Dialogic Endorsement in Social Psychology Research Articles

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The term ‘Appraisal' is used as a cover-all term to encompass all evaluative uses of language, including those by which speakers/writers adopt particular value positions or stances and by which they negotiate these stances with either actual or potential respondents. According, Appraisal - the evaluative use of language - is seen to perform the following functions:

✿ 1) Attitudinal Positioning
✿ 2) Dialogistic Positioning
✿ 3) Intertextual Positioning

(White 2005)
APPRAISAL FRAMEWORK

- Attitudinal Positioning: implies a positive/negative assessment of people, places, things, state of affairs...
- Dialogistic Positioning: means that every word/utterance is refracted through a host of other (antagonistic) idioms
- Intertextual Positioning: when a writer/speaker quotes or refers to the words or thoughts of someone else
Dialogue, in the narrow sense of the word, is of course only one of the forms – a very important form, to be sure – of verbal interaction. But dialogue can also be understood in a broader sense, meaning not only direct, face-to-face, vocalised verbal communication between persons, but also verbal communication of any type whatsoever. A book, i.e. a verbal performance in print, is also an element of verbal communication. ...[it] inevitably orients itself with respect to previous performances in the same sphere... Thus the printed verbal performance engages, as it were, in ideological colloquy of a large scale: it responds to something, affirms something, anticipates possible responses and objections, seeks support, and so on.

Voloshinov [1929] 1995
Dialogistic Positioning and Engagement

The resources by which speakers/writers negotiate the arguability of their utterances, within the Appraisal Framework, are grouped under the heading of "Engagement"
The Category of Engagement

includes:

- attribution, modality
- hearsay, concession
- polarity, evidentiality
- hedges, boosters
- metadiscursives
ENGAGEMENT

It brings together “these lexico-grammatically diverse wordings [... as] resources which vary the terms of the speakers’s engagement with propositions and proposals, [...] both in individual utterances and as the texts unfolds cumulatively”

(Martin & White 2003)
Aspects of Engagement

Dialogic Contraction:
- Proclaim
- Endorse
- Disclaim

vs.

Dialogic Expansion
- Entertain
- Attribute
when speakers/writers choose to quote or reference the words or thoughts of (and adopt a stance towards) other speakers/writers, it is usual to talk about "attribution", "direct and indirect speech", 'intertextuality' and, following Bakhtin, "heteroglossia"
ENDORSEMENT

- By referencing the words of another, the writer indicates that these words are in some way relevant to his/her current communicative purposes.

- The most basic intertextual evaluation is one of implied 'relevance'.
ENDORSEMENT

Positioning with respect to Endorsement

- Endorsement
- Dis-endorsement
- Non-endorsing
ENDORSEMENT

The endorsed utterance is

♦ one in which the writer either directly or indirectly indicates support for, or agreement with

♦ represented as true or reliable or convincing
DIS-ENDORSEMENT

Under dis-endorsement, writers:

- distance themselves from the utterance
- indicate that they take no responsibility for its reliability
- reject or deny the attributed proposition
The authors remain neutral with respect to the words/beliefs of other authors they quote.
Appraisal and Media Discourse

- The **AF** (Martin, Iedema, Feez and White) mainly deals with Media Commentary and Journalistic voice.
- It explores the way language is used to evaluate, to adopt stances, to construe **textual personas in the world of media**.
What about dialogic Endorsement in academic discourse?

- Academic discourse communities follow a very different set of rules both discipline-and-genre-specific in their professional interaction, to pursue their different communicative goals.

- Research Articles are the pivotal genre in academic communication.
Quotation and References in RAs

are crucial to engage the scientific community at global level into accepting the work as belonging to a reliable tradition of studies.
In Ras Endorsement is a significant aspect of academic writing as engagement.

In Hyland’s word’s” the way writers present their topics signal their allegiances, and stake their claims represent careful negotiations, and considerations of, their colleagues” (Hyland 2006)
Endorsement in Research Articles

- Research hypotheses have either to be rooted in previous studies, or take them into account.

- In RA Introductions and Conclusions, especially, the discourse unfolds through referring to previous specialized literature, which needs to be the starting point of current research.
Hypothesis

- Our hypothesis is that authorial endorsement towards previous authors/researchers leads not so much to dialogic contraction – as in White’s AF – but rather to dialogic expansion which results in a polyphony of authorial voices.

- The negotiation of scientific findings entails taking into account previous tradition and ‘expanding’ it.
AIMS

- We will try to highlight the *discursive/dialogic* quality of the different kinds of endorsement in Social Psychology RAs.
- We shall see how the authorial attitudes and stances are graded / vary 
  - display scaling intensity
  - sharpen / soften the focus
METHOD

Procedure: quantitative and qualitative computer-based textual analysis

Materials: Selection of 20 RAs from a wider corpus chosen from EBSCO database for Psychology and Behavioural Sciences Publications
METHOD

Criteria for selection:

3. Impact Factor
4. Relevance
5. Length
6. Date (2004-2006)
CORPUS

20 Research Articles chosen from the following refereed international Journals

British Journal of Social Psychology 8

European Journal of Social Psychology 5

The Journal of Social Psychology 4

Asian Journal of Social Psychology 2

South African Journal of Social Psychology 1
CORPUS

159118 running words

287 pages

20 Research Articles
Kinds of Endorsement

- Stronger
- Weaker
- More Neutral
A possible cline of Endorsement

STRONGER
✓ Reported Speech
✓ According to

WEAKER
✓ Paraphrase/summary
✓ e.g.
✓ See

MORE NEUTRAL
Quote (Author’s name + year)
## Data

### Occurrences of *According to*

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<th>According to</th>
<th>Running words</th>
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</tr>
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<td>..............</td>
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DATA

OCCURRENCIES on 159118 running words

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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total see</td>
<td>Not considered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>227</td>
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</table>

*Valid examples:*

- **e.g.**
- **see**
Occurrences of quotes on 159118 running words

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<td>More endorsing quotes (signpost+Author’s name + year)</td>
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Data

Occurrences of endorsement -entailing terms:
(on 159118 running words)

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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>163</td>
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</table>
Self-referential/ Endorsing words

- *Study* and *research* refer to the ongoing research
- *Studies* and *researchers* refer to previous research
Delicacy of focus

- When dealing with dialogistic expansion, differences can be subtle.
- Meta-discursivity moves in a more delicate level of analysis.
‘Textual’ context

- The full value of words/sentences may be ‘appraised’ only in their TC.
- We selected a small specialized corpus to ‘keep in touch’ with the texts.
- We extracted a sample of qualitative data to better illustrate the quality of authorial positioning.
Strong endorsement

As Lakoff & Johnson (1980/2003 p.269) noted recently, “Cognitive Psychology is dominated by the old idea that concepts are all literal and disembodied”


The researcher is here using L& J’s criticism of old CogSci ideas to support/express his own criticism
More examples

Strong endorsement

The distinctiveness account gained support from studies that revealed

Discursive/explicit self-endorsement

It is very encouraging as we start on this new road that scholars in such disparate research domains are drawing such similar conclusions from their work.


This research has been impressive in demonstrating the wide scope of unconsciously instigated influences.

The present authors will review representative literature regarding independent-interdependent self-construals in North American and Asian samples and will then introduce two hypotheses.

*JrnSocPsy 2006, 146 (5) p. 593*
Dialogic – discursive partial endorsement

- Clearly the present study differs from earlier research .... Nonetheless the parallel is interesting
- We argue that different from earlier treatments of the concept of power... in this situation.....Moreover
- The literature does not show consistent and strong support for this hypothesis
Although several studies corroborated the distinctiveness account of illusory correlations, some of those results have since been challenged.

Whilst some progress has been made in...our knowledge remains rather one-sided.

Dis-endorsement

To some, however, these impressive empirical demonstrations have become an embarrassment of riches, our empirical knowledge has outstripped our ability to understand and conceptualize.
Dis-endorsement

Although the present results are consistent with past research, researchers should not take them without a grain of salt

(Positive) endorsing phrases

✓ Consistent with earlier studies...
✓ Recent meta-analytic reviews...reveal
✓ More specifically the findings are consistent with....
✓ The findings can also be related to Platow’s work on...
✓ This conclusion is in line with Tyler’s view
Rephrasing (weaker endorsement)

- In their classic article, French and Raven (1959) understand power broadly as...
- In contrast, Moscovici (1976) distinguishes between power and influence....
- As Turner (2005) argues even the meaning of reward and sanctions...
More neutral/distant endorsement

- There has been recurring theoretical debate
- Researchers on the self have demonstrated that people
- Since the end of the Second World War, social psychologists have become increasingly aware
In Concluding

Dialogig Endorsement in RAs:

- plays a pivotal role
- can be described as a cline
- needs to be contextualized and analysed at semantic level
- leads to discursive expansion, rather than contraction
To cite with approbation one of Tommasello et al.’s (in press) conclusions “there is of course still much that we do not know about all of this”