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As previous researchers have found...' – dialogic Endorsement in Social Psychology Research Articles

The present study lies in the research domains of APPRAISAL (Iedema, Feez, and White 1994, Martin 1997, White 1998, Martin 2001), and, more specifically, of ENDORSEMENT in Research Articles (RAs), which are by now the most widely academic genre used by scientists, researchers and professionals all over the world for acquiring/disseminating information and findings.

What makes the Appraisal Framework (AF) a highly useful, versatile model or system is the way it re-considers many traditional separate headings such as modality, meta-discourse, or hedging/boosting, vagueness, without perhaps reshaping nor refining them but rather re-ordering them. It brings together "these lexico-grammatically diverse wordings […as] resources which vary the terms of the speaker's *engagement* with propositions and proposals, […] both in individual utterances and as the texts unfolds cumulatively (Martin and White, 2003 *our emphases)*". The resource of the APPRAISAL – or the evaluative use of language – which appeared more functional to our analysis is ENDORSEMENT, that has been defined as the

attribution or inter-textual positioning brought into play when a writer/speaker chooses to quote or reference the words or thoughts of another [...] relevant to his/her current communicative purposes. Thus the most basic inter-textual evaluation is one of implied 'relevance'(White 2001)**.**

The AF provides a set of tools for the analysis of ENDORSEMENT, with its variety and gradation of possibilities, from the simple binomial endorsement /dis-endorsment, up to the cline of extra versus intra vocalisation. In RAs ENDORSEMENT is a significant aspect of *academic writing as engagement* with both content and dialogue in rhetorical situations. In Hyland's words (2006:36) "the way writers present their topics, signal their allegiances, and stake their claims represent careful negotiations with, and considerations of, their colleagues". It is thus a matter of positioning, not only towards the issues discussed but also towards researchers who hold similar or different opinions on those topics.

Our main purpose is to examine and assess the value and functions of ENDORSEMENT in RAs of Social Psychology. While reporting their research and/or experiments, RA authors seem to assume attitudes which notably vary from (and within) Introductions through Methods and Results up to Discussions ― at epistemic as well as evaluative levels. Among the linguistic resources that play a major role in persuading and engaging the reading audience are citation practices, reporting and 'coming-to know' verbs, and evaluative lexis. Quotations and references are crucial to scientific discourse, and are chosen not only according to an implied relevance criterion, but also as preceding functional steps of the ongoing research. They are essential *to engage* the scientific community at a global level into reading and accepting the work as belonging to a reliable tradition of studies. ENDORSEMENT has therefore become a constitutive part of Introductions, and, to a lesser degree, of Conclusions/Discussions as well.

The manner and measure in which writers' commitments to the propositions expressed in their statements vary is discussed, mainly, in line with Martin and White's Appraisal Framework. In particular we intend to investigate both the way the authorial voice is expressed, its inter-textual positioning (Endorsement/Dis-endorsement/Non-endorsing) and the dialogic engagement (Disclaim; Proclaim; Entertain; Attribute).

Our analysis also considers RAs genre-specific variations, such as ENDORSEMENT as debate-

generating and then instrumental to dialogic expansion, rather than contraction. In addition, we examined the way in which writers report things which they believe to be true, possible, and untrue; in Skelton's terms these three main types of truth are identified as *contextualized truth, evidential truth,* and *interpreted truth.* These correspondingly stand for truth as enunciated by the research tradition, truth as the statistical evidence states it to be, and truth "as a matter of deriving possible non-statistical meaning from findings" (Skelton 1997:129) . The resulting image is a polyphony of authorial voices, to be described according to their different identities, which is a major focus of our study.

Since it is not always possible, however, nor perhaps advisable, to adopt *tout court* the same instruments for different kinds of texts – in line with the post-modern absence of consensus on a new and universally applicable critical paradigm (see Selden 1995; Hillis Miller 2006, among others) – we resorted to additional, flexible tools for analysing ENDORSEMENT in RAs, such as will be illustrated in our presentation. Furthermore, in coherence with the shared notion that the full value of words and sentences can be understood and 'appraised' only in their textual context, we did not consider de-contextualised lexical items, but we tried to evaluate how they work in their own textual contexts, through the operation of adequate, specific instruments.

We selected a corpus of 40 Research Articles of Social Psychology published in 2006, drawn from leading journals of Social Psychology circulating at global level, and precisely, *The Journal of Social Psychology* (US), *Asian Journal of Social Psychology, British Journal of Social Psychology, European Journal of Social Psychology, South African Journal of Social Psychology*. The source is EBSCO publishing, a far reaching medium of research on line, distributing 750 Journals of Psychology and Behavioural Sciences, which is highly appreciated by the contemporary web-wired academic scientific community. The RAs considered are written in English – the 'tyrant' globalising lingua franca of Research (Swales 1997) – both by English native speakers and non-native speakers, and were selected on the basis of relevance and impact factor.

In our presentation we will highlight recurring En-/Non-/Dis-endorsing linguistic features (showing both qualitative and quantitative data), classified and framed according to their specific communicative /rhetoric/negotiating purposes. This study should help to further reveal aspects of the rhetorical and socio-political distinctiveness of different disciplinary communities.
One possible further research development might be to investigate whether (and if so to what extent) such variety of authorial voices is linked to cross-cultural differences – making thus possible to identify "cases of language variations linked to the encounter/collision on different cultural frameworks within English academic discourse "(Gotti, 2006). Another and different scenario, however, may emerge, where such variety is due, simply, to the different personae authors choose to assume (reporter, writer, correspondent…) – all codified not only in the specific rules of rhetoric, but also according to the policies of the discourse communities they belong to (Hyland 2004), through the over-national standard of RAs as (a set of) genre(s) for each (sub-)community.

Keywords: dialogic engagement, inter-textual positioning, endorsement, appraisal, genre-specific variations, Research Article, discourse community, rhetoric.

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