *to the top of an hour*</u>, to announce the countdown. *At the hour*, the *first* <u>explosion* will occur</u>. *Approximately <u>six</u>* <u>will die</u>, *mainly* **family members**, and the **bomber**. <u>This will start a **panic**</u>, with people running in *all* directions. *One* of those <u>directions will be toward the</u> <u>*second* **bomber**</u>. *Six* seconds after the *first* explosion <u>the *second* will occur</u>, a distance from the *first*. <u>*Six* more dead.</u>

<u>*NOW* for the *big* one</u>. *Two* groups of <u>people will *collide*</u>, while *escaping* their respective explosions. At that time and place the *third*, *largest* <u>explosion will occur</u>. *Eight* dead, *at least*.

<u>You wonder why</u> we have people willing to do this and die over you? It's because <u>they don't *even* know</u> they **are packing**. <u>And you **cannot find**</u> them.

<u>The people that die will ***even*** **the score**</u>, <u>and we *start **fresh***</u>. <u>Don't ***fuckup*** or it will happen *again*.</u> <u>Perform your job</u> with **respect** and **dignity** for the people you serve <u>and you will **save their lives**</u>. <u>We *regret* this but **feel**</u> an example of <u>death is the *only* way</u> to make you understand.

*<u>*You remember the bomb</u> in the planter *last* summer? <u>That's **right**</u>, the iron pipe bomb, with an electronic igniter. <u>It was powered</u> by *four* AA batteries in an Electronic Supply pack, with a time delay. <u>Don't **count on** a **misfire** *this time*</u>. <u>We worked out the ignition **problems**</u> with that design.

<u>It's a ***great*** day coming</u>.

Table E.1: **Attitude** for LH Text

Attitude Token	Affect	Judgement	Appreciation	Appraised
asshole		-propriety		recipient
bloodiest			-reaction	day in history
fucks		-propriety		you
step outside the law		-propriety		you
fuck		-propriety		your mother
attacked		-propriety		you
innocent		+propriety		people
innocent		+propriety		people
trying to stop us		-capacity		a few cops
family members		+normality		people who will die
bomber		-propriety		person who kills
panic		-normality		people's reaction
bomber		-propriety		person who kills
are packing		-veracity		they (people who kill)
(cannot) find		(neg) +capacity		you
even the score		+capacity		people who die
even			+valuation	the score
fresh			+valuation	start
(don't) fuckup		(neg) -tenacity		you
respect		+propriety		your job performance
dignity		+propriety		your job performance
save their lives		+capacity		you
regret	-satisfaction			we
feel	+security			we
right			+composition	that (the memory)
(don't) count on (a misfire)		(neg) +tenacity		you
misfire			-composition	bomb
problems			-composition	ignition
great			+reaction	day

Table E.2: <u>Engagement</u> for LH Text

Engagement Marker	Heteroglossic/ Monoglossic	Contract/	Disclaim/ Proclaim	Deny/Counter Concur/Pronounce/

		Expand	Entertain/ Attribute	Endorse Acknowledge/ Distance
Hello asshole.	Heteroglossic	expand	entertain	
This is the eve	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce
You fucks want to step outside the law… ?	Heteroglossic	expand	entertain	
you have attacked innocent people	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce
and now innocent people will pay	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	concur
and a few cops trying to stop us	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	concur
Sunday is the final day	Monoglossic			
20 people will die	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce
Here is how it will happen	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce
Your department will receive a phone call	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce
explosion will occur	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce
six will die	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce
This will start a panic	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce
directions will be toward the second bomber	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce
the second will occur	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce
Six more dead.	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce
NOW for the big one.	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce
people will collide	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce
explosion will occur	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce
eight dead	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce
You wonder why	Heteroglossic	expand	entertain	
they don't even know	Heteroglossic	expand	attribute	acknowledge
And you cannot find them	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	concur
The people that die will even the score,	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce

and we start fresh	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	concur
Don't fuckup or it will happen again.	Heteroglossic	contract	disclaim	counter
Perform your job… and you will save their lives	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce
We regret this but… death is the only way	Heteroglossic	contract	disclaim	counter
You remember the bomb	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce
That's right	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce
It was powered	Monoglossic			
Don't count on a misfire	Heteroglossic	contract	disclaim	counter
We worked out the ignition problems	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce
It's a great day coming	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce

Table E.3: *Graduation* for LH Text

Graduation Token	Force/Focus	Quantification/ Intensification
asshole	force	int/infusing
the eve of	force	quant/extent
bloodiest	force	int/isolating
in the history of	force	quant/extent
fucks	force	int/infusing
how much of	force	quant/mass
fuck	force	int/infusing
attacked	force	int/infusing
innocent	force	int/infusing
now	force	quant/extent
innocent	force	int/infusing
a few	force	quant/number
final	force	quant/extent
a minimum	force	quant/number
20	force	quant/number
ten	force	quant/number
to the top of an hour	force	quant/extent
at the hour	force	quant/extent
first	force	quant/number
approximately	focus	

six	force	quant/number
mainly	focus	
panic	force	int/infusing
all	force	quant/number
one	force	quant/number
second	force	quant/number
six	force	quant/number
first	force	quant/number
second	force	quant/number
first	force	quant/number
six	force	quant/number
now	force	quant/extent
big	force	quant/mass
two	force	quant/number
collide	force	int/infusing
escaping	force	int/infusing
third	force	quant/number
largest	force	quant/mass
eight	force	quant/number
at least	focus	
even	focus	
even	force	int/isolating
start fresh	force	int/isolating
fuckup	force	int/infusing
again	force	quant/extent
regret	force	int/infusing
only	force	quant/number
last	force	quant/extent
four	force	quant/number
this time	force	quant/extent
great	force	int/isolating

Text E.2: Army of God Analysis

THE **BOMBING'S** IN SANDY SPRING'S AND MIDTOWN WHERE CARRIED OUT BY *UNITS* OF THE ***ARMY OF GOD***.

YOU MAY CONFIRM THE FOLLOWING WITH F.B.I. THE SANDY SPRINGS DEVICE'S-GELATIN-DYNAMITE-POWER SOURCE *6 VOLT* D BATTERY BOXES, DURACELL BRAND, CLOCK TIMER'S. THE MIDTOWN DEVICE'S ARE SIMILAR EXCEPT NO AMMO CAN'S, TUPPERWARE CONTAINERS INSTEAD-POWER SOURCE *SINGLE 6 VOLT* LANTERN BATTERIES. DIFFERENT **SHRAPNEL**, REGULAR NAIL'S INSTEAD OF CUTT NAILS.

THE ABORTION CLINIC WAS *THE TARGET* OF THE *FIRST* DEVICE. THE ***MURDER OF 3.5 MILLION CHILDREN*** *EVERY* WILL NOT BE "***TOLERATED***." THOSE WHO PARTICIPATE IN *ANY*WAY IN THE ***MURDER OF CHILDREN*** MAY BE *TARGETED* FOR ***ATTACK***. THE ***ATTACK*** THEREFORE SERVES AS A **WARNING**: *ANYONE* IN OR AROUND FACILITIES THAT ***MURDER CHILDREN*** MAY BECOME ***VICTIMS*** *OF* ***RETRIBUTION***. THE *NEXT* FACILITY *TARGETED* MAY NOT BE ***EMPTY***.

THE *SECOND* DEVICE WAS *AIMED AT* AGENTS OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT I.E. A.T.F., F.B.I., MARSHALL'S *E.T.C.* WE DECLARE AND WILL ***WAGE TOTAL WAR*** ON THE ***UNGODLY COMMUNIST REGIME*** IN NEW YORK AND YOUR ***LEGASLATIVE BUREAUCRATIC LACKEY'S*** IN WASHINGTON. IT IS YOU WHO ARE **RESPONSIBLE** AND **PRESIDE OVER** THE ***MUR OF CHILDREN*** AND ISSUE THE POLICY OF ***PREVERSION*** THAT ***DESTROYING*** OUR PEOPLE. WE WILL *TARGET ALL* FACILITIES AND PERSONNEL OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. THE ***ATTACK*** IN MIDTOWN WAS *AIMED AT* THE ***SODOMITE*** BAR (THE OTHERSIDE). WE WILL *TARGET* ***SODOMITES***, THERE ORGANIZATIONS, AND *ALL* THOSE WHO **PUSH THEIR AGENDA**.

IN THE FUTURE WHEN AN ***ATTACK*** IS MADE AGAINST *TARGETS* WHERE ***INNOCENT*** PEOPLE MAY BECOME THE *PRIMARY CAUSALTIES*, A **WARNING** PHONE CALL WILL BE PLACED TO *ONE* OF THE NEWS BUREAUS' OR 911.

Table E.4: **Attitude** for AG Text

Attitude Token	Affect	Judgement	Appreciation	Appraised
bombing's		-propriety		act performed by the army of god
army of god			+valuation	responsible group
shrapnel			-composition	item used to kill
murder of 3.5 million children		-propriety		act done by abortion doctors
tolerated			-valuation	murder of children
murder of children		-propriety		act done by abortion doctors

attack		-propriety		act of bombing performed by the army of god
attack		-propriety		act of bombing performed by the army of god
warning			-valuation	the attack
murder children		-propriety		act done by abortion doctors
victims of retribution		+normality		people in or around facilities that murder
empty			-composition	targeted facility
wage (total) war		-propriety		we
ungodly		-veracity		government agents in NY
communist		-veracity		government agents in NY
regime		-propriety		government agents in NY
legislative		-propriety		government agents in DC
bureaucratic		-propriety		government agents in DC
lackey's		-tenacity		government agents in DC
responsible (for murder)		+tenacity (neg)		you
preside over (murder)		+capacity (neg)		you
mur[der] of children		-propriety		act done by abortion doctors
perversion			-reaction	policy
destroying (our people)		-propriety		policy of perversion you issue
attack		-propriety		act of bombing performed by the army of god
sodomite		-propriety		people targeted
sodomites		-propriety		people targeted
push their agenda		-propriety		those in alignment with people targeted
attack		-propriety		act of bombing performed by the army of god

innocent		+propriety		people who die
causalties		+normality		innocent people who die
warning			-valuation	phone call

Table E.5: <u>Engagement</u> for AG Text

Engagement Marker	Heteroglossic/ Monoglossic	Contract/ Expand	Disclaim/ Proclaim Entertain/ Attribute	Deny/Counter Concur/Pronounce/ Endorse Acknowledge/ Distance
the bombing's in Sandy Spring's and Midtown where carried out by units of the Army of God.	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce
you may confirm the following with F.B.I.	Heteroglossic	expand	entertain	
the Sandy Springs device's-gelatin-dynamite-power	Monoglossic			
the Midtown device's are similar	Monoglossic			
the abortion clinic was the target	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce
murder of 3.5 million children every will not be "tolerated."	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce
those who participate in anyway in the murder of children may be targeted	Heteroglossic	expand	entertain	
the attack therefore serves as a warning.	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	concur/affirm
anyone in or around facilities that murder children may become victims	Heteroglossic	expand	entertain	
the next facility targeted may not be empty	Heteroglossic	expand	entertain	

the second device was aimed at agents	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce
we declare and will wage total war	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce
it is you who are responsible and preside over the mur of children and issue the policy of perversion	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce
we will target all facilities and personnel	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce
the attack in Midtown was aimed at the sodomite bar	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce
we will target sodomites, there organizations, and all those	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce
when an attack is made against targets	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	pronounce
innocent people may become the primary causalties	Heteroglossic	expand	entertain	
a warning phone call will be placed	Heteroglossic	contract	proclaim	concur/affirm

Table E.6: *Graduation* for AG Text

Graduation Token	Force/Focus	Quantification/ Intensification
units	force	quant/number
Army of God	force	int/infusing
6 volt	force	quant/number
single	force	quant/number
6 volt	force	quant/number
the target	force	int/infusing and repetition
first	force	quant/number
murder of 3.5 million children	force	int/infusing and repetition
3.5 million	force	quant/number
every	force	quant/number
tolerated	force	int/infusing
any (way)	focus	

murder of children	force	int/infusing and repetition
targeted	force	int/infusing and repetition
attack	force	int/infusing and repetition
attack	force	int/infusing and repetition
anyone	focus	
murder children	force	int/infusing and repetition
victims of retribution	force	int/infusing
next	force	quantification/extent
targeted	force	int/infusing and repetition
empty	focus	
second	force	quant/number
aimed at	force	int/infusing and repetition
E.T.C.	force	quant/extent
total	force	quant/extent
wage (total) war	force	int/infusing
ungodly	force	int/infusing and repetition
communist	force	int/infusing and repetition
regime	force	int/infusing and repetition
legislative	force	int/infusing and repetition
bureaucratic	force	int/infusing and repetition
lackey's	force	int/infusing and repetition
mur of children	force	int/infusing and repetition
perversion	force	int/infusing
destroying	force	int/infusing
target	force	int/infusing and repetition
all (facilities and personnel)	force	quant/number
attack	force	int/infusing and repetition
aimed at	force	int/infusing and repetition
sodomite	force	int/infusing and repetition
target	force	int/infusing and repetition
sodomites	force	int/infusing and repetition
all (those)	force	quant/number
in the future	force	quant/extent
attack	force	int/infusing and repetition
targets	force	int/infusing and repetition
innocent	force	int/isolating
primary	focus	
causalties	force	int/infusing
one	force	quant/number

REFERENCES

The Academy Group, Inc. (2009). Manassas, VA. http://www.academy-group.com/.

Agha, A. (2005). Voice, footing, enregisterment. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology, 15*(1), 38-59.

Agha, A. (2007). *Language and social relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The American National Corpus (1993). Tag descriptions. Accessed May, 25, 2010: http://www.americannationalcorpus.org/SecondRelease/Biber-tags.txt

Aspan, M. (2006). Nielsen will start to measure TV habits of college students. *New York Times*: Business. Accessed January 26, 2010: http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/20/business/media/20nielsen.html.

Austen, J. (1813/1981). *Pride and prejudice.* New York, NY: Bantam Books.

Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to do things with words.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays*. Austin, TX: The University of Texas Press.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1986). The problem of speech genres. In V. W. McGee (trans.) *Speech genres and other late essays* (pp. 60-101)*.* Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Bartlett, E. C. (1932). *Remembering.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bateson, G. (1954/1972). A theory of play and fantasy. In *Steps to an ecology of mind* (pp. 117-193). New York, NY: Ballantine.

Bauman, R. (1977). *Verbal art as performance.* Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

Bauman, R. (2001). The ethnography of genre in a Mexican market: Form, function, variation. In P. Eckert and J. R. Rickford (Eds.) *Style and sociolinguistic variation* (pp. 57-77). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bednarek, M. (2006). *Evaluation in media discourse: Analysis of a newspaper corpus*. New York, NY: Continuum.

Berman, M. E., Fallon, A. E., and Coccaro, E. F. (1998). The relationship between personality psychopathology and aggressive behavior in research volunteers. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 107*(4), 651-658.

Bernard, V. W., Ottenberg, P., and Redl, F. (2003). Dehumanization: A composite psychological defense in relation to modern war. In M. Schwebel (Ed.) *Behavioral science and human survival* (pp. 64-82). Lincoln, NE: iUniverse.

Biber, D. (1988). *Variation across speech and writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Biber, D. (1990). Methodological issues regarding corpus-based analyses of linguistic variation. *Literacy and Linguistic Computing, 5*, 257-269.

Biber, D. (1995). *Dimensions of register variation: A cross-linguistic comparison*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Biber, D. (2006). *University language: A corpus-based study of spoken and written registers.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Biber, D., Conrad, S., and Reppen, R. (1998). *Corpus linguistics: Investigating language structure and use.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Biber, D., Conrad, S., Reppen, R., Byrd, P., and Helt, M. (2002). Speaking and writing in the university: A multidimensional comparison. *TESOL Quarterly, 36*(1), 9-48.

Biber, D. and Finegan, E. (1988). Adverbial stance types in English. *Discourse Processes, 11*, 1-34.

Biber, D. and Finegan, E. (1989). Styles of stance in English: Lexical and grammatical marking of evidentiality and affect. *Text, 9*, 93-124.

Biber, D., Johansson, S., Leech, G., Conrad, S., and Finegan, E. (1999). *Longman grammar of spoken and written English*. London: Longman.

Black, H. C., Nolan, J. R., and Nolan-Haley, J. M. (1990). *Black's law dictionary, 6th edition*. St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Co.

Blommaert, J. (2005). *Discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bondi, M. (2002). Attitude and episteme in academic discourse: Adverbials of stance across genres and moves. *Textus, 15*(2), 249-264.

Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Brown, P. and Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bucholtz, M. (2007). Word up: Social meanings of slang in California youth culture. In L. Monaghan and J. Goodman (Eds.) *A cultural approach to interpersonal communication: Essential readings* (pp. 243-267). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Bucholtz, M. (2009). From stance to style: Gender, interaction, and indexicality in Mexican immigrant youth slang. In A. Jaffe (ed.) *Stance: Sociolinguistic perspectives* (pp. 146-170). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Burgess, A. W. and Marchetti, C. H. (2009). Contemporary issues. In R. R. Hazelwood and A. W. Burgess (Eds.) *Practical aspects of rape investigation: A multidisciplinary approach* (pp. 3-23). New York, NY: CRC Press.

Cesarani, R. (2007). *Attitude stance adverbials in G.W. Bush's presidential speeches.* Thesis. Università degli Studi di Sassari.

Chafe, W. (1986). Evidentiality in English conversation and academic writing. In W. Chafe and J. Nichols (Eds.), *Evidentiality: The linguistic coding of epistemology* (pp. 261-272). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Chafe, W. and Nichols, J. (Eds.) (1986). *Evidentiality: The linguistic coding of epistemology*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Channell, J. (2000). Corpus-based analysis of evaluative lexis. In S. Hunston and G. Thompson (Eds.) *Evaluation in text: Authorial stance and the construction of discourse* (pp. 38-55). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Charles, M. (2004). *The author's voice in academic writing with reference to theses in politics and materials science.* Ph.D. dissertation, University of Birmingham.

Chaski, C. (2010). ALIAS Technology, LLC: Linguistic Consulting Services. Accessed January 26, 2010: http://www.aliastechnology.com/Home.aspx.

Cheng, F. (2008). Scaffolding language, scaffolding writing: A genre approach to teaching narrative writing. *Asian EFL Journal 20*(2), available online http://www.asian-efl- journal.com/June_08_fwc.php.

Chomsky, N. (1957). *Syntactic Structures*. The Hague: Mouton de Gruyter.

Christie, F. and Martin, J.R. (1997). Introduction. In F. Christie & J.R. Martin (Eds.) *Genre and institutions* (pp. 1-2). London: Continuum.

Cole, S. and Dioso-Villa, R. (2007) *CSI* and its effects: Media, juries, and the burden of
     proof. *New England Law Review 41*(3), 435–469.

Conrad, S. and Biber, D. (2000). Adverbial marking of stance in speech and writing. In S.
     Hunston and G. Thompson (Eds.) *Evaluation in text: Authorial stance and the
     construction of discourse* (pp. 56-73). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Corpus of Contemporary American English (2010). http://www.americancorpus.org/.

Coulthard, M. and Johnson, A. (2007). *An introduction to forensic linguistics: Language
     in evidence*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Crystal, D. (2001). *Language and the internet*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cutting, J. (2008). *Pragmatics and discourse: A resource book for students, 2nd edition.*
     New York, NY: Routledge.

Davies, B. and Harré, R. (1990) Positioning: The social construction of selves. *Journal
     for the Theory of Social Behaviour, 20*, 43-63.

Davis, D. A. (1997). *Threats pending fuses burning: Managing workplace violence.* Palo
     Alto, CA: Davies-Black Publishing.

de Becker, G. (2009). MOSAIC Threat Assessment Systems. Accessed January 26, 2010:
     https://www.mosaicsystem.com/.

Dietz, P. E., Matthews, D. B., van Duyne C., Martell, D. A., Parry C. D. H., Stewart, T.,
     Warren, J., Crowder, J. D. (1991a). Threatening and otherwise inappropriate
     letters to Hollywood celebrities. *Journal of Forensic Sciences, 36*(1), 185-209.

Dietz, P. E., Matthews, D. B., Martell, D. A., Stewart, T. M., Hrouda, D. R., Warren, J.
     (1991b). Threatening and otherwise inappropriate letters to members of the
     United States Congress. *Journal of Forensic Science, 36*(5), 1445-1468.

Dowden, C., Bennell, C., and Bloomfield, S. (2007). Advances in offender profiling: A systematic review of the profiling literature published over the past three decades. *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology, 22*, 44–56.

du Bois, J. W. (2007). The stance triangle. In R. Englebretson (Ed.) *Stancetaking in discourse: Subjectivity, evaluation, interaction* (pp. 139-182). Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.

Duhart, D. T. (2001). *Violence in the workplace, 1993-99 (NCJ Publication No. 190076).* Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.

Dumas, B. K. (1990). Voice identification in a criminal law context. Special issue: Papers on language, variability, and law. *American Speech, 65*(4), 341-348.

Eggins, S. and Martin, J. R. (1997). Genres and registers of discourse. In T. van Dijk (Ed.) *Discourse as structure and process* (pp. 230-256). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Eggins, S. and Slade, D. (1997). Analysing casual conversation. London: Cassell.

Einhorn, B. J. (1992). Political asylum in the ninth circuit and the case of Elias-Zacarias. *San Diego Law Review, 29*, 597.

Englebretson, R. (2007). Stancetaking in discourse. In R. Englebretson (Ed.) *Stancetaking in discourse: Subjectivity, evaluation, interaction* (pp. 1-26). Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.

Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power.* London: Longman.

Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Federal Bureau of Investigations (2008). Photo gallery, Amerithrax case. Headline

    Archives. Accessed June 13, 2009:

    http://www.fbi.gov/page2/august08/anthrax_gallery6.html.

Federal Bureau of Investigations (2009). Man sentenced to nearly four years in federal

    prison for sending threatening white powder-laced hoax letters. Press release.

    Accessed June 25, 2009: http://dallas.fbi.gov/dojpressrel/pressrel09/dl060409.htm

Federal Bureau of Investigation (2010). Fallen Angel threat letter. Accessed May 26,

    2010: http://www.fbi.gov/ricin/envelopeletter.htm.

Fein, R., and Vossekuil, B. (1999). Assassination in the United States: An operational

    study of recent assassins, attackers, and near lethal approachers. *Journal of*

    Forensic Sciences, 44, 321-333.

Fein, R., and Vossekuil, B. (2000). *Protective intelligence and threat assessment*

    investigations: A guide for state and local law enforcement officials. Washington

    D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of

    Justice.

Ferree, M. M., Gamson, W. A., Gerhards, J., and Rucht, D. (2002). *Shaping abortion*

    discourse: Democracy and the public sphere in Germany and the United States.

    Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fillmore, C. J. (1975). An alternative to checklist theories of meaning. In Proceedings of

    the first annual meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society, Institute of Human

    Learning (pp. 123-131). University of California, Berkeley.

FindLaw (2006). U.S. v. Jake J. Brahm. Accessed June 19, 2009:

    http://news.lp.findlaw.com/hdocs/docs/terrorism/usbrahm101906hxcmp2.html

Fitzgerald, J. (2005). *Forensic linguistic services at the Behavioral Analysis Unit-1.* Quantico, VA: FBI Academy and the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime.

Fitzgerald, J. (2007). The FBI's Communicated Threat Assessment Database: History, design, and implementation. *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, February 76*(2), 1-21.

Fitzmaurice, S. (2004). Subjectivity, intersubjectivity and the historical construction of interlocutor stance: From stance markers to discourse markers. *Discourse Studies, 6*, 427-448.

Fraser, B. (1975). Warning and threatening. *Centrum, 3*(2), 169-180.

Fraser, B. (1998). Threatening revisited. *Forensic Linguistics, 5*(2), 159-173.

Friginal, E. (2009). *The language of outsourced call centers: A corpus-based study of cross cultural interaction.* Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.

Gales, T. (2009). 'Diversity' as enacted in US immigration politics and law: A corpus-based approach. *Discourse & Society, 20*(2), 223–240.

Gales, T. and Chand, V. (2010). A corpus-based approach to word frequency and syntactic categories: Untangling their relationship within sound change. Paper at 2010 Linguistic Society of America (LSA) Annual Meeting, Baltimore, MD.

Givón, T. (1990). *Syntax: A functional-typological introduction. Volume II.* Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.

Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Goffman, E. (1981). *Forms of talk.* Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Gottschalk, L. A. (1995). *Content analysis of verbal behavior: New findings and clinical applications.* Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Grice, H. P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In P. Cole and J. L. Morgan (Eds.) *Syntax and semantics: Speech acts, Vol. 3* (pp. 41-58). New York, NY: Academic.

Hale, D. J. (2006). The Chicago school. In D. J. Hale (Ed.) *The novel: An anthology of criticism and theory, 1900-2000*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1978). *Language as social semiotic: The social interpretation of language and meaning.* London: Edward Arnold.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1984). Language as code and language as behavior: A systemic-functional interpretation of the nature and ontogenesis of dialogue. In R. Fawcett, M. A. K. Halliday, S. M. Lamb, and A. Makkai (Eds.) *The semiotics of language and culture, Vol. 1: Language as social semiotic* (pp. 3-35). London: Pinter.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1985/1994). *An introduction to functional grammar.* London: Edward Arnold.

Halliday, M. A. K. (2002). *On grammar.* New York, NY: Continuum.

Halliday, M. A. K. and Hasan, R. (1976). Cohesion in English. London: Longman.

Halliday, M. A. K. and Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2004). *An introduction to functional grammar, 3rd edition.* London: Arnold.

Hanks, W. (1996). *Language and communicative practices*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Hanks, W. (2000). *Intertexts: Writings on language, utterance, and context*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

Hänlein, H. (1999). *Studies in authorship recognition: A corpus-based approach.*
European University Studies, 352*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

Hasan, R. (2003). Globalization, literacy, and ideology. *World Englishes, 22*(4), 433-448.

Haviland, J. (2005). "Whorish Old Man" and "One (Animal) Gentleman": The
intertextual construction of enemies and selves. *Journal of Linguistic
Anthropology, 15*(1), 81–94.

Hermann, M. G. (2003). Assessing leadership style: Trait analysis. In J. M. Post (Ed.),
*The psychological assessment of political leaders with profiles of Saddam
Hussein and Bill Clinton* (pp. 178-212). Ann Arbor, MI: the University of
Michigan Press.

Herring, S. C. (2004). Slouching toward the ordinary: Current trends in computer-
mediated communication. *New Media & Society, 6*(1), 26-36. Accessed August
19, 2009: http://ella.slis.indiana.edu/~herring/slouching.pdf.

Hill, J. (2007). Mock Spanish: A site for the indexical reproduction of racism in
American English. In J. Healey and E. O'Brien (Eds.) *Race, ethnicity, and
gender: Selected readings* (pp. 270-284). Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Hill, J. (2008). *The everyday language of white racism*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Hoey, M. (2000). Persuasive rhetoric in linguistics: A stylistic study of some features of
the language of Noam Chomsky. In S. Hunston and G. Thompson (Eds.)
Evaluation in text: Authorial stance and the construction of discourse (pp. 28-37).
Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Huffaker, D. A., and Calvert, S. L. (2005). Gender, identity, and language use in teenage
    blogs. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 10*(2), article 1. Accessed
    August 19, 2009: http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol10/issue2/huffaker.html.

Hunston, S. (1994). Evaluation and organization in a sample of written academic
    discourse. In M. Coulthard (Ed.), *Advances in written text analysis* (pp. 191-218).
    London: Routledge.

Hunston, S. (2007). Using a corpus to investigate stance quantitatively and qualitatively.
    In R. Englebretson (Ed.) *Stancetaking in discourse: Subjectivity, evaluation,
    interaction* (pp. 27-48). Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.

Hunston, S. and Thompson, G. (2000). Editors' introductions. In S.Hunston and G.
    Thompson (Eds.) *Evaluation in text: Authorial stance and the construction of
    discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 38-39, 56-57.

Hyland, K. (1996). Talking to the academy: Forms of hedging in scientific research
    articles. *Written Communication, 13*, 251-281.

Hyland, K. (1998). Hedging in scientific research articles. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Hymes, D. (1974). *Foundations in sociolinguistics: An ethnographic approach*.
    Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Irvine, J. T. and Gal, S. (2000). Language ideology and linguistic differentiation. In P.
    Kroskrity (Ed.) *Regimes of language: Ideologies, polities, and identities.* Santa
    Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.

Jaffe, A. (2009). Introduction: the sociolinguistics of stance. In A. Jaffe (ed.) *Stance:
    Sociolinguistic perspectives* (pp. 3-28). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jenkins, E. L. (1996). Workplace homicide: Industries and occupations at high risk. *Occupational medicine state of the art reviews, 11*(2), 219-225.

Johnstone, B. (2009). Stance, style, and the linguistic individual. In A. Jaffe (Ed.) *Stance: Sociolinguistic perspectives* (pp. 29-52). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kärkkäinen, E. (1991). *Modality as a strategy of spoken interaction: A discourse analytical and pragmatic approach with particular focus on the English language.* Licentiate Thesis. University of Oulu.

Kärkkäinen, E. (2003). *Epistemic stance in English conversation: A description of its interactional functions, with a focus on 'I think.'* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Kent, G. (1967). *The effects of threats.* Columbus, OH: Ohio State University.

Kiesling, S. F. (2004). Dude. *American Speech, 79*(3), 281-305.

Kiesling, S. F. (2009). Style as stance: Stance as the exploration for patterns of sociolinguistic variation. In A. Jaffe (Ed.) *Stance: Sociolinguistic perspectives* (pp. 171-194). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kruse, C. (2010). Producing absolute truth: CSI science as wishful thinking. *American Anthropologist, 112*(1), 79-91.

Labov, W. (1984). Intensity. In D. Schiffrin (Ed.), *Meaning, form, and use in context: Linguistic applications* (pp. 43-70). Washington DC: Georgetown University Press.

Labov, W. (1997). Some further steps in narrative analysis. *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, *Oral Versions of Personal Experience: Special Issue, 7*. Accessed April 4, 2010: http://www.ling.upenn.edu/~wlabov/sfs.html.

Leech, G. and Coates, J. (1980). Semantic indeterminacy and the modals. In S. Greenbaum, G. Leech, and J. Svartvik (Eds.) *Studies in English linguistics* (pp. 79-90). London: Longman.

Lemke, J. L. (1992). Interpersonal meaning in discourse: value orientations. In M. Davies and L. Ravelli (Eds.) *Advances in systemic linguistics: Recent theory and practice* (pp. 82-194). London: Pinter.

Lemke, J. L. (1998). Resources for attitudinal meaning: Evaluative orientations in text semantics. *Functions of Language, 5*(1), 33-56.

Lord, V. B., Davis, B., and Mason, P. (2008). Stance-shifting in language used by sex offenders: Five case studies. *Psychology, Crime and Law, 14*(4), 357-379.

Lyons, J. (1977). *Semantics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lyons, J. (1982). Deixis and subjectivity: Loquor, ergo sum? In R. Jarvella and W. Klein (Eds.), *Speech, place, and action: Studies in deixis and related topics* (pp. 101-124). Chichester, NY: Wiley.

Macken, M. and Slade, D. (1993). Assessment: A foundation for effective learning in the school context. In B. Cope and M. Kalantzis (Eds.), *The powers of literacy: A genre approach to the teaching of writing* (pp. 203-230). London: Falmer Press.

Martin, J. R. (1992). *English text: System and structure*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Martin, J. R. (1997). Analysing genre: functional parameters. In F. Christie & J.R. Martin (Eds.) *Genre and institutions* (pp. 3-39). London: Continuum.

Martin, J. R. (2000). Beyond exchange: Appraisal systems in English. In S. Hunston and G. Thompson (Eds.) *Evaluation in text: Authorial stance and the construction of discourse* (pp. 142-175). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Martin, J. R. and Rose, D. (2003). *Working with discourse: Meaning beyond the clause.* New York, NY: Continuum.

Martin, J. R. and White, P. R. R. (2005). *The language of evaluation: Appraisal in English.* New York, NY: Palgrave/Macmillan.

Meloy, J. R. and Hoffmann, J. (2008). Contributions from attachment theory and psychoanalysis to advance understanding of public figure stalking and attacking. In J. R. Meloy, L. Sheridan, and J. Hoffmann (Eds.) *Stalking, threatening, and attacking public figures: A psychological and behavioral analysis* (pp. 165-194). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Meloy, J. R.; Mohandie, K.; and Green, M. (2008). A forensic investigation of those who stalk celebrities. In J. R. Meloy, L. Sheridan, and J. Hoffmann (Eds.) *Stalking, threatening, and attacking public figures: A psychological and behavioral analysis* (pp. 37-54). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Milburn, T. W. and Watman, K. H. (1981). *On the nature of threat: A psychological analysis.* New York, NY: Praeger Publishers.

Napier, M. and Mardigian, S. (2003). Threatening messages: The essence of analyzing communicated threats. *Public Venue Security, September/October*, 16-19.

National Abortion Federation (2010). History of the Army of God. Accessed April 3, 2010: http://www.prochoice.org/about_abortion/violence/army_god.html.

National Terror Alert (2007). Goldman Sachs threatened by group calling itself A.Q.U.S.A. Accessed November 4, 2009: http://www.nationalterroralert.com/updates/2007/07/page/3/

National Terror Alert (2008). Former grocery clerk receives 6 months sentence for stadium terror attack hoax. Accessed June 27, 2009: http://www.nationalterroralert.com/updates/2008/06/06/former-grocery-clerk-receives-6 months-sentence-for-stadium-terror-attack-hoax/.

Nichols, J. (1984). Functional theories of grammar. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 13*, 97-117.

NIOSH. (1992). *Homicide in U.S. workplaces: A strategy for prevention and research.* Morgantown, WV: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Centers for Disease Control, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, DHHS (NIOSH).

Ochs, E. (1986). From feelings to grammar. In B. Schieffelin and E. Ochs (Eds.), *Language socialization across cultures* (pp. 251-272). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ochs, E. (Ed.), (1989). The pragmatics of affect. *Text 9*(1).

Ochs, E. and Capps, L. (1996). Narrating the self. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 25*, 19-43.

Ochs, E. and Schieffelin, B. (1989). Language has a heart. *Text, 9*(1), 7-25.

Olsson, J. (2004). *Forensic linguistics: An introduction to language, crime and the law.* London: Continuum.

Park, J. (2007) Interpersonal and affective communication in synchronous online discourse. *Library Quarterly, 77*(2), 133–155.

Pennebaker, J. W., Mehl, M. R., and Niederhoffer, K. G. (2003). Psychological aspects of natural language use: Our words, our selves. *Annual Review of Psychology, 54*, 547-577.

Precht, K. (2000). *Patterns of stance in English.* Ph.D. dissertation, Northern Arizona University.

Precht, K. (2003a). *Great* versus *lovely*: Stance differences in American and British English. In C. Meyer and P. Leistyna (Eds.), *Corpus analysis: Language structure and language use* (pp. 133-152). Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Precht, K. (2003b). Stance moods in spoken English: Evidentiality and affect in British and American conversation. *Text, 23*(2), 239–257.

Precht, K. (2007). StanceSearch: A new way to look at language. Kent State University. Accessed April 21, 2010: http://kprecht.net/MyWork/StanceSearch%20brochure.pdf.

Preston, D. (2007). The uses of folk linguistics. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics, 3*(2), 181-259.

Rand, A. (1936/1996). *We the living.* New York, NY: Signet.

Random House college dictionary, Revised edition (1988). New York, NY: Random House.

Reynolds, K. J., Turner, J. C., Haslam, S. A. (2000). When are we better than them and they worse than us? A closer look at social discrimination in positive and negative domains. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 78*(1), 64-80.

Rosenfeld, B. and Harmon, R. (2002). Factors associated with violence in stalking and obsessional harassment cases. *Criminal Justice and Behavior, 29*(6), 671-691.

Ross, R. N. (1975). Ellipsis and the structure of expectation. *San Jose State Occasional Papers in Linguistics, 1*, 183-191.

Rothery, J. and Stenglin, M. (1997). Entertaining and instructing: exploring experience through story. In F. Christie and J. R. Martin (Eds.) *Genre and the institutions* (pp. 231-263). London: Continuum.

Rugala, E. and Fitzgerald, J. (2003). Workplace violence: From threat to intervention. *Clinics in Occupational and Environmental Medicine, 3*, 775-789.

Scalora, M. J., Baumgartner, J. V., Zimmerman, W., Callaway, D., Maillette, M. A. J., Covell, C. N., Palarea, R. E., Krebs, J. A., and Washington, D. O. (2002). Risk factors for approach behavior toward the U.S. Congress. *Journal of Threat Assessment, 2*(2), 35-55.

Schbley, A. H. (2006). Toward a common profile of religious terrorism: Some psychosocial determinants of Christian and Islamic terrorists. *Police Practice and Research, 7*(4), 275-292.

Scheibman, J. (2002). *Point of view and grammar: Structural patterns of subjectivity in American English conversation.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Schleppegrell, M. J. (2001). Linguistic features of the language of schooling. *Linguistics and Education, 12*(4), 431-459.

Scott, Mike (2010). WordSmith Tools 5.0. Oxford University Press. http://www.lexically.net/wordsmith/

Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech acts.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Searle, J. R. (1975/1998). Indirect speech acts. In A. Kasher (Ed.) *Pragmatics: Critical concepts* (pp. 617-638). New York, NY: Routledge.

Shuy, R. (1993). *Language crimes: The use and abuse of language evidence in the courtroom.* Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Silver, M. (2003). The stance of stance: A critical look at ways stance is expressed and modeled in academic discourse. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 2*, 359-374.

Silverstein, M. (2003). Indexical order and the dialectics of sociolinguistic life. *Language & Communication, 23*(3-4), 193-229.

Smith, S. (2006). *From violent words to violent deeds? Assessing risk from threatening communications.* Ph.D. dissertation. Georgetown University.

Smith, S. (2008). From violent words to violent deeds? Assessing risk from FBI threatening communication cases. In J. R. Meloy, L. Sheridan, and J. Hoffmann (Eds.) *Stalking, threatening, and attacking public figures: A psychological and behavioral analysis* (pp. 435-455). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Spitzberg, B. H., Nicastro, A. M., and Cousins, A. (1998). Exploring the interactional phenomenon of stalking and obsessive relational intrusion. *Community Report, 11*(1), 33-47.

Storey, K. (1995). The language of threats. *Forensic Linguistics, 2*(1), 74-80.

Stubbs, M. (1986). A matter of prolonged fieldwork: Towards a modal grammar of English. *Applied Linguistics, 7*(1), 1-25.

Tannen, D. (1993). What's in a frame? Surface evidence for underlying expectations. In D. Tannen (Ed.) *Framing in discourse* (pp. 14-56). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Teubert, W. (2004). Language and corpus linguistics. In M. A. K. Halliday, W. Teubert, C. Yallop, and A. Čermáková (Eds.) *Lexicography and corpus linguistics* (pp. 73-112). New York, NY: Continuum.

Thibault, P. (1997). Mood and eco-social dynamics. In R. Hasan and P. Fries (Eds.) *On subject and theme: A discourse functional perspective* (pp. 51-90). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Tjaden, P. and Thoennes, N. (1998). *Prevalence, incidence, and consequences of violence against women: Findings from the National Violence against Women survey.* Washington, D.C.: Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, and Center for Disease Control.

Thompson, G. and Hunston, S. (2000). Evaluation: An introduction. In S. Hunston and G. Thompson (Eds.) *Evaluation in text: Authorial stance and the construction of discourse* (pp. 1-27). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Thompson, G. and Zhou, J. (2000). Evaluation and organization in text: The structuring role of evaluative disjuncts. In S. Hunston and G. Thompson (Eds.), *Evaluation in text. Authorial stance and the construction of discourse* (pp. 121-141). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Thompson, S. (2002). "Object complements" and conversation. *Studies in language, 26*(1), 125-164.

Top Colleges (2009). Top TV shows college students watch. Accessed January 26, 2010: http://www.top-colleges.com/blog/2009/12/21/top-tv-shows-for-students/.

Turner, J. T., and Gelles, M. G. (2003). *Threat assessment: A risk management approach.* New York, NY: Haworth Press.

UCREL (2008). CLAWS (the Constituent Likelihood Automatic Word-tagging System) POS Tagger. Lancaster University. http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/claws/.

U.S. Code: Title 18—Crimes and Criminal Procedure (2008). Accessed June 25, 2009: http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/18/usc_sup_01_18.html.

U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation (1997). Terrorism in the United States: Counterterrorism, Threat Assessment, and Warning Unit National Security Division. Accessed April 3, 2010: http://www.fbi.gov/publications/terror/terror97.pdf.

U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation (1998). Terrorism in the United States: Counterterrorism, Threat Assessment, and Warning Unit National Security Division. Accessed April 3, 2010: http://www.fbi.gov/publications/terror/terror98.pdf.

van Dijk, T. (1991). *Racism and the press.* London: Routledge.

van Leeuwen, T. (1993). Genre and field in critical discourse analysis. *Discourse and Society, 4*(2), 193-223.

van Leeuwen, T. (1996). The representation of social actors. In C. R. Caldas-Coulthard and M. Coulthard (Eds.) *Texts and practices: Readings in critical discourse analysis* (pp. 32-70). New York, NY: Routledge.

Vološinov, V. N. (1929). *Marxism and the philosophy of language*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Vossekuil. B., Borum, R., Fein, R., and Reddy, M. (2001). Preventing targeted violence against judicial officials and courts. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 576*(1), 78-90.

Weintraub, W. (1981). *Verbal behavior: Adaptation and psychopathology.* New York, NY: Spring Publishing.

Weintraub, W. (1989). *Verbal behavior in everyday life.* New York, NY: Spring Publishing.

Weintraub, W. (2003). Verbal behavior and personality assessment. In J. M. Post (Ed.), *The psychological assessment of political leaders with profiles of Saddam Hussein and Bill Clinton* (pp. 137-152). Ann Arbor, MI: the University of Michigan Press.

White, P. R. R. (2005). The Appraisal website: The language of attitude, arguability, and interpersonal positing. Accessed April 8, 2010: http://www.grammatics.com/appraisal/index.html.

Winter, D. G., Hermann, M. G., Weintraub, W., and Walker, S. G. (1991). The personalities of Bush and Gorbachev measured at a distance: Procedures, portraits, and policy. *Political Psychology, 12*(2), 215-245.

Wu, R. J. (2004). *Stance in talk: A conversation analysis of Mandarin final particles.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Yamanaka, N. (1995). On indirect threats. *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law, 8*(2), 37-52.