

# An Analysis of the Engagement System of Vietnamese Research Articles in the Light of the Appraisal Framework

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**Abstract**—Evaluation is widely accepted by many scientists as one of the most basic and important functions of language worth studying deeply. As a result, evaluative language has drawn a lot of interests worldwide. Yet, the Vietnamese language community appears to be rather unfamiliar with this term. In order to shed further light on the use of evaluative language in Vietnam, this article examines how evaluative language is exploited by Vietnamese linguists in a corpus of 35 Vietnamese empirical research articles in the light of the Appraisal framework by Martin and White (2005). More specifically, the study analyses the frequency of categories of the Engagement system in the Appraisal framework and studies in-depth realizations of the Contract subsystem. Results show that Contract resources are more frequently employed than Expand. Writers tend to contract their dialogues more in the Conclusion section of the articles. It is hoped that the research results will be a useful reference for article writers and they can contribute to the literature materials for the fields of evaluative language and academic writing pedagogy in Vietnam.

**Index Terms**—evaluative language, appraisal framework, engagement, contract, expand

## I. INTRODUCTION

There have been numerous studies on linguistic mechanisms used to express people's emotions and evaluation. These studies were primarily approached from the perspectives of language of evaluation (Hunston, 1994; Hunston & Sinclair, 2000), meta-discourse theory (Hyland & Tse, 2005), and particularly Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal theory, which was developed from an SFL background with an emphasis on evaluative meaning from the interpersonal aspect.

Martin and White modeled their theory of evaluation into an "Appraisal Framework". This framework has been used as the theoretical foundation for evaluative language analysis in numerous studies on a range of materials and for a variety of purposes: (1) on a variety of fields and genres, such as political discourses (Helander, 2014; Mazlum & Afshin, 2016), language of advertisements (Kochetova & Volodchenkova, 2015); textbooks, historical materials (Coffin, 2006; Myskow, 2017); (2) to demonstrate the pedagogical implications and applicability of using the framework in English teaching and learning (Liu, 2010; Hu & Choo, 2015); (3) to provide evidence that the framework can be used in languages other than English, such as Korean (Bang & Shin, 2012), Spanish (Taboada & Carretero, 2010), Chinese (Kong, 2006), Vietnamese (Ngo, 2013), etc.

Evaluative language in academic discourses has been studied on various corpora from students' essays (Brooke, 2014) to parts of master and doctoral theses (Geng & Wharton, 2016), etc. However, the analysis of evaluative language used in research articles, specifically in their rhetorical structures (from rhetoric moves to different sections), has not yet attracted the attention of researchers, especially in Vietnam where evaluative language and the appraisal framework of Martin and White are of little known. This motivates us to conduct a small-scale research project on the ways authors use evaluative language, particularly **engagement** resources, in linguistic research articles written in Vietnamese. We hope that the research would serve as a resource for authors of articles and to the literature in the areas of academic writing pedagogy and evaluative language in Vietnam.

## II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUNDS

### A. The Appraisal Framework

#### (a). Overview of the Appraisal Framework

With an attempt to investigate evaluative language systematically, Martin and White (2005) introduced the Appraisal Framework with three domains of **attitude**, **engagement** and **graduation** (Figure 1). **Attitude** refers to human feelings

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and emotions, consisting of emotional interactions, behavioural judgement and evaluation of things and entities. **Engagement** is concerned with the linguistic resources speakers/ writers employ to show their stance towards the value positions that the text refers to. **Graduation** deals with gradability of evaluative resources. Each system is divided into sub-systems. For example, **attitude** is divided into **affect**, **judgement** and **appreciation**. Each sub-system is then categorised into different categories.

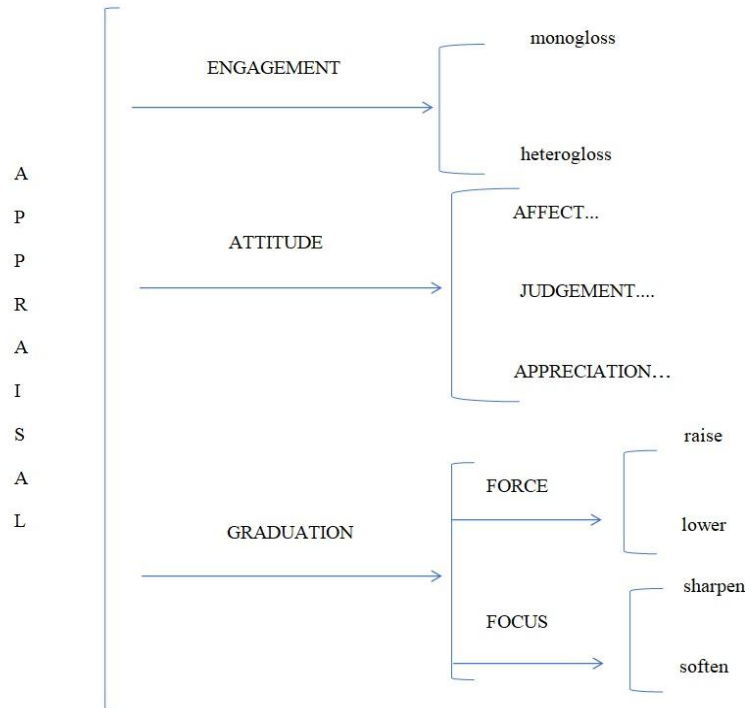


Figure 1. An Overview of the Appraisal Framework (Martin, 2005)

(b). *Engagement*

The **engagement** system is illustrated in Figure 2.

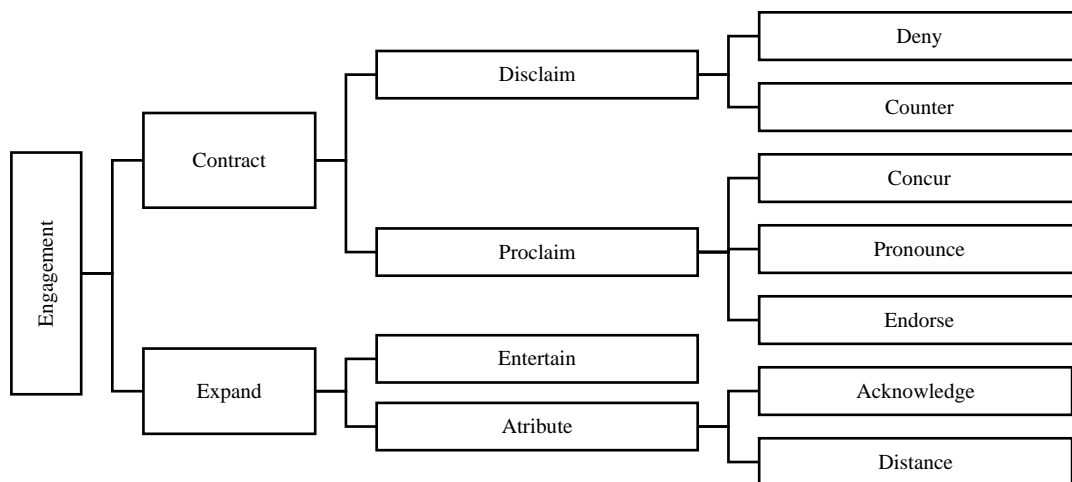


Figure 2. The Engagement System (Martin & White, 2005)

Martin and White (2005, p. 92) affirmed that “all utterances are ... in some way stanced or attitudinal”. This indicates that the speaker's attitude or point of view is reflected in whatever they say. A speaker's attitude might be conveyed as one viewpoint among several options, or it can be stated as a simple assertion that does not explicitly acknowledge other viewpoints or other voices within the text. In other words, utterances are categorized as "heterogloss" when they enable or evoke dialogic alternatives, and as "monogloss" when they do not allude to other voices and opinions. For instance, the statement "*The government has been successful*" is monoglossic because it implies that the government's success is no longer in doubt, is not up to debate, or is simply accepted. Thus, it is

assumed that there are no alternative perspectives on this. In the meantime, the statement "*I believe the government has been successful*" creates a heteroglossic atmosphere where many opinions of the government's success or failure coexist.

The **engagement** system primarily concentrates on explicitly dialogic language and the various heteroglossic diversities that it conveys. In light of this, the system is split into two major subsystems: **contract** and **expand**, which correspond to the writer's goal to either close down or provide space for other voices in the text.

### 1. Contract

**Contract** consists of meanings that, while providing a dialogic backdrop for outside voices, both confine or reject these dialogistic options from the text. There are two categories of this sub-system: **disclaim** and **proclaim**.

- **Disclaim** refers to the presentation of an author's voice in a way that rejects other opposing viewpoints. **Deny** or **counter-expectations** might be used to indicate this. For example:

*Although* (counter) *they have tried hard, they could not* (deny) *win the race.*

- **Proclaim** presents the authorial support or warranty of a proposition in ways that it eliminates or rules out other positions. **Proclaim** is expressed through categories of **concur**, **pronounce** and **endorse**. For example:

*It is the fact that* (concur) *most children prefer outdoor activities to indoor ones.*

*Results show that* (endorse) *it is feasible to integrate extensive reading activities into traditional classes.*

*I conclude that* (pronounce) *the Appraisal framework can be used as a tool to improve reading skills and enrich vocabulary in language classrooms.*

### 2. Expand

**Expand** describes meanings that are open for alternative positions and voices beside the authorial voice in the text. This subsystem is divided into two main categories: **entertain** and **attribute**.

- By "**entertain**," we mean that the author's voice is only one of many viable viewpoints, opening up a dialogue to include more options and perspectives. **Entertain** can be conveyed by modal attributes (*it's likely that, etc.*), modal adjuncts (*perhaps, probably, etc.*), modal auxiliaries (*may, might, could, etc.*), and phrases like *in my opinion, I believe, etc.* For example:

*I believed that he had broken the vase.*

- **Attribute** focused on the way outside voices are presented in the text. The most common way to express this meaning is through reported speech (*X argue that, X believe that, X claim that, etc.*). The two categories of **attribute** are **acknowledge** and **distance**. For example:

*... His attack came as the Aboriginal women involved in the case demanded [Acknowledge] a female minister examine the religious beliefs they claim [Distance] are inherent in their fight against a bridge to the island near Goolwa in South Australia. [Bank of English – OzNews sub-corpus] (Martin & White, 2005, p. 113).*

## B. The Structure of Research Articles

### (a). Macro-Structure of Research Articles

According to Swales (1990), research articles consist of three main sections: Introduction, Methods and Results/ Discussion/ Conclusions.

- Introduction presents the topic and aims of the study.

- Methods mentions methods, techniques to collect and analyse data and procedures to do research.

- Results/ Discussion/ Conclusions: A survey by Swales (1990) showed that most articles have separate Results and Discussion sections (IMRD), some combine them into one (IMR), some add sub-sections such as Conclusions, Implication, Application, etc. Therefore, Swales gather them all in Results/ Discussion/ Conclusions.

The IMR(D) structure that Swales suggested consists of only main sections of an article. Other studies reveal some modification to this structure. For instance, Yang and Allison (2004) indicate that Introduction, Methods and Results appear in all articles of their corpus while the Discussion and Conclusions are found in just 2/3 of the corpus. The researchers also point out some uncommon and optional sections like Theoretical basis, Literature review, Research questions and Pedagogic implication after Conclusions.

In this study, we divide research articles into five main sections: Introduction, Methods, Theoretical grounds, Results, and Discussion/ Conclusions. The evaluative language is realized, synthesized and compared in terms of frequency and realizations among these main sections.

### (b). Rhetorical Structure of Research Articles

The rhetorical structure of a genre is formed by rhetorical moves and steps. Rhetorical moves and steps are utilized sequentially according to the development of a text.

Many studies have investigated the rhetorical structure of separate parts of empirical research articles and the article as a whole. In the field of applied linguistics, Pho (2008) can be considered to be one of the most comprehensive analyses of rhetorical structures of the whole article from Abstract to Conclusions. Pho's model has been employed as a frame to analyze articles in other disciplines and languages, Iranian articles (Fazilatfar & Naseri, 2016) for example. This comprehensively and disciplinarily suitable model is therefore chosen as a source of reference in this study to

analyze our corpus. Based on Pho's and Fazilatfar and Naseri's models and based on our corpus of Vietnamese articles, we offer a model consisting of 15 moves as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1  
RHETORICAL MOVES OF RESEARCH ARTICLES

Sections	Rhetorical moves
Introduction	M1. Establishing a territory M2. Establishing a niche M3. Presenting the present work
Theoretical grounds	
Methods	M4. Describing design of the study M5. Describing data collection procedure M6. Describing data analysis procedure
Results (or Results Discussion)	M7. Preparing for the presentation of results M8. Reporting specific/ individual results M9. Commenting on specific results
Discussion Conclusions (or Conclusions)	M10. Preparing for the presentation of the discussion section M11. Highlighting overall research outcome M12. Discussing the findings of the study M13. Drawing conclusions of the study / Stating research conclusions M14. Evaluating the study M15. Making suggestions/ drawing implications

### III. RESEARCH METHODS

#### A. Corpus of the Study

The corpus consists of 35 Vietnamese research papers in linguistic field, published in three prestigious journals in Vietnam from 2015 to 2019. Specifically, the journals include *Ngôn ngữ* (Linguistics) – Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences; *Từ điển học và Bách khoa thư* (Lexicography & Encyclopaedia) – Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences; *Ngôn ngữ và Đời sống* (Language and Life) – Linguistic Society of Vietnam. All research papers are coded from Vres 1 to Vres 35.

#### B. Methods

In this paper, we only focus on one system of the Appraisal Framework - the **engagement**. Specifically, we count the frequency of each sub-system in **engagement**, then we analyse the realizations of the category of **contract** in details. To fulfil these aims, we employ the following methods:

Firstly, the descriptive method is used to analyse evaluative language in each sub-system in the **engagement**. Based on this analysis, the evaluative language is identified and classified into different categories and the evaluative implications of the authors are interpreted.

Statistic and classification techniques are used to categorize the evaluative language in accordance with each category and quantify the frequency of each category in each article and in the entire corpus.

### IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Frequency of Categories in the Engagement System

**Engagement** is divided into two sub-systems: **Contract** and **Expand**. Table 2 presents the detailed frequency of the sub-systems and categories in **engagement**. Generally, Vietnamese authors tend to **contract** rather than **expand** the dialogistic space for other voices into the text.

TABLE 2  
FREQUENCY OF ENGAGEMENT RESOURCES

			Rate/1000 words	Total	
Contract	Disclaim	Deny	2.71	5.74	14.01
		Counter	3.03		
	Proclaim	Concur	0.18	1.49	
		Pronounce	0.28		
		Endorse	1.03		
Expand	Entertain		2.74	2.74	3.67
	Attribute	Acknowledge	0.92	0.93	
		Distance	0.01		

As can be seen from the Table, in the **contract** sub-system, resources to illustrate **disclaim** is far higher than **proclaim** (nearly 4 times higher). In the group of **disclaim**, **counter** is used more and this category also has higher

frequency than all other categories in the entire system of **engagement**. This is understandable as many researchers have affirmed that the language used in scientific papers usually contains lots of voices (outside the text) incorporated in the articles to illustrate the overall picture of the discussed issues and highlight the contrasts between different views, which are an integral part of scientific research. In the category of **proclaim**, authors use **endorse** most and **concur** least. In the meantime, in the sub-system of **expand**, **entertain** is used more frequently than **attribute**. In the category of **attribute**, **acknowledge** appears more than **distance**. In this article, we focus on analysing categories of the **contract** sub-system.

## B. Analysis of Contract Resources

### (a). Disclaim

In the Appraisal Framework, to **disclaim**, authors can use **deny** and **counter**. Here we analyse **disclaim** from two aspects: its frequency in different parts of the article and lexical and grammatical resources for realizations.

#### 1. Frequency

The frequency of words expressing **disclaim** via **deny** and **counter** is illustrated in Table 3. In general, Discussion/ Conclusions uses **disclaim** the most in the entire article while Methods uses **disclaim** the least. The detailed illustrations of two categories of **disclaim** according to rhetorical moves and the main sections of the article are analysed as follows:

TABLE 3  
FREQUENCY OF CATEGORIES OF DISCLAIM (/1000 WORDS)

Sections	Rhetorical moves	Deny		Counter		Total	
Introduction	M1	3.12	2.70	4.60	4.25	7.72	6.95
	M2	4.90		11.27		16.17	
	M3	0.96		0.24		1.20	
Theoretical grounds		2.36	2.36	2.25	2.25	4.61	4.61
Methods	M4	0.00	1.10	0.74	1.17	0.74	2.27
	M5	1.42		1.24		2.66	
	M6	0.68		1.37		2.05	
Results	M7	1.28	2.84	2.25	3.09	3.53	5.93
	M8	2.61		3.11		5.72	
	M9	6.96		4.36		11.32	
Discussion/ Conclusions	M10	4.64	3.83	7.73	4.50	12.37	8.33
	M11	2.25		4.10		6.35	
	M12	7.08		5.10		12.18	
	M13	3.17		3.17		6.34	
	M14	3.36		6.71		10.07	
	M15	1.18	3.77	4.95			
Entire article			2.71		3.03		5.74

#### (1). Deny

From the dialogistic perspective, negation is a tool for bringing up a different positive viewpoint in a dialogistic context, and as such it acknowledges or denies that view (Martin & White, 2005). The above table illustrates that writers of scientific papers use **deny** a lot. **Deny** is used most widely in Discussion/ Conclusions and least in Methods. **Deny** has the highest density when writers discuss the findings of the study (M12) and it is completely not used in the description research design (M4). For example:

(1) *Kích cỡ từ vựng, trong trường hợp cụ thể này, **không** đủ để khẳng định sự thành công trong giao tiếp mà còn cần đến các thông tin về tần suất. (Vocabulary size, in this specific case, is **not** enough to confirm the success in communication but there should be information about frequency) (Vres 19)*

#### (2). Counter

**Counter** is to reflect a concession or countering expectation. As illustrated in Table 3, **counter** has the highest frequency in the **engagement** system. The high frequency of **counter** can be attributed to the essence of scientific research, which is to identify contradictions, problems and solutions to deal with them. Therefore, it can be said that the use of **counter** to question other views is the core of critical thinking in research doing and the prevalent voice in research articles. Researchers seem to be well aware of this and use this tool to the maximum to clarify their research objectives. This also indicates that researchers have all demonstrated the right spirit of academic language style.

Table 3 also shows that **counter** has high frequency in all sections of the research paper, of which, like in the case of **deny**, it appears the most in Discussion/ Conclusions. Methods uses **counter** the least. It should be noted that while Discussion/ Conclusions has the highest frequency of **counter**, the second rhetorical move M2 (establishing a niche) in the Introduction sees the most common use of **counter** while M4 (describing design of the study) has the lowest density. For example:

(2) *Tuy **nhì**ên trong điều kiện và ngữ cảnh của Việt Nam **chưa** thực sự có nhiều nghiên cứu chuyên sâu tìm hiểu những trở ngại của người học Việt Nam khi tiếp thụ kỹ năng quan trọng này. (**However**, in the specific conditions and*

circumstances of Vietnam, there has **not** been much research on challenges Vietnamese learners face when acquiring this important skill) (Vres 4)

## 2. Realizations of Disclaim

### (1). Deny

**Deny** is used 448 times in 25 different expressions, among which *không* (no/ not) appears 370 times in various structures (*không bị, không còn, không được ... (not/ not + adjective/ verb/ noun)*). *Chưa* (not yet) appears 64 times in structures like *chưa được, chưa phải, chưa thể (not yet + verb)* while *thiếu/ vắng* (lack/ absent) is used 11 times in different word phrases. It is noted that there are word variations in Vietnamese (*không bị, không còn, không được; chưa được, chưa phải, chưa thể* all have only one equivalent “not” in English), making the number of expressions in Vietnamese far exceed that in English.

It is also noteworthy that Vietnamese has the negative expressions of *không hề* (by no means) to upscale intensification and *không hoàn toàn, không mấy* (not really) to downscale intensification. For example:

(3) *Sơ đồ tư duy vốn không phải là một biện pháp hay khái niệm mới mẻ. (Mind mapping is not really a novel method nor concept)* (Vres 26)

### (2). Counter

There is a total 502 words reflecting **counter**, shown in 27 different expressions, of which the most-commonly used is the connector *nhưng* (but) with 166 times, other popular expressions are *tuy nhưng/ tuy nhiên/ tuy vậy* (yet – 140 times); *mặc cho/ mặc dù/ mặc dầu* (although – 48 times); structures made from *dù* (though – 27 times) such as *cho dù, dù, dù sao; trong khi (đó)* (while – 42 times); the least-common are *ngạc nhiên* (surprisingly – 2 times) and *trong lúc (đó)* (whereas – 2 times). It is noteworthy that when expressing contrasting ideas, after the connector *nhưng*, Vietnamese authors use another word of *lại* (also), creating a combination of *nhưng lại ...*; likewise, after *cũng* they may use *chỉ* (only), creating *cũng chỉ ...* to emphasize the contrast. These word combinations are not always available in English. For example:

(4) *Thế nhưng điều này chỉ đúng với tiếng Việt dùng trong nước. (But this is only the case to Vietnamese language that is used domestically)* (Vres 9)

The findings in this corpus affirm the comments by Martin and White (2005, p. 120) that **counter** is usually combined with **deny**, among which the denial expressions show the contrast against the expectations that appear in the previous expressions (see Example 2).

### (b). Proclaim

**Proclaim** is divided into three categories of **concur**, **pronounce** and **endorse**. The frequency of these categories is quite low, among which the highest is for **endorse** and the lowest is for **concur**.

#### 1. Frequency

**Proclaim** is generally not used much in the corpus. A detailed analysis of sections and rhetorical moves in the research articles show that the distribution of **proclaim** is quite similar to that of **disclaim**, that is, Discussion/ Conclusions uses **proclaim** the most while Methods uses it the least. The detailed statistics of categories of **proclaim** is presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4  
FREQUENCY OF CATEGORIES OF PROCLAIM (/1000 WORDS)

Sections	Rhetorical moves	Concur	Pronounce	Endorse	Total	
Introduction	M1	0.30	0.30	0.89	1.07	
	M2	0.00	0.49	1.47		
	M3	0.00	0.00	0.00		
Theoretical grounds		0.19	0.34	0.34	0.79	1.32
Methods	M4	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.32	0.38
	M5	0.00	0.09	0.27		
	M6	0.00	0.00	1.37		
Results	M7	0.19	0.06	0.32	1.16	1.68
	M8	0.15	0.33	1.35		
	M9	0.62	0.52	1.25		
Discussion/ Conclusions	M10	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.55	2.07
	M11	0.00	0.00	2.66		
	M12	0.33	0.33	1.65		
	M13	0.79	1.59	1.98		
	M14	0.00	0.00	0.00		
Entire article		0.18	0.28	1.03	1.49	

### (1). Concur

**Concur** is when writers incorporate their agreement by emphasizing that a fact/ situation comes as matter of course and is accurate in their view without claiming it explicitly. For example:

(5) *He is **of course** right to treat consent as significant.*

In this example, the writer does not use explicit expressions or claims of agreement like *I agree* or *I have the same opinion* but via the use of *of course*, readers can infer that this is an implicit or indirect way to show that the writer completely agrees with this view.

Research findings indicate that **concur** is rarely used. The two parts with the highest frequency of **concur** are Discussion/Conclusions and Results, with the highest density in M13 (drawing conclusions of the study). Methods does not employ **concur**; likewise, many other rhetorical moves do not make use of **concur**. For example:

(6) *Nếu ngành giáo dục của chúng ta hướng vào chuẩn hóa đội ngũ giáo viên tiếng Anh thì việc chuẩn hóa và nâng cấp chương trình đào tạo, giáo trình và phương pháp giảng dạy môn tiếng Anh là điều tất yếu. (If our education system focuses on standardizing English-teaching staff, standardizing teaching curriculum, materials and methods will come as an **inevitable** trend) (Vres 15)*

(2). *Pronounce*

**Pronounce** refers to expressions that show the writers' emphasis or their direct references and interferences in what is presented in the text. For example:

(7) *What lies behind this, **I claim**, is a degree of morphosyntactic indeterminacy in the suffixes.*

In this example, the writer directly expresses his view towards the previously-mentioned subject that the reasons for or answers to the morphosyntactic indeterminacy in the suffixes. This is an explicit utterance of the writer, which clearly states his points of view. It acts as a claim which limits chances of other opposite views to be accepted.

Table 4 indicates that **pronounce** is most commonly used in Theoretical grounds of the research but the rhetorical move that uses this tool the most is M13 (drawing conclusions of the study). By contrast, Methods uses **pronounce** the least and many rhetorical moves in the article do not apply **pronounce**. For example:

(8) *Từ những kết quả khảo sát, có thể rút ra một số kết luận sơ bộ dưới đây về đặc điểm ngữ pháp - từ vựng của Sinh học 8 nhìn từ góc độ chuyển tác. (From the results of the survey, it is possible to **draw some conclusions** about the lexical - grammatical features of Biology 8 from the point of transformation) (Vres 12)*

We assume that in academic discourses, especially in scientific reports, that very few conclusions are stated is comprehensible because a scientific statement should be based on various evidence, contrast and discussion. Scientific statements should be accurate and reliable, reflect research quality and accountability, therefore statements cannot be made intuitively but be grounded solidly. As a result, **pronounce** is used less commonly and each scientific research only expects to come up with a few certain conclusions.

(3). *Endorse*

A common way to pronounce the writer's views is by **endorsing** propositions outside the text as accurate, valid and undeniable. For scientific articles, this is the most popular way to show the writer's attitude. For example:

(9) *Nhiều nghiên cứu đã khẳng định rằng phạm vi từ vựng có vai trò quan trọng đến việc hình thành nên năng lực sử dụng ngoại ngữ. (Many studies confirmed that lexical range is important in the formation of language competence) (Vres 19)*

In this example, the writer raises a proposition that many previous studies have affirmed. Considering a statement (*the importance of lexical range to foreign language competence*) as right is an indirect way to show that the writer totally accepts this view, seeing it as a matter of fact and therefore limits opposite views in the text.

As presented in the Table, Discussion/Conclusions uses **endorse** most frequently while Methods uses this engagement tool the least. **Endorse** is realized the most in M11 when the authors highlight the research findings. Four rhetorical moves (M3, M4, M10, M14) do not use **endorse**. For example:

(10) *Kết quả cho thấy, so với bản ngữ Anh, khả năng thể hiện phẩm chất nguyên âm của sinh viên rất thấp ... (The results illustrate that in comparison with native speakers, students' ability to show vowel's nature remains very low) (Vres 15)*

## 2. Realizations of Proclaim

(1). *Concur*

There are 9 expressions for 30 words of **concur**, mostly including adjectives, of which the most common are *rõ ràng* (*obvious*) and *tất yếu* (*inevitable*). For example:

(11) *Hiển nhiên là người học càng biết nhiều từ thì độ hiểu văn bản càng tăng. (It is **obvious** that the more learners know, the higher the degree of text absorption is) (Vres 19)*

(2). *Pronounce*

There are 25 expressions for 47 statements, realized by 23 clauses with compounded subjects (including subjects and objects of communication) and impersonal pronouns such as *chúng tôi* (*we* - 5), *chúng ta* (*we* - 4), *ai* (*one* - 3), *ta* (*we* - 5), *người ta* (*people* - 1) and *non-subject* (3). The most commonly-used expression for **pronounce** is *thực tế* (*the fact* - 18). For example:

(12) **Thực tế cho thấy**, muốn nâng cao chất lượng ngoại ngữ trong trường đại học không phải là điều dễ dàng. (**The fact shows that** it is not easy to improve the foreign language quality in universities) (Vres 20)

(3). *Endorse*

There are 171 realizations of **endorse**, realized by 15 expressions. The most widely-used verbs include *cho thấy* (show - 120), *chỉ ra* (present - 20), *khẳng định* (affirm - 10), *chứng minh* (prove - 4), *chỉ rõ* (illustrate - 2), ... The popular structures are *Kết quả/ phân tích/thống kê số liệu/nghiên cứu ... + cho thấy/ chứng minh/ chỉ ra rằng ...* (*The results/ analysis/ statistics/ data/ research... show(s)/ prove(s)/ illustrate(s) that*). For example:

(13) **Các nghiên cứu cũng chỉ ra rằng** kích cỡ vốn từ vựng quyết định đến sự thành công trong giao tiếp, khả năng tận dụng các cơ hội học ngoại ngữ cũng như giúp phân loại trình độ năng lực sử dụng ngôn ngữ của người học tại các cấp độ khác nhau. (**Research indicates that** vocabulary size plays a decisive role to the success in communication, ability to make use of opportunities to learn foreign language as well as the classification of language competence of learners at different levels) (Vres 19)

C. *Comments*

Among different categories of **engagement**, authors of scientific papers tend to **contract** rather than **expand** the dialogic space and use **acknowledge** the least in their scientific articles. It is likely that writers are trying to create room to exchange opinions and avoid acknowledging external views in their research as this acknowledgement may restrict the opportunities for writers to exchange and counter in their own reports. Our research findings go in line with the findings of Geng and Wharton (2016) in their research on doctoral theses in applied linguistics. Geng et. al. commented that British authors really mind incorporating other **engagement** resources in their papers, and they especially use more **disclaim** than **proclaim**.

V. CONCLUSION

The analysis of the frequency and realizations of **engagement** resources in scientific research papers (specifically the use of **contract**) helps to draw the following remarks about the ways writers show their **engagement** in their research papers.

To make their research papers more reliable, to show the specialized knowledge of the writers in the research topics, to illustrate the links and significance of the research findings amid the current contexts, writers can enhance their papers' persuasiveness by expressing their **engagement** in the contents. Specifically, in Introduction, writers use **deny** and **counter** in M2 to discuss the research gaps in order to show their critical views as well as highlight the rationale of the current research. When presenting Research findings, **endorse** is used frequently to create the objectiveness of the statistic results. **Pronounce** is also used most commonly in this part to present the authors' statements or affirmations of the findings. In other words, **contracting** the dialogic space is used more towards the end of the articles as this is where the authors wish to affirm their results and views rather than open up the dialogic space for alternative positions, like in other parts of the article.

Different resources of lexis and grammar are used to realize the **contract**. For example, among various connectors to realize **counter**, *nhưng* (*but*) and *tuy nhưng/ tuy nhiên/ tuy vậy* (*however*) are used most frequently and usually accompany negative words while *rõ ràng* (*obvious*) and *tất yếu* (*inevitable*) are the most common expressions of **concur**. This demonstrates the flexibility of authors in using the language to draw readers' attention and persuade them more effectively.

Evaluative language analyzed in the view of Appraisal Framework by Martin and White covers some other systems that are not yet mentioned in this article. This leaves a gap that we expect to fill in our future research so as to create a full picture of the ways Vietnamese linguists use evaluative language in their papers. We do hope that this research can be used by researchers, especially novel ones, as a source of reference to improve the quality of their research papers.

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