ANNOTATION GUIDE: Conative and Inhibitive Forces

For annotators - Axiodynamic Version

🧠 Fundamental Principle

You will evaluate the psychological effect of the text on a reader regarding a stated objective (telos).

Central Question:

"Reading this text, do I feel pushed to act (Fc) or held back (Fi) towards this objective?"

1️⃣ Fc - CONATIVE FORCE (pushes towards the telos)

Psychological Definition

Conative Force = What, in the text, makes one want to act towards the objective.

Not just:

- Explicit action verbs ("we must," "we have to")
  But also:
- The **tone** that inspires engagement
- The **arguments** that reinforce legitimacy
- The **rhetoric** that mobilizes emotionally
- Implicit or explicit **urgency**

Putting yourself in the author's shoes

Key question:

"What is the intended purpose (vocation) of the terms used by the author?"

Even in a neutral academic text, the author chose:

- *These specific words* (and not others)
- *This argumentative structure*
- *This level of detail*
- *This framing* of the problem

Example:

- **Text:** "The data suggests a worrying trend requiring special attention."
- ❌ **Superficial reading:** "It's neutral, academic → Fc=1"

- ✅ **Axiodynamic reading:** "'Worrying' + 'requiring' = The author is subtly pushing for action → Fc=3"

Concealed Semantics

CRITICAL: Many institutional texts conceal their conative force behind formal language.

Subtle markers:

- "It appears necessary to..." (= "We must")
- "Stakeholders are invited to..." (= "Act")
- "This situation calls for..." (= "It's urgent")
- "It would be advisable to..." (= "You should")

Mental exercise:

Rephrase the text in direct language. If it yields "Do X now!", then Fc is high, even if the original was polite.

Fc Scale (0-5)

Score	Description	Details
0	**No push**	Purely descriptive text. No call to action (even implicit). Total neutrality.
1	**Vague suggestion**	"""We could consider..."" ""It would be interesting to..."" No urgency, no commitment."
2	**Oriented mention**	"""This question deserves attention"". The author orients towards the telos without pressing."
3	**Moderate call**	"""It is necessary to..."" Arguments that legitimize action. Tone that encourages (without forcing)."
4	**Strong call**	"""We must act"". Marked urgency. Asserted moral/technical legitimacy."

5	**Categorical imperative**	"""We absolutely must..."" Militant, engaged tone. No room for inaction. Powerful mobilizing rhetoric."

2 Fi - INHIBITIVE FORCE (slows down towards the telos)

Psychological Definition

Inhibitive Force = What, in the text, discourages action towards the objective.

⚠️ CRITICAL SUBTLETY: Paradoxical Inhibition

CAUTION: Mentioning obstacles can have two opposite effects:

- Effect A: Real Inhibition
  "The obstacles are too great" → Reader discouraged → Fi high
- Effect B: Mobilizing Inhibition
  "The obstacles are immense, THEREFORE we must act" → Reader mobilized → Fi low, Fc high

How to distinguish?

Key question:

"Does the author mention obstacles to discourage or to mobilize?"

Linguistic cues:

- 👉 **Real Inhibition (Fi high)**
  - "It's too complex"
  - "The costs are prohibitive"
  - "It is already too late"
  - "The resistance is insurmountable"
  - "However, but, nevertheless" + **unresolved** obstacle
  - **Psychological effect:** The reader thinks "It's hopeless, no use trying"
- 👉 **Mobilizing Inhibition (Fi low)**
  - "Despite the immense obstacles, we must..."
  - "Precisely because it is difficult, we must..."
  - "These dangers make action even more urgent"
  - Obstacles mentioned + solution proposed
  - **Psychological effect:** The reader thinks "It's hard but necessary, let's go"

Putting yourself in the reader's shoes

Mental exercise:

After reading the text, I feel:

- ✅ "Motivated despite the difficulties" → **Fi low** (obstacles acknowledged but surmountable)
- ❌ "Discouraged by the scale of the problems" → **Fi high** (paralyzing obstacles)

Affectively Inhibiting Semantics

Some terms have an inhibiting psychological effect even unintentionally:

Examples:

- "Risk" → Evokes fear
- "Cost" → Evokes sacrifice
- "Complexity" → Evokes incomprehension
- "Slowness" → Evokes frustration
- "Uncertainty" → Evokes hesitation

BUT: Their effect depends on the **context** and **direction**:
- Context A: Inhibition
  "The risks are enormous and poorly understood" → Fi high
- Context B: Mobilization
  "The risks are enormous, which is why we must act now" → Fi low, Fc high

Typology of Inhibitions
- **Type 1: Material Obstacles**
  - Financial costs
  - Lack of resources
  - Technical constraints
  - Impossible deadlines
  - **Annotation:** Fi high IF the author presents them as **insurmountable**
- **Type 2: Political/Social Obstacles**
  - Institutional resistance
  - Lobbying opposition
  - Internal divisions
  - Lack of political will
  - **Annotation:** Fi high IF the author presents them as **blocking**
- **Type 3: Epistemic Doubts**
  - "We do not know if..."
  - "The evidence is insufficient"
  - "More research is needed"
  - "Uncertainty remains"
  - **Annotation:** Fi high IF the author recommends **inaction** in the meantime
- **Type 4: Moral/Ethical Criticisms**
  - "It would be unjust"
  - "This would violate principles"
  - "The side effects would be worse"
  - **Annotation:** Fi high IF the author **condemns** the direction of the telos

Fi Scale (0-5)

Score	Description	Details
0	**No hindrance**	No obstacles mentioned. Path to the telos presented as clear. Unreserved enthusiasm.
1	**Minor nuance**	"""A few challenges to overcome"". Obstacles mentioned but trivial. ""Certainly... but..."" with ""but"" dominating."
2	**Moderate reservations**	"Real obstacles acknowledged. But presented as surmountable. ""Difficult but necessary""."
3	**Significant obstacles**	"Serious problems identified. Doubts about feasibility. ""We must first solve X"". Numerous conditions (""if and only if..."")."
4	**Strong opposition**	"Severe criticism of the approach. Obstacles presented as major. ""This is likely to fail"". Dominant pessimistic tone."
5	**Rejection / Impossibility**	"Telos presented as impossible. Catastrophic dangers mentioned. ""We absolutely must not..."" Call for inaction or opposite direction."

3 INTERPRETATION MATRIX

Frequent Cases

Fc	Fi	Psychological Interpretation

5	0	**Pure Militant**: Total commitment, no doubt
4	2	**Engaged Realist**: Acknowledges difficulties but pushes for action
3	3	**Ambivalent**: Hesitates between "we must" and "it's difficult"
2	4	**Skeptic**: More hindrances than push
0	5	**Opponent**: Totally discourages action
5	5	**Intense "Yes, but..."**: Strong commitment + strong reservations
0	0	**Neutral/Descriptive**: No axiodynamic dimension

Trap Case: "Yes, but..."

- Typical text:
  "It is imperative to act quickly [Fc high]. However, the obstacles are numerous and complex [Fi ?]"
- Question:
  Does the author mention the obstacles to:
  A) Say "it's too hard, give up" → Fi high
  B) Say "it's hard but let's do it anyway" → Fi moderate
  C) Prepare the reader for the challenges ahead → Fi low
- **Clue:** Look at the **conclusion** of the paragraph:
  - Ends with a solution → **Fi low**
  - Ends with a problem → **Fi high**

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4 COMMENTED EXAMPLES

Example 1: Fc=5, Fi=0

- Text:
  "Never again would the Jewish people allow themselves to be massacred while the world looked on. The modern State of Israel was born in 1948 not as an act of

colonial ambition, but out of moral necessity. Only a Jewish state could guarantee that another genocide would never happen."

- **Analysis:**
  - **Fc=5**: Categorical imperative ("never again"), absolute moral legitimacy, historical necessity
  - **Fi=0**: No reservations, no "buts," no conditions
- **Vocation of terms:** Memorial mobilization, unwavering commitment
- **Psychological effect:** Reader feels called to defend this principle without compromise

Example 2: Fc=3, Fi=4

- Text:
  "The pension funds will be technically insolvent. We must acknowledge that our assembly recently took measures. But the elected officials have no intention of tackling the imminent fiscal crisis. The state is drowned in debt and unfunded liabilities."
- **Analysis:**
  - **Fc=3**: "We must acknowledge" = moderate recognition of a need for action
  - **Fi=4**: Massive obstacles (insolvency, blocking officials, debt, crisis), pessimistic tone
- **Vocation of terms:** Denouncing inaction more than mobilizing action
- **Psychological effect:** Reader feels powerless in the face of the problem's scale

Example 3: Fc=4, Fi=2 (mobilizing inhibition)

- Text:
  "AI stocks are in a historic bull run. This surge in valuations might worry some investors [obstacle]. However, it is based on solid earnings and strong balance sheets, not on irrational exuberance. The fundamentals fully justify these valuations."
- **Analysis:**
  - **Fc=4**: Reassures, legitimizes, encourages investment
  - **Fi=2**: Mentions potential worry but **immediately dispels it**
- **Vocation of terms:** Obstacle mentioned to be **dismissed** ("however")
- **Psychological effect:** Initially worried reader is **reassured** → Pushed to invest
- **TRAP:** Do not confuse:
  - Mention of obstacle → Fi automatically high ❌
  - Obstacle mentioned **then refuted** → Fi remains low ✅

Example 4: Fc=2, Fi=3 (concealed academic semantics)

- Text:
  "Developments in 20th-century physics, biology, and history seem to support the hypothesis of a first cause. It would be advisable to examine these arguments further. However, the methods employed raise certain epistemological questions."
- **Analysis:**
  - **Fc=2**: "Seem to support" + "it would be advisable" = Timid push concealed under academic neutrality

- ○ **Fi=3**: "However" + "epistemological questions" = Significant methodological reservations
- **Vocation of terms:** Polite language masking an underlying debate
- **Psychological effect:** Academic reader understands the subtext: "Interesting but doubtful"

Example 5: Fc=0, Fi=0 (pure descriptive)

- Text:
  "Political News. Health News. Security Analysis. Economy Commentary."
- **Analysis:**
  - ○ **Fc=0**: No discourse, just categories
  - ○ **Fi=0**: No obstacles (no discourse at all)
- **Vocation of terms:** Technical metadata
- **Psychological effect:** None (this is not axiodynamic discourse)

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5 GOLDEN RULES FOR ANNOTATING

- **Rule 1: Read the telos first**
  - ○ Always read the stated objective BEFORE the text.
  - ○ **Why:** To evaluate if the text **pushes towards** (Fc) or **slows down** (Fi) that specific objective.
- **Rule 2: Put yourself in the target reader's shoes**
  - ○ **Question:** Who is meant to read this text? (Citizens? Decision-makers? Experts?)
  - ○ **Effect:** The same text can have different Fc/Fi depending on the intended reader.
- **Rule 3: Analyze the argumentative structure**
  - ○ **Schema A:** Problem → Solution
    - ■ → **Fc dominant** (even if obstacles mentioned)
  - ○ **Schema B:** Problem → Complications → Doubts
    - ■ → **Fi dominant**
  - ○ **Schema C:** Urgency → Action → Benefits
    - ■ → **Fc very high**
- **Rule 4: Pay attention to "but"**
  - ○ "But" after the action:
    - ■ "We must act, but it's difficult" → **Fi high** (discourages)
  - ○ "But" after the obstacle:
    - ■ "It's difficult, but we must act" → **Fi moderate** (mobilizes despite)
- **Rule 5: Distinguish mention from emphasis**
  - ○ **Mention:**
    - ■ "There are some technical challenges" → **Fi=1** (acknowledged but minimized)
  - ○ **Emphasis:**
    - ■ "The technical challenges are immense, complex, and potentially insurmountable" → **Fi=5** (dramatized)
- **Rule 6: Look for the conclusion**

- When in doubt, **read the last sentence of the text**:
- Ends with a call to action? → **Fc dominant**
- Ends with an unresolved problem? → **Fi dominant**
- **Rule 7: Annotate the effect, not the intention**
  - Do not guess what the author "really thinks".
  - Annotate the objective **psychological effect** of the text as written.

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6 TRAPS TO AVOID

Trap	Description
Trap A: Confusing objectivity and neutrality	❌ ""The text is academic so Fc=0"" / ✅ ""The text is academic but subtly pushes → Fc=2 or 3""
Trap B: Personal bias	❌ ""I agree with this objective so Fc=5"" / ✅ ""Regardless of my opinion, the text pushes strongly → Fc=5""
Trap C: Counting words	❌ ""3 action verbs so Fc=3"" / ✅ ""Rhetorical intensity and mobilizing effect → Fc=?""
Trap D: Obstacle = Automatic Fi	❌ ""It mentions obstacles so Fi high"" / ✅ ""It mentions obstacles to overcome them → Fi low""
Trap E: Fc/Fi confusion	❌ ""Strong commitment so Fi=0"" / ✅ ""Fc and Fi are independent"" (Fc=5, Fi=5 possible for intense ""Yes, but"")
Trap F: Ignoring context	❌ ""He says 'we must' so Fc=4"" / ✅ ""We must' in what context? Moral imperative or polite suggestion?""

7 EDGE CASES (discussion)

- **Case 1: Irony / Sarcasm**
  - **Text:** "Sure, let's keep ignoring the problem, it will eventually solve itself."

- **Interpretation:**
  - Literal reading: Fc=0, Fi=5 ❌
  - Ironic reading: Fc=4 (indirect call to action), Fi=2 ✅
- **Rule:** Detect irony from context and annotate the **real effect**.
- **Case 2: Technical text with no emotional charge**
  - **Text:** "Protocol X allows reaching Y with an efficiency of Z%."
  - **Interpretation:**
    - **Fc=1** (neutral information but useful for the objective)
    - **Fi=0** (no obstacle mentioned)
  - **Rule:** Even if neutral, a text that **facilitates** the telos has Fc > 0.
- **Case 3: Call for inaction for the telos**
  - **Text:** "We must not act precipitately. Let's wait for more data."
  - **Interpretation:**
    - **Fc=0** (no push to action)
    - **Fi=5** (maximum hindrance: recommends inaction)
  - **Nuance:** If the telos is "act with caution," then:
    - **Fc=4** (pushes towards caution)
    - **Fi=2** (obstacles to precipitation)
  - **Rule:** Everything depends on the stated **telos**.

8️⃣ PRACTICAL EXERCISE (self-assessment)

- Text A
  "The FCC chairman is right to end E-Rate funding for school bus Wi-Fi. While these programs can be debated, they clearly overstepped the bounds of the law. The FCC had to rein them in."
- **Stated Telos:** "Limit FCC overreach and restore the legal framework"
- **Your annotation:**
  - Fc = ? (what push towards this telos?)
  - Fi = ? (what hindrances?)
- **Suggested answer:**
  - **Fc = 4** (strong support: "is right," "had to," legal legitimacy affirmed)
  - **Fi = 1** ("can be debated" = minor nuance, but firm conclusion)
- Text B
  "AI stock valuations seem high. Some analysts worry about a speculative bubble. Current multiples are twice the normal rate. Perhaps one should wait for a correction before investing."
- **StDétailelos:** "Rationally analyze AI stock valuations"
- **Your annotation:**
  - Fc = ?
  - Fi = ?
- **Suggested answer:**
  - **Fc = 2** (analysis proposed but timid: "seem," "perhaps")
  - **Fi = 4** (multiple hindrances: bubble worry, high valuations, call to wait)
- Text C
  "Despite the immense challenges posed by climate change, we have a moral duty to

act now. The obstacles are real but surmountable. Every day of inaction worsens the situation. The time for hesitation is over."

- **Stated Telos:** "Act against climate change"
- **Your annotation:**
  - Fc = ?
  - Fi = ?
- **Suggested answer:**
  - **Fc = 5** (categorical imperative: "moral duty," "now," "time for hesitation is over")
  - **Fi = 2** ("immense challenges" and "real obstacles" mentioned BUT presented as "surmountable" → mobilizing inhibition)

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9 IF IN DOUBT

- **If you hesitate between two values**
  - Choose the intermediate value and **note your hesitation in a comment**.
  - Example: "Hesitating between Fc=3 and Fc=4. The tone is engaged but the language remains polite."
- **If the text is ambiguous**
  - This is normal! Ambiguity is part of institutional discourse.
  - In this case:
    - Annotate the **dominant effect**
    - Fc and Fi can both be high (assumed ambivalence)
    - Comment: "Very ambivalent text"
- **If the text is off-topic**
  - Example: Technical metadata, web navigation, etc.
  - **Annotation:**
    - **Fc = 0**
    - **Fi = 0**
    - **Comment:** "No discursive content"

🎯 MNEMONIC RECAP

- **Fc (CONATIVE Force) → "This makes me want to act"**
  - Action verbs
  - Moral/technical legitimation
  - Urgency (explicit or implicit)
  - Mobilizing rhetoric
  - Even if **concealed** under academic language
- **Fi (INHIBITIVE Force) → "This slows me down"**
  - Material/political obstacles
  - Epistemic doubts
  - Moral criticisms
  - Numerous conditions

- - But **only if presented as blocking**
    - **Not if** mentioned to be overcome
- Golden Rule
  "After reading this text, do I feel more pushed (Fc) or held back (Fi) towards the objective?"

📞 IN CASE OF QUESTIONS

If a text seems truly impossible to annotate:

1. Reread the **telos**
2. Reread the text
3. Annotate **your best interpretation**
4. Comment on your difficulty
   There is no "wrong" annotation if it is thoughtful and commented on.

Estimated time per excerpt: 45-90 seconds

Total time (20 excerpts): 15-20 minutes

Your contribution is valuable to science! 🙏

Version: Annotator Guide v3.1 (axiodynamic)

Date: 2025-10-29

Approach: Psycho-semantic, interpretation of discursive vocation