

Appraisal Theory and the Annotation of Speaker-Writer Engagement

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Abstract

In this work, we address the annotation of language resources through the application of the engagement network in appraisal theory. This work represents an attempt to extend the advances in studies of speech and dialogue acts to encompass the latest notion of stance negotiations in discourse, between the writer and other sources. This type of phenomenon has become especially salient in contemporary media communication and requires some timely research to address emergent requirement. We shall first of all describe the engagement network as proposed by Martin and White (2005) and then discuss the issue of multi-subjectivity. We shall then propose and describe a bi-step procedure towards better annotation before discussing the benefits of engagement network in the assessment of speaker-writer stance. We shall finally discuss issues of annotation consistency and reliability.

Keywords: annotation consistency, multi-subjectivity, engagement, appraisal theory, media discourse

1. Introduction

Engagement in appraisal research is concerned with sourcing opinions and the speaker's alignment with respect to them, i.e. the way in which the speaker positions him/herself with regard to these opinions as well as hypothetical responses from the audience (Martin & White 2005: 91-134). It provides the resources through which speakers construe their point of view and take stances towards others' opinions, including all items by which the textual or authorial voice is positioned intersubjectively (Read et al 2007: 94). Significantly, the Engagement system has shifted the focus of appraisal research from static investigation of personal attitudinal meaning to a position highlighting the dynamic processes of meaning negotiation between interlocutors (Huan 2016: 4). Hunston (2011: 35) further argues that due to the intertextual feature of discourse, the sourcing of evaluation is dialogic, being highly susceptible to conditioning by the co-text in which it occurs, which makes it more difficult for a reader to isolate a single voice for (dis)agreement. For example, in the rhetorical question of example (1), the writer reports an evaluation from the source of *scientists* that the mutation of the virus is *possible*, while the writer views it as *unlikely*. Evidently, the sentence construes a contrast of opinions between the authorial voice and the attributee.

- [1] *Why should scientists suddenly fear that the H5N1 virus is likely to mutate soon, and become transmissible among humans, when it has been around for at least 50 years?*

According to the two overarching sourcing types, the dialogistic positionings are classified into two general semantic domains of Expand and Contract. As visualized in Figure 1, Expand is subdivided into Entertain and Attribute,

through which an utterance actively makes allowances for alternative positions and voices, while Contract subdivided into Disclaim and Proclaim, which act to challenge, fend off or restrict the scope of such. More specifically, under Disclaim, the sub-domain of Deny means rejecting a position, and in the option of Counter, while the alternative position has been recognised, it is held not to apply (Martin & White 2005: 117). Under Proclaim, three options are involved (Martin & White 2005: 120): Concur which overtly announces the journalist as agreeing with, or having the same knowledge as the public audience; Pronounce which concerns explicit authorial intrusion into the dialogue; and Endorse by which propositions sourced to external evidences are construed by the authorial voice as correct, valid, undeniable or otherwise maximally warrantable (Martin & White 2005: 121, 126).

In the case of Expand, the proposition is overtly grounded in either the contingent, individual subjectivity of the speaker/writer in relation to evidentials and epistemic modals, i.e. Entertain, or in the contingent subjectivity of the quoted source with regard to attribution, i.e. Attribute (White 2012: 61). By Entertain, we mean the authorial voice indicates that its position is but one of a number of possible positions and therefore, to greater or lesser degrees, makes dialogic space for those possibilities. Within Attribute, while through the Acknowledge option the speaker simply acknowledges the attributee's voice as one of a range of possible voices without making a choice of preferred voice, the Distance sub-domain explicitly detaches the writer from responsibility for what is being reported, therefore maximising the space for dialogic alternatives (Martin & White 2005: 113), as shown in example (1).

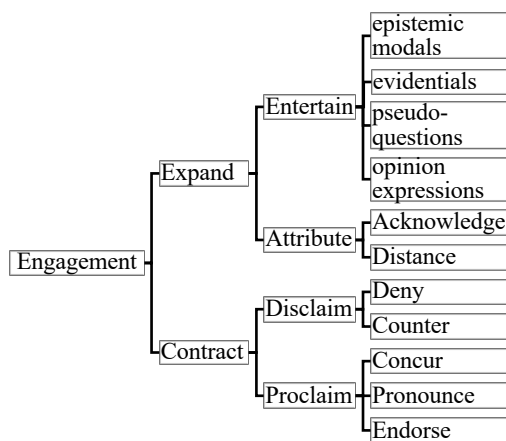


Fig 1: Engagement in Martin&White (2005: 134) In addition, from a dialogistic perspective, White (2012: 64) proposes the notion of dialogistic association to refer to the positioning of the authorial voice re the attributed proposition. It is not hard to see that the above three options of Acknowledge, Distance and Endorse fit into the framework of dialogistic association, as depicted in Figure 2. To specify, Acknowledge is taxonomised as unmarked or neutral, that is, the author presents the attributed proposition for the reader’s consideration, either possibly indicating a dialogic stance on the part of the attributed voice or not (White 2012: 66), while Distance as Disassociating, namely the author “stands away from” the attributed proposition, and Endorse as Associating, viz, the author “stands with” the attributed proposition, construing it as a given.

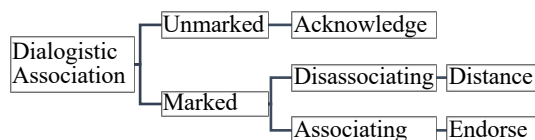


Fig. 2: Dialogistic association (White 2012: 64)

Evaluation is dependent on context, which can be defined as the immediate environment of the co-occurring words and structures (Hunston 2011: 17). As a matter of fact, appraisal is much more complex and requires a multitude of different considerations that often extend beyond the current text. Methodologically, Engagement is taxonomised based on discourse semantic categories which are used to label a stretch of discourse by referring to as much of the context and meaning of the discourse as necessary (Martin & White 2005). These conditions, however, have not been discussed in any detail in the literature, thus classifying expressions of Engagement, which is a fundamentally subjective exercise, has not received any clearly laid out consensus. As Macken-Horarik & Isaac (2014: 81) have observed, evaluation “resists enclosure in analytical boxes and frustrates the ‘either-or’ distinctions that are central to the [Appraisal]

system network”. Yet, as has been widely believed, unequivocal choices are an inescapable part of the process of text annotation.

Being difficult and subject, the task of classifying Engagement expressions based on the categories provided by the Appraisal model poses several conceptual and methodological challenges. Different interpretations for an expression are often equally plausible, and multiple category labels valid. The more fine-grained the analysis is, the more problematic and subjective classification choices become (Read & Carroll 2012). As noted by Macken-Horarik & Isaac (2014: 88), one strategy to cope with this type of ambiguities is to allow for double or multiple coding. Rather than annotating expressions with one single category label, we can, when necessary, apply two or more. However, there are several drawbacks to this approach (Fuoli 2018). Most notably, the degree of subjectivity and inconsistency involved in the annotation process grows substantially, as the number of possible choices for each item increases. The number and variety of highly subjective decisions that, as discussed above, are involved in the task of identifying and classifying expressions of Engagement may represent a challenge to achieving acceptable standards of reliability, replicability and transparency.

Context-specific definitions and guidelines are in most cases necessary to be explicitly formulated and made available to other analysts. In this article, we address the issue of stance nouns and their annotation according to the Engagement network of Appraisal Theory. This type of phenomenon has become especially salient in contemporary media communication and requires some timely research to address emergent requirement. Our work was based on stance nouns (StNs) retrieved from a corpus of British media and a corpus of Chinese media, aiming to identify differences and similarities across the two discourse groups. This work is taken as a pioneering effort towards a framework of annotation that is suitable for consistent, computationally trackable application.

2. A description of corpora as primary data

The term “stance noun” refers to the nominal expression of the writer’s point of view towards the content specified in the complement fragment (Biber et al 1999: 986; Charles 2007; Jiang & Hyland 2015). According to Biber et al (1999: 645-649), Schmid (2000: 57, 59) and Jiang & Hyland (2015), there is the strongest tendency for noun phrases to take complement *that*-clauses in different registers, which generally provide only semantic equivalence of what the head nouns are. The present study is well justified to focus on stance nouns ensued

by appositive *that*-clauses, i.e. StN + *that*, the reliable syntactic test for identifying stance nouns with minimal reliance on expert judgement in borderline cases.

The primary data comes from two comparable corpora of media English texts (Fang et al 2012). The resources comprise *Corpus of British Media English* (CBME) and *Corpus of Chinese Media English* (CCME), each of a total size of about one million word tokens. The two comparable corpora follow an identical design constituting three media types, namely, newspapers, magazines and the Internet. For each media type, five text categories are identified, including news, editorial, society, culture and arts, and business. The pre-designated corpus size is equally distributed across the three media types and the five text categories.

The two corpora were grammatically tagged for part-of-speech (POS) information using AUTASYS (Fang 1996) and then syntactically parsed for detailed structural information using the Survey Parser (Fang 2006). For every parsed tree, each node is regarded as a function-category pair and annotated as such. The subject NP is annotated as SU NP, the former indicating the syntactic function, i.e. subject, and the latter the syntactic category, that is, noun phrase. The *that*-clause is annotated as APPOS CL, indicating the presence of a clause (CL) functioning as an apposition (APPOS) of the antecedent noun. The two corpora were automatically parsed and then manually checked and corrected where necessary. Sentences containing StN+*that* constructions were identified through manual validation based on the criteria of semantic equivalence between the head noun and the proposition expressed by the APPO CL *that*-clause. Consider

- [2] He said that Mr Fisher had not alerted Mr Brooker or their record company when he decided to take action, “with the **result** *that they could not prepare themselves to meet the claim*”. <#British/web/social>

In example (2), *result* is identifiable as stance noun due to its encapsulation of the proposition in the appositive *that*-clause. It should be noted in N + *that*-clause constructions, *that* functions as a subordinate conjunction rather than a relative pronoun leading a relative clause. Compare

- [3] And if people keep coming back to discuss it, that’s the best **result** **that we can have*, he says. <#British/web/culture>

In this sentence, the head noun *result* acts as object in the relative postmodifying *that*-clause, being offered with some descriptive information. This is in sharp contrast with what happens in example (2) in which the stance noun *result* plays no syntactic role inside the appositive *that*-clause as its complete content is presented in the latter.

Table 1: Stance nouns in CBME and CCME

	StN Sent	StN Tokens	StN Types
CBME	783	846	190
CCME	361	406	115
Total	1144	1252	231

It should be noted the present study takes a corpus-driven view of language which focuses on individual wordforms rather than abstractions such as lemmas (Sinclair 1991: 44-51). We took plural forms of StNs into due consideration, systematically searching potential plural forms of StNs and including valid instances into the quantitative data, such as *concerns*, *signs*, *reports*. Some basic information about our primary data is summarized in Table 1. We observe that British English employs roughly twice as many StNs in terms of the number of sentences with StN+*that* construction, the number of StN tokens, and the number of StN types. These striking differences in the use of StNs across the two groups of professional writers of English might be further reflected in the Engagement annotation results.

3. Annotation and results

The annotation was carried out by one annotator and in three phases: annotation of Engagement contextual factors, annotation of dialogic expansion and contraction categories, and annotation of neutral, disassociating, and associating dialogistic options. Six factors were considered: source type, functional class of stance noun, type of information expressed in appositive *that*-clause, additional expansive marker, additional contractive marker and additional disassociating marker. The six factors are listed with corresponding values in Table 2. Options of the first three factors were manually annotated in phase 1, on the 783 and 361 sentences containing StN + *that* constructions, identified in the two corpora of British and Chinese media English texts.

Table 2: Description of six factors for phase 1 annotation

Factors	Values	
Source type (Martin & White 2005)	Authorial	
	Non-authorial	
	Hard proof	
Functional class of stance nouns (Jiang and Hyland 2015)	Event	Event/ Manner noun
	Evidentiality	Discourse/ Cognition/ Relation/ Quality/ Manner noun
	Modality	Status noun

Expansive marker (Coffin 2006)	Such as	hedge, modal verb/ adverb/ noun, possessive + evidential noun, reported speech
Contractive marker (Coffin 2006)	Such as	negative marker, second person pronoun, first person pronoun, unmodalised affirmative clause
Disassociating marker (Coffin 2006)	Such as	verb of negative attitude, negative marker, adjective of negative attitude
Type of information expressed in appositive <i>that</i> -clause (Schmid 2000; Jiang and Hyland 2015)	Opinion	Discourse/ Cognition/ Relation/ Quality/ Manner/ Status noun
	Event	Hard proof/ Neutral fact event noun, Manner noun

The result of phase 1 annotation is summarised in Table 3. It is observable that both the British and Chinese writers make frequent use of cognition StNs, but the former mostly for the authorial source while the latter mostly for the non-authorial source. In addition, the loglikelihood ratio test suggests that the British

journalists tend to make heavy use of discourse StNs (LR=4.913228, $p<0.05$) across non-authorial sources, whereas the Chinese colleagues prefer the use of event StNs (LR=-13.652045, $p<0.001$) across the authorial and hard proof sources.

Table 3: Phase 1 annotation result for the corpora of CBME and CCME: Different classes of stance noun, types of *that*-clause and source types

stance noun	<i>that</i> -clause	Source type	CBME		CCME	
			Freq	Prop (%)	Freq	Prop (%)
Cognition	Opinion	Authorial	164	19.4	39	9.6
		Non-authorial	120	13.9	94	23.0
<i>Subtotal</i>			284	33.6	133	32.8
Discourse	Opinion	Authorial	55	6.5	22	5.4
		Non-authorial	183	21.6	65	15.8
<i>Subtotal</i>			238	28.1	87	21.4
Event	Event	Authorial	75	8.9	50	12.3
		Non-authorial	47	5.5	17	4.1
		hard proof + Non-authorial	12	1.4	24	5.8
		hard proof	55	6.5	47	11.6
<i>Subtotal</i>			189	22.3	138	34
Manner	Event	Authorial	--	--	6	1.5
	Opinion	Non-authorial	1	0.1	2	0.4
		Authorial	1	0.1	--	--
<i>Subtotal</i>			2	0.2	8	2
Quality	Opinion	Authorial	2	0.2	--	--
<i>Subtotal</i>			2	0.2	--	--
Relation	Opinion	Authorial	3	0.3	--	--
		Non-authorial	25	2.9	4	0.9
<i>Subtotal</i>			28	3.3	4	1
Status	Opinion	Authorial	71	8.4	20	4.9
		Non-authorial	32	3.8	16	4.0
<i>Subtotal</i>			103	12.2	36	8.9
<i>Total</i>			846	100	406	100

In phase 2 the contextual factors of additional contractive marker and additional expansive marker were annotated. We summarise the contractive and expansive contextual patterns observed in the corpora of CBME and CCME in Table 4. On the basis of these contractive and

expansive contextual patterns identified, Engagement categories correspondingly in the domains of Contract and Expand were annotated. The results are summarised in Table 5.

Table 4: Phase 2 annotation results for CBME and CCME: Summary of contractive and expansive contextual patterns

Dialogic contextual patterns in terms of contraction and expansion	CBME		CCME	
	Freq	%	Freq	%
Contractive contextual patterns				
hard proof event noun	115	13.6	58	14.3
neutral fact event noun + Authorial	54	6.4	11	2.7
negative clause + Authorial	26	3.1	11	2.7
unmodalised/ deontically modalised affirmative clause + Authorial	11	1.3	58	14.3
second person pronoun/reader + Authorial	5	0.6	--	--
first person pronoun + Authorial	8	0.9	7	1.7

rhetorical question as negative clause + Authorial	1	0.1	2	0.5
Expansive contextual patterns	626	74	248	61.1
evidential opinion noun + Authorial	166	19.6	34	8.4
non-authorial + evidential opinion noun	133	15.7	61	15
non-authorial + evidential opinion noun in plural	50	5.9	27	6.7
modal opinion noun + Authorial	75	8.9	20	4.9
possessive + evidential opinion noun	40	4.7	17	4.2
neutral fact event non/ modal opinion noun in reported speech	31	3.7	32	7.9
non-authorial premodifier + evidential opinion noun	19	2.2	9	2.2
evidential opinion noun + Authorial + partial negative "little"	5	0.6	--	--
non-authorial + modal opinion noun	--	--	6	1.5
non-authorial + hard proof event noun + modal verb	--	--	2	0.5
hard proof event noun + Authorial in conditional clause	3	0.4	--	--
hard proof event noun + epistemically modalised clause + Authorial	2	0.2	--	--
neutral fact event noun + Authorial in modalised clause	1	0.1	--	--
neutral fact event noun + Authorial in subjunctive mood clause	1	0.1	--	--
non-authorial + evidential opinion noun + negative attitude	36	4.3	9	2.2
non-authorial + evidential opinion noun in plural + negative attitude	29	3.4	14	3.4
possessive + evidential opinion noun + negative attitude	26	3.1	5	1.2
non-authorial premodifier + evidential opinion noun + negative attitude	7	0.8	7	1.7
modal opinion noun + negative attitude in reported speech	1	0.1	5	1.2
non-authorial + modal opinion noun + negative attitude	1	0.1	--	--
<i>Total</i>	<i>846</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>406</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 5: Phase 2 annotation result for the corpora of CBME and CCME: Summary of engagement categories in terms of dialogical orientation

Dialogical orientation	Engagement category	CBME		CCME	
		Freq	Prop (%)	Freq	Prop (%)
Expansion	Acknowledge	273	32.3	154	37.9
	Entertain	253	29.9	54	13.3
	Distance	100	11.8	40	9.8
	<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>626</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>248</i>	<i>61.1</i>
Contraction	Endorse	86	10.2	68	16.7
	Pronounce	71	8.4	72	17.7
	Deny	62	7.3	15	3.7
	Counter	1	0.1	3	0.7
	<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>220</i>	<i>26.0</i>	<i>158</i>	<i>38.9</i>
	<i>Total</i>	<i>846</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>406</i>	<i>100.0</i>

As indicated in Table 4, both the British and Chinese journalists prefer to expand dialogic space, for which the three contextual patterns of “evidential opinion noun + Authorial”, “Non-authorial + evidential opinion noun” and “Non-authorial + evidential opinion noun in plural” are commonly most frequently used. In addition, the former also make heavy use of “modal opinion noun + Authorial”, while the latter also of “neutral fact event/ modal opinion noun in reported speech”. More notably, we observe a visibly reduction of expansion in Chinese media coupled with a salient increase in contraction, with a significant difference between the two as suggested by the loglikelihood ratio test (expansion, LR=6.707140, $p < 0.01$; contraction, LR=-14.528171, $p < 0.001$). This difference may lend itself to the suggestion that in Chinese media English texts, while the meanings construe a dialogistic backdrop of other voices and other value positions, the Chinese media are inclined to exclude or constrain certain dialogic alternatives. On the part of the British media, however, they tend to put the current proposition into play in a way which opens up the space for the dialogic alternatives. In other words, in

intersubjective terms of evaluation, the British group can be said to be more discursive while the Chinese group more assertive of a particular stance, most probably an official one (Zhao 2008).

A loglikelihood ratio test of the data presented in Table 5 further shows that within the domain of expansion, the British journalists favour the option of Entertain (LR=34.385400, $p < 0.001$). This finding may suggest that the British media prefer to dominate the discourse with their own voice while constructing meanings which indicate that the authorial position is but one of a number of possible positions. At the same time, the two journalistic groups exhibit no significant difference in the use of the other two expansive options of Acknowledge and Distance, quite an expectable result in view of the commonly held journalism ideology of neutrality and objectivity. Within the domain of contraction, the Chinese journalists favour the option of Pronounce (LR=-19.592595, $p < 0.001$), suggestive of their inclination to signal the explicit authorial intrusion into the negotiation in text. Differently, the British media tend to make the choice of

Deny (LR=6.449762, $p<0.05$), suggestive of their preference for constructing meanings which serve to reject a position, being maximally contractive. In addition, the Chinese media also skew towards the choice of Endorse (LR=-9.195267, $p<0.01$), indicating their preference for the use of external evidences as sources responsible for the propositions being advanced by the authorial or other voice as undeniable or maximally warrantable. Significantly, these differing preferences exhibited by the two groups of journalistic professionals can provide empirical support for the idea that the western media is more discursive in media reality construction whereas the Chinese media is more assertive in news event narration (Huan 2016).

It is noteworthy that in Engagement system, the boundaries between dialogic expansion and contraction are not always clear-cut, especially when it comes to the sub-categories of Entertain (sub-domain within Expand) and Proclaim (sub-domain within Contract). Certain markers of Engagement may be interpreted as instances of Entertain in certain contexts, but of Proclaim in others. Compare

[4] Compounding the situation was the **fact** *that banking institutions' loaning services only reached 37 percent of farmer households.* <#Chinese/magazine/editorial>

[5] His tenure there is generally agreed to have been particularly successful, despite the **fact** *that he used to have the reputation of being a difficult and wayward man.* <#British/magazine/arts>

It is shown that in example (4) the noun *fact* occurs in an unmodalised affirmative clause, marking the writer's seemingly objective stance towards the verifiable state of affairs encapsulated in the appositive *that*-clause. It is justifiably annotated as Pronounce. In example (5) *fact* however, occurs in the *despite* prepositional phrase, being contrasted with the information contained in the main clause and marking the author's judgment of certainty towards the complement proposition. It is arguably an instance of Entertain.

Additionally, the distinction of two options in Expand, i.e. Entertain and Attribute, also poses visible challenges. Consider

[6] GUO Qiang, general manager of Shanghai Zhongcheng Digital Technology Co., Ltd., has been on edge due to declining orders, but is breathing a little easier following **news** *that the tax rebate rate for exports of mechanical and electrical products is being raised.* <#Chinese/magazine/business>

In this example, the noun *news*, carrying no determiner, can be annotated as Entertain through interpreting the source of the complement

proposition as the writer or alternatively as Acknowledge through attributing it to an additional source which is not specified in the text. According to Sinclair (1986) and Martin & White (2005: 72), normally the speaker/writer is interpreted as the source of a proposition and takes responsibility for its truth, i.e. averral, unless it is projected as the speech or thought of an additional source (some other person or entity), i.e. attribution. In this article we are thus motivated to analyse example (6) as fitting into the category of Entertain. Moreover, when stance nouns are used in plural form, they are annotated as attributed to unspecified non-authorial sources in text, as illustrated in (7) below.

[7] THE KLF have announced a temporary departure from the music business in the wake of **rumours** *that the band is to be permanently dissolved.* <#British/magazine/arts>

In phase 3 the additional disassociating markers, the sixth contextual factor as listed in Table 2, were annotated. We summarise the associating, dialogically neutral and disassociating contextual patterns observed in the corpora of CBME and CCME in Table 6. On the basis of these dialogistic association patterns identified, Engagement categories correspondingly in the domains of Dialogistic unmarked/ neutral (Acknowledge), Associating (Endorse) and Disassociating (Distance) were annotated. The results are summarised in Table 7.

As shown in Table 6, the British and Chinese journalistic writers both tend to associate the positions being advanced in text with non-authorial voices and sources of external evidences. Additionally, the loglikelihood ratio test suggests that a significant difference between the two groups (British 54.3% vs. Chinese 64.5%, LR=-4.934618, $p<0.05$). This observation may be linked to the preferred choice of associating contextual patterns by the Chinese writers (LR=-9.195267, $p<0.01$), including "hard proof event noun" and "relational verb clause + Authorial", indicative of the author's stance of "standing with" the attributed proposition sourced to external evidences and therefore construing them as givens. Differently, the British group prefer to make dialogically neutral choices in the sense of being inclined to engage interactively with attributed voices and positions, therefore reclaiming responsibility for the truth of the propositions expressed in the appositive *that*-clauses.

According to the data presented in Table 7, the two groups of journalistic writers commonly favour the dialogically unmarked option of Acknowledge and the disassociating option of Distance. In other words, they are both inclined to present the propositions sourced to attribution

voices for the reader’s consideration, and also to stand away from the proposition attributed to the non-authorial voices. With regard to the choice of Endorse, however, the Chinese journalists make a significantly heavier use than the British (LR=9.195267, $p<0.01$), suggesting that the

Chinese group are more concerned with the factuality and objectivity of what is reported in news text by resort to external evidences which help to construe propositions as correct and valid (Huan 2016).

Table 6: Phase 3 annotation results for CBME and CCME: Summary of dialogically neutral, associating and disassociating contextual patterns

Engagement contextual patterns in terms of dialogistic association	CBME		CCME	
	Freq	%	Freq	%
Associating contextual patterns (Endorse)	86	10.2	68	16.7
hard proof event noun	86	10.2	57	14
relational verb clause + authorial	--	--	11	2.7
Dialogically neutral contextual patterns (Acknowledge)	273	32.3	154	37.9
Non-authorial + evidential opinion noun	133	15.7	61	15
Non-authorial + evidential opinion noun in plural	50	5.9	27	6.7
Possessive + evidential opinion noun	40	4.7	17	4.2
neutral fact event/ modal opinion noun in reported speech	31	3.6	32	7.9
Non-authorial premodifier + evidential opinion noun	19	2.2	9	2.2
Non-authorial + modal opinion noun	--	--	6	1.5
Non-authorial + hard proof event noun + modal verb	--	--	2	0.5
Disassociating contextual patterns (Distance)	100	11.8	40	9.8
Non-authorial + evidential opinion noun + negative attitude	36	4.3	9	2.2
Non-authorial + evidential opinion noun in plural + negative attitude	29	3.4	14	3.4
Possessive + evidential opinion noun + negative attitude	26	3.1	5	1.2
Non-authorial premodifier + evidential opinion noun + negative attitude	7	0.8	7	1.7
modal opinion noun + negative attitude in reported speech	1	0.1	5	1.2
Non-authorial + modal opinion noun + negative attitude	1	0.1	--	--
<i>Total</i>	<i>459</i>	<i>54.3</i>	<i>262</i>	<i>64.5</i>

Next, we attempt to investigate whether and how the contextual factors annotated in Phase 1, including source types, types of stance nouns and information expressed in appositive *that*-clause, are associated with the annotation of

engagement categories in Phases 2 and 3. For this purpose, we present the distribution of source types across engagement categories in the two corpora of CBME and CCME in Table 7.

Table 7: Distribution of source types across engagement categories in CBME and CCME

Engagement category	Source type	CBME		CCME	
		Freq	Prop (%)	Freq	Prop (%)
Acknowledge	Non-authorial	273	32.3	154	37.9
Distance	Non-authorial	100	11.8	40	9.9
Entertain	Authorial	253	29.9	52	12.8
	Authorial + Hard proof	--	--	2	0.5
Counter	Authorial	1	0.1	1	0.2
	Hard proof + Non-authorial	--	--	2	0.5
Deny	Authorial	46	5.4	14	3.4
	Hard proof + Non-authorial	16	1.9	1	0.2
Endorse	Hard proof + Non-authorial	38	4.5	23	5.7
	Hard proof	48	5.7	45	11.1
Pronounce	Authorial	71	8.4	72	17.7

As expounded above, the British writers prefer the expansive option of Entertain and the contractive option of Deny, while the Chinese counterparts favour the contractive/ associating option of Endorse, and also Pronounce. As the data in Table 9 indicates, this finding may be explained by the former’s preference for the authorial voice in opening up the possibility of dialogic alternatives in addition to the heavy use of non-authorial sources. Furthermore, within

the domain of contraction, the British media tend to exploit the authorial voice to reject a proposition as one means of the persuasive endeavour of media reality construction. The Chinese media, however, are inclined to deploy the authorial voice or external evidences to explicitly claim the writer’s stance towards the objectivity of news story telling, making visibly more narrative efforts.

Table 8: Distribution of types of stance nouns across engagement categories in each of the two corpora of CBME and CCME

Engagement category	Type of StN	CBME		CCME	
		Freq	Prop (%)	Freq	Prop (%)
Acknowledge	Cognition	100	11.8	75	18.5
	Discourse	107	12.6	45	11.1
	Event	12	1.4	15	3.7
	Manner	1	0.1	2	0.5
	Relation	24	2.8	3	0.7
	Status	29	3.4	14	3.4
Counter	Event	1	0.1	3	0.7
Deny	Cognition	19	2.2	8	2
	Discourse	4	0.5	5	1.2
	Event	34	4	2	0.5
	Relation	1	0.1	--	--
	Status	4	0.5	--	--
Distance	Cognition	20	2.4	16	3.9
	Discourse	76	9	20	4.9
	Relation	1	0.1	1	0.2
	Status	3	0.4	2	0.5
	Manner	--	--	1	0.2
Endorse	Event	86	10.2	68	16.7
Entertain	Cognition	136	16.1	17	4.2
	Discourse	41	4.8	13	3.2
	Event	4	0.5	2	0.5
	Manner	1	0.1	2	0.5
	Quality	2	0.2	--	--
	Relation	2	0.2	--	--
	Status	67	7.9	20	4.9
Pronounce	Cognition	9	1.1	17	4.2
	Discourse	10	1.2	4	1
	Event	52	6.1	48	11.8
	Manner	--	--	3	0.7

As indicated in Table 3, each of the two groups of writers tends to make heavy use of cognition StNs. Besides, the Chinese media prefer the use of event StNs, whereas the British media favour the use of discourse StNs. According to the data in Table 8, it may be further argued that the British journalists prefer the choice of cognition StNs in association with the authorial voice to open up the dialogic space for alternatives, i.e. Entertain (LR=38.164356, $p<0.001$), while the Chinese counterparts favour to use this type of StNs in the context of explicitly marking the authorial intrusion into the dialogue, i.e. Pronounce (LR=-11.802792, $p<0.001$). In addition, the Chinese media's preference for the contractive option of Pronounce and Endorse can be explained by their preferred choice of event StNs across the authorial voice for the former (LR=-10.406200, $p<0.01$) and hard proof source for the latter (LR=-9.195267, $p<0.01$). However, the British media's preference for the use of discourse StNs seems to have no visible link to the choice of engagement options, as the two groups do not exhibit significant difference in the choice of Acknowledge and Distance. Furthermore, the British media's preference for the choice of the contractive option of Deny cannot be connected to the use of particular type of StNs. This result

seems to suggest that the contextual factors of the type of StN and the type of appositive *that*-clause have no observable association with the choice of engagement options. These findings provide a further empirical support for the methodology expounded in this study, namely annotation of contractive/ expansive and dialogistic neutral/ associating/ disassociating contextual patterns.

5. Conclusion

In this article, we address the issue of stance nouns and their annotation according to the engagement network of Appraisal Theory. Our results show that the two groups indeed demonstrate significant differences from the engagement-based perspective, in terms of stance types, source and types, and discourse strategy in terms of expansion and contraction, and also in dialogistic association terms. While the results have demonstrated the usefulness of Appraisal Theory in empirical terms when applied to discourse analysis, the multi-subjectivity nature of contemporary media discourse has also raised a challenge to the formation of a consistent and reliable framework of analysis. Our future work will be focused on a feasibility study to test whether a subsequent annotator's manual, informed by the current study, can be compiled and used to produce annotation

results meeting the requirement of acceptable inter-annotator consistency. This is not only crucial for improving reliability and replicability, but also for ensuring transparency, i.e. allowing others to trace and fully understand the annotation process and correctly and critically interpret and assess the results. Moreover, by disclosing the annotation criteria, we enable other researchers to contribute to their improvement, and, ultimately, to a progressive and collaborative development of the APPRAISAL model.

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