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*Authorial Identity and Textual Voices
in English Review Discourse across Disciplines*

Partendo da un corpus di *book review article* pubblicati in riviste scientifiche anglosassoni e americane nell'ambito disciplinare delle scienze umane e sociali, il presente articolo prende in esame in un confronto cross-disciplinare il rapporto tra le forme di riferimento all'identità del recensore, che servono a introdurre le forme del ragionamento che lo caratterizzano, e le diverse voci che sono rappresentate nel testo. L'espressione della valutazione è un tratto distintivo di questo genere della comunicazione accademica scritta che viene presentata come evento argomentativo. Gli autori di *book review article* sfruttano la dimensione valutativa per veicolare le proprie argomentazioni intorno alle idee dell'autore recensito e intrattenere un dialogo con una pluralità di voci: l'autore recensito, la comunità di discorso scientifico-disciplinare, e il lettore. I risultati dell'analisi evidenziano significative convergenze/divergenze tra le discipline.

1. Introduction

Academic writing has traditionally been thought of as an impersonal prose. But recent research suggests a growing recognition that there is room for negotiation of writer identity within academic writing (Ivanič 1998; Tang / John 1999; Hyland 2001a, 2002a; Fløttum 2005; Bondi 2007a).

As observed by Hyland (2006: 36):

Academic writing is an interactive, as well as cognitive, project. [...] The ways writers present their topics, signal their allegiances, and stake their claims represent careful negotiations with, and considerations of, their colleagues. These interactions essentially involve 'positioning', or adopting a point of view in relation to both the issues discussed in the text and to others who hold points of view on those issues.

Bondi (1999: 5) states something very similar to this when she claims that “the representation of the different positions is one of the core activities in the community and may even become the distinctive feature of some genres”.

Book review articles would seem to offer a particularly interesting arena for the analysis of the notion of writer identity. Their primary function is to evaluate the knowledge claims of other researchers in the context of their publications. This is clearly different from a book review which functions to evaluate a range of features of books (Hyland 2000). This type of review genre offers a critical analysis of the ideas an author discusses in his or her book (not necessarily a new one) as a springboard for a wider evaluation of them, comprising a discussion of the issues they raise and an appraisal of what this means for the community.

Book review articles can be thus seen as crucial sites of engagement, where reviewers provide evaluative commentary on the voices variously reported in the text (i.e. the reviewed book author), and display their credibility by projecting an identity invested with individual authority (e.g. *I believe X deserves credit for having ventured onto contested ground, inevitably inviting debate*).

The notion of identity in academic research writing has become an extensive area of study in recent years and much of this work focuses on forms of authorial self-mention, writer visibility and interaction with the reader across disciplines or disciplinary fields (Fløttum / Dahl / Kinn 2006; Hyland / Bondi 2006). Not enough attention, however, has been paid to the different types of textual voices involved in the presentation of academic research, and to the role they play in the construction of the writer’s identity in different disciplinary domains. In fact, only one study is known to me: Bondi (2007a), dealing with authority and expert voices in the discourse of history.

In this paper I explore from a cross-disciplinary perspective to what extent and in which ways reviewers involved in the evaluation of academic research manifest themselves and their interaction with the various textual voices weaved into the text, with a particular focus on their manifestation and role in the construction of the reviewer’s discourse. The expression ‘textual voice’ is intended as a source that is given voice in the text (Thompson 1996). The aim is to describe and explain similarities and differences among disciplinary communities.

2. *Materials and methods*

This study is based on three small corpora of English book review articles in the disciplines of linguistics, history and economics. I made use of the following corpora:

- a corpus of 60 Linguistics book review articles (LIBRA) published in six British and American academic journals spanning the years 1999-2001 (consisting of 359,000 words).
- a corpus of 45 History book review articles (HIBRA) published in five British and American academic journals spanning the years 1999-2001 (consisting of 206,089 words).
- a corpus of 24 Economics book review articles (EBRA) published in six British and American academic journals spanning the years 2000-2003 (consisting of 167,239 words).

Each corpus contains both single- and multi-authored book review articles, but the distribution of these articles differs to a greater extent. Only two articles in each discipline are written by more than one author. Because of the low number of these articles, they were excluded from the present study, and only single-authored articles are included (see Table 1 for the distribution of single-authored articles in the three corpora).

<i>Discipline</i>	<i>Number of articles</i>	<i>Number of words</i>
Linguistics	58	347,831
History	43	186,192
Economics	22	107,306

Table 1. Distribution of single-authored book review articles by discipline.

The methodology adopted for this study combines a discourse and a corpus perspective. Discourse analysis contributes to the definition of pragmatic functions of authorial identity and textual voices characterising dialogic and argumentative practices in academic book review articles, whereas corpus analysis contributes to the analysis of lexical features. Some applications in the *WordSmith Tools* suite (Scott 1998), namely Wordlist and the Concordancer have proven particularly useful.

The analysis started with an investigation of first-person pronouns,

including subjective, objective, and possessive cases (*I, me, my, we, us, our*), arguably the most visible manifestation of the reviewer identity, and moved on to the type of textual voice involved in the reviewer's discourse, as manifested by the presence of specific authors (i.e. the reviewed book author), and the discourse community or the reader. All occurrences of first-person plural pronouns were examined in context to ensure they were exclusive first-person uses.

An important issue for the interpretation of textual voices in the book review article is that of "voice-directionality, the ways in which the plurality of voices involved in a text are convergent or conflicting" (Bondi 1999: 123). This suggested studying the various 'argumentative roles' realized in the text (Stati 1990). Particular attention was paid to the dialogic roles of agreement and disagreement as the most representative in a virtual dialogic alternation of turns in the reviewer's discourse. In a formally monologic genre like the one under examination, this implies paying attention to what Stati (1994) calls 'passive moves'.

3. Reviewer identity in single-authored book review articles

3.1. Exploring frequency data

In this section, I sketch the main quantitative results of disciplinary comparison between *I* and *we* used as grammatical subjects – arguably the most prominent instance of reviewer identity in single-authored book review articles. Other uses of first-person pronouns to those with subject function were also included, primarily objectives and possessives (*me, my, us, our*). Table 2 presents the data for first-person pronoun use in the three corpora. As can be seen, it is the frequency of first-person singular pronouns that is most noteworthy. They comprise 92.16% of all pronouns. The occurrences of first-person singular pronouns exceed considerably those of first-person plural pronouns in all three disciplines (96.31% vs. 3.68% in linguistics, 86.63% vs. 11.36% in history, 76.4% vs. 23.6% in economics). The results here echo those of Hyland (2001a), who found that single-authored research articles in the humanities and social sciences contain far more singular than plural first-person pronouns as instances of author-reference.

<i>Discipline</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>Me</i>	<i>My</i>	<i>We</i>	<i>Us</i>	<i>Our</i>
Linguistics	2.70	0.16	0.27	0.07	–	0.04
History	0.74	0.13	0.17	0.10	–	0.02
Economics	1.44	0.15	0.17	0.36	–	0.18

Table 2. Frequency of first-person pronouns as references of reviewer authorial identity in single-authored book review articles by discipline (per 1,000 words).

However, similarities also emerge across the disciplines. Both the subjective cases *I* and *we* reach the highest frequency of pronouns in all three disciplines (*I* – 58.48% in linguistics, 8.57% in history, 9.63% in economics; *we* – 1.67% in linguistics, 0.12% in history, 2.42% in economics). Similarly, the possessives *my* and *our* rank second in frequency in each discipline (*my* – 6.02% in linguistics, 1.98% in history, 1.18% in economics; *our* – 0.93% in linguistics, 0.31% in history, 1.24% in economics). The singular objective *me* has the lowest frequency in the three disciplines (3.66% in linguistics, 1.55% in history, 1.05% in economics). In contrast, the plural objective *us* does not occur at all in the three disciplines (for the use of *us* as object of *let* in a *let us*-imperatives, see 3.2.3).

To elaborate on the discipline factor, we can see that there is considerable variation among disciplines. It can be said that first-person singular pronouns are used more by linguists (3.13 occurrences per 1,000 words) and economists (1.76) than by historians (1.04). First-person plural pronouns, on the other hand, are used more frequently by economists than by historians or linguists (0.54 compared to 0.12 and 0.11). These findings conflict with Fløttum’s (2005) results for the use of *we* in economics and linguistics single-authored research articles, where she noted that economics and linguistics have about the same frequency as *we* in these articles.

In explaining the differences in frequency between *I* and *we*, I cite evidence from a study by Hyland (2001a: 217) on the role of self-mention in research articles, which showed that “the decision to use ‘we’ by writers of single-authored articles is often said to indicate an intention to reduce personal attributions”. This does not seem to be a feature of book review articles where we see that reviewers want to project a prominent identity through the explicit presence of subject *I*.

However, the topic is rather fuzzy. As Hyland (2001a: 217) observes, “it is not always the self-effacing device it is sometimes thought to be”. Pennycook (1994: 176), for example, observes that “there is an instant claiming of authority and communality in the use of *we*”.

On the whole the findings suggest that the book review article in the soft-knowledge fields has a high-key representation of reviewer authorial self. This helps to reinforce the conceptual structure of the discipline by presenting the soft-knowledge fields as “typically more interpretative and less abstract [...] which means greater intervention in the argument is required and the writer’s presence is necessarily stronger” (Hyland 1999: 115).

3.2. Pragmatic-rhetorical nature of the reviewer’s self-manifestation in single-authored book review articles

The previous section argues that in single-authored book review articles the presence of the first-person singular pronouns constitutes the most explicit manifestation of the reviewer’s authorial identity. Quantitative data need to be complemented by a qualitative analysis targeting the pragmatic-rhetorical nature of this kind of manifestation. In this section I explore the rhetorical function the reviewer takes on when referring to him- or herself by means of first-person singular or plural pronouns.

3.2.1. First-person subject pronoun ‘I’

The main communicative purpose of book article reviewers is to display confidence in their evaluations of the knowledge claims of reviewed book authors and to gain credibility by establishing an appropriately ‘authorial persona’ (Hyland 2001a). This is realised in the context of the argument that the reviewer constructs with the various voices involved in the text (i.e. the reviewed book author, the discourse community, the reader). It is this argument that dramatises the voice of the reviewer, thus conferring an authoritative discursal identity on him or her, as shown in the following example, taken from the LIBRA corpus. In all my examples the text in italics henceforth highlights the focus of my point.

- (1) *Herman claims* that ‘the vaunted separation between dramatic text and dramatic performance on verbal/non-verbal lines, are not quite as radical as they are seen to be’ (p.26). In contrast, *I suggest* that the difference is fundamental, especially from a pragmatic point of view. Play-text dialogue mostly features primary speech acts, without nonverbal indicators, and such verbal sentences are indeed pragmatically ambiguous, not because they are primary, but because they are devoid of nonverbal indicators. (LIBRA)

The reviewer exploits the reported voice of the reviewed book author (*Herman claims that...*) to find a niche for his claims on the topic – in this case, by counter-claiming against the author’s theory. Through *I suggest*, he projects his identity by introducing an explicit element of evaluation of the sequence reported (*the difference is fundamental, especially from a pragmatic point of view*).

In order to investigate the rhetorical function of reviewer manifestation, I looked at the immediate co-text where the pronoun *I* occurs, i.e. the verb which is combined with it. I only list the top five verbs for each discipline, with the number of occurrences per 1,000 words (see Table 3).

<i>Linguistics</i>	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>History</i>	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>Economics</i>	<i>Freq.</i>
suggest	0.07	suggest	0.03	think	0.06
think	0.07	think	0.03	find	0.05
believe	0.06	argue	0.02	discuss	0.03
argue	0.04	believe	0.01	agree	0.02
find	0.04	find	0.01	argue	0.02

Table 3. Top five verbs used with *I* by discipline (per 1,000 words).

There appears to be no disciplinary variation in the choice of verb form. The verbs that are used explain to a certain extent the function attributed to the pronoun *I*. The top five verbs combined with *I* are almost identical across disciplines and explain to a certain extent the function attributed to the pronoun: they denote processes involving verbal expression, such as *suggest*, *argue*, *discuss*, *agree*, and processes concerned with mental activity, such as *think*, *believe*, *find* (meaning *believe*). For Hyland (2000: 123) verbs like *think*, *believe* allow writers

to “build a personal ethos through an impression of certainty, assurance and conviction in the views expressed, an image strengthened with the use of personal pronouns”. The following example, taken from the LIBRA corpus, illustrates this certainty ‘booster’ (to use Hyland’s terminology) very well:

- (2) *Mattelart is undoubtedly correct* when he draws our attention to the general media-centric view of communication [...] But who sees communication in this way? If *Mattelart* means the general public then *I think* we can basically concede the case. If he is referring to scholars of communication then he is only partly right. (LIBRA)

Through the statement *Mattelart is undoubtedly correct* the reviewer thematizes his evaluation and makes his perspective prominent. An overt acceptance of personal responsibility for his judgement is also expressed in the use of the expression *I think* which is inserted in the second part of the deductive formula *if ... then* and makes the conclusion stronger.

In my view, the results give a good indication of the reviewer’s role in writing the article. As can be seen from the verbs that appear regularly with *I*, his or her role is that of a writer who clearly assumes an ‘arguer’ role, to borrow Fløttum, Dahl and Kinn’s (2006) terminology.

Further evidence comes from the analysis of the possessive *my*. In fact, all three disciplines show a marked preference for associating it with expressions referring to argumentative procedures, e.g. *agreement*, *disagreement*, *discussion*, *judgment*, *assumption*. Here are the most common collocations for each discipline:

- linguistics: *my discussion*, *my view*, *my disagreement*, *my hypothesis*, *my opinion*, *my judgment*
- history: *my agreement*, *my view*, *my impression*, *my point*, *my contribution*
- economics: *my impression*, *my disagreement*, *my assumption*, *my discussion*, *my own agreement*

As regards the objective *me*, similar uses emerge in the corpora. It is used as object of *let* in a *let me*-imperative. Here are some concordance lines from the corpora:

ircean pragmatism (cf. Savan 1994).	Let me suggest some important
uildup in the 1930s (pp. 305, 324).	Let me conclude this review by
or must express some reservations.	Let me, therefore, offer a few
ar Japanese system. In conclusion,	let me say that Hoshi and
historians to dismiss or ignore them.	Let me now attempt to situate the

Table 4. Concordance sample of *let me*-imperative in the corpora.

Another case is in the *it* introductory pattern, + *seems* + *to me* + extraposed complement clause:

namic systems' (1984: 15).	It seems to me that this dual
namic, through and through.	It seems to me that these are the
sing the terms as synonyms,	it seems to me that he is looking
view which ignores species.	It seems to me that the language-
eche 1997; Kilstrup 1997)?	It seems to me that Horst gets into

Table 5. Concordance sample of *it seems to me that* in the corpora.

And also *me* as direct object in a clause:

ocating such a policy change	strikes me as a reasonable,
tion. This argument does not	strike me as particularly
. One of the things that has	struck me most forcibly in
of representation	helped me, as a budding
this volume, that it	pains me greatly to say

Table 6. Concordance sample of *me* as direct object in a clause in the corpora.

As regards the distribution of these concordance lists in the three disciplines, the results reveal disciplinary differences: linguistics has the highest frequency (58.81%), history is second (23.51%) and economics third (17.63%). These findings may suggest that linguists definitely make themselves more visible in their texts and are more explicitly argumentative than their history and economics colleagues.

3.2.2. First person plural subject pronoun ‘we’

Let us move on to the consideration of the rhetorical function of the pronoun *we* referring to a single author, i.e. authorial *we* (‘we’ for ‘I’), in order to identify similarities or differences across disciplines.

As seen in Section 3.1, there is a relatively small number of occurrences of ‘we’ for ‘I’. The frequency of *we* varies from 0.07 occurrences per 1,000 words in linguistics to 0.10 in history and 0.36 in economics. The possessive *our* is close behind (0.04 in linguistics, 0.02 in history, 0.18 in economics). In contrast, there is not a single occurrence of the objective *us* in any of the three disciplines. Although *we* does not seem to be so frequent in the corpora, there are still sufficient numbers to make it worth analysing. To illustrate in some more detail how *we* is used, I investigated the occurrences of this subject pronoun with a view to the verbs that are combined with it in the three disciplines. I only list the top five verbs for each discipline, except for economics where only two verbs are particularly frequent (Table 7).

<i>Linguistics</i>	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>History</i>	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>Economics</i>	<i>Freq.</i>
think	0.05	examine	0.01	believe	0.01
suggest	0.04	discuss	0.01	discuss	0.01
argue	0.03	argue	0.01		
believe	0.02	explore	0.01		
claim	0.02	believe	0.01		

Table 7. Top five verbs used with *we* in single-authored book review articles by discipline (per 1,000 words).

These results are fairly similar to those for *I*, despite differences in frequency. In fact, most verbs combined with *we* denote discourse and cognitive processes in the three disciplines. Here is an example:

- (3) Although Sulloway laments that he could find the birth order for only percent of the deputies to the Convention, he insists that “birth order is the most important predictor of voting during the king’s trial.” This evidence constitutes the core of the conclusion that “[t]he bulk of what we can explain about individual behaviour during this event [the Terror] faithfully reflects sibling differences

and sibling strategies” (323–324). *We believe* that this conclusion is supported neither by an adequate grasp of historical context nor the cogency of the statistical analysis. (HIBRA)

However, disciplinary differences in the variety of verb forms emerge. Comparing the verbs used with *we* with those with *I* in economics, we see that the picture is quite different. Here there are only two verbs (*believe* and *discuss*), compared to the varied forms occurring with *I* (*think, find, discuss, agree, argue*).

As noted for the verb *find* (meaning *believe*) in the corpora analysed, the typical research verbs *examine* and *explore* occurring in history are not used to report research findings, but to introduce issues that are up for discussion. Here they typically occur when outlining the book review article structure presented at the end of the *Introduction* section, as in the following example:

- (4) In what follows, we will first trace the general contours of precolonial historiography, stressing the local orientation of the early accounts and their transition to an emphasis on royal history. We then *examine* the broader factors that influenced this transformation, and the way in which the writing of Alexis Kagame came to incorporate the one within the other, sublimating local data to central court perspectives. (HIBRA)

The reviewer’s ‘statement of purpose’, to use Bondi’s (2007b) terminology, is a unique form of self-mention. Like in a research article *Introduction* section, in a book review article this form is used in one of the typical moves of the *Introduction*: stating the purpose of the article.

Examples like (4) abound in the corpora. Yet only in nine of the 123 introductions was it possible to identify verbs such as those above that seem to outline text structure. The majority of *Introduction* sections in the book review articles under examination contain claims by reviewers that are about their positions, and often point out gaps in the reviewed book author’s ideas, as in the following example, taken from the *Introduction* section of a linguistics book review article:

- (5) The narrative structure of my discussion is organized as follows: *in section 2, I consider* a representative number of Postal’s core arguments and their factual basis in some detail, and *argue* that,

contrary to his substantive claims, there is nothing like congruence between the B-extractions on the one hand and the environments which tolerate attested RPs on the other. *In section 3, I review* a number of his assertions about the class of conjuncts which, following Lakoff (1986), Postal considers in connection with CSC violations and *argue* that here too, his proposal fails to take into account the full range of facts. In particular, *I show* that these conjuncts fail his own criteria for the identification of weak (in his terms, selective) islands, and that, in particular, there are good cases of extraction from antipronominal contexts within these conjuncts. *In section 4, a careful review* of Postal's critique of non-extraction RNR accounts shows that the weight of evidence does contraindicate an extraction treatment. (LIBRA)

Let us now turn to the use of the possessive case *our* across disciplines. The data indicate that all three disciplines show a marked preference for associating it with expressions referring to both argumentative procedures, e.g. *discussion, question, observation*, and cognitive tools of research like *theory, model, perspective*. Here are the most common collocations for each corpus:

- linguistics: *our discussion, our concern, our view, our hypothesis, our question*
- history: *our concern, our intent, our analysis, our perspective, our impression, our interest*
- economics: *our discussion, our view, our attention, four focus, our explanation, our theory, our observation, our model*

Again, this trend confirms that there is argumentation in such texts.

This section has discussed the use of *we* used for 'authorial *we*'. However, it is important to acknowledge the fundamental referential vagueness of *we*. Many authors have discussed the reference of first-person plurals and employed classificatory systems to sort out the possibilities (e.g. Myers 1989; Kuo 1999; Hyland 2001a; Harwood 2005, to name but a few). In the following section, I concentrate on the case of 'reader-inclusive *we*', as the majority of instances of *we* across the corpora refer to the reviewer and the reader together.

3.2.3. Reader-inclusive 'we'

A close study of the concordances of *we* shows that *see* and *know* are

the most frequent reader-inclusive verbs used in linguistics (0.09 occurrences of *see* per 1,000 words, 0.05 of *know*). Here is an example, where the reviewer helps the reader follow his observations:

- (6) There are reasons to believe that German split topics, just like other topics, do not get incorporated at all. Split topics may be the objects of psychological verbs, which, as *we have seen above*, do not incorporate [...] (LIBRA)

The presence of the metatextual adverbial *above* constitutes important support for my interpretation of *we* including the reader. In linguistics, other combinations like *we + expect* and *we + look* are also frequently used to include the reader (0.04 occurrences per 1,000 words). Here is an example, where the combination *we + expect* includes not only the reader, but also the whole linguistics discourse community:

- (7) According to S.' ideas, *we should expect* the same to happen in the case of adjuncts extracted in the absence of islands, given that for S. the abstract syntactic configuration is not the reason for their existence. (LIBRA)

Turning to history and economics, both history and economics authors are clearly less reader-oriented than their fellow linguists (only 0.03 occurrences of *we see* and *we know* in history and 0.02 occurrences of *we see* and *we know* in economics). Further, *we expect* and *we look* do not appear at all in history, with only 0.02 occurrences of *we look* in economics.

The interaction between writer and reader has received great attention in research on academic discourse (e.g. Bazerman 1988; Swales 1990; Hyland 2000, 2001b, 2002b). Among the most explicit textual features used in this connection are *let us*-imperatives: "When using *let us*-imperatives, the author creates a space where he or she and the reader are, metaphorically speaking, together" (Fløttum / Kinn / Dahl 2006: 212).

Looking at *let us*-imperatives in the corpora, there are clear differences between disciplines with respect to their use. They are used more frequently (but still not often) in linguistics (29 examples in 58

book review articles) than in history or economics (only five examples in each discipline). The examples in the corpora involve eleven different verbs in the three disciplines, forming some evident clusters (*move, start, begin, turn, return, note, imagine, think, examine, consider, see*). The most frequent verbal expressions that are common in the three disciplines are *return, begin, start*, which “direct attention to the structure of the text as well as the relation of formal structure to thematic structure, and make the structure of the text clearer to the reader” (Fløttum / Kinn / Dahl 2006: 213). Two examples are given in (8) and (9):

- (8) Now, *let us return* to Whorf’s hypothesis of linguistic relativity and determinism in relation to these traditional theories in order to highlight two points. (LIBRA)
- (9) *Let us begin* with the parts of Crosby’s argument that are easy to accept. (HIBRA)

Other verbs that are found primarily in linguistics are *consider* and *see*, which serve to delimit the focus of the ongoing discussion, and bring the reader along in the construction of the reviewer’s discourse. Here are some examples:

- (10) Before delving into the specifics of this shift, *let us first consider* some of the differences between the two theories. (LIBRA)
- (11) For Clark, this ‘includes’ concerns the information exchanges which sustain our cognitive abilities, those abilities which we readily associate with our minds. *Let’s see* what he means. (LIBRA)

The quantitative data above reveal clear differences between linguistics on the one hand, and history and economics on the other hand. There are very few examples of *let us*-imperatives in both history and economics, and almost all occurrences are from the linguistics corpus. Fløttum, Kinn and Dahl (2006: 215), discussing the functions of *let us*-imperatives, state that:

The use of ‘let us’-imperatives not only implies directly addressing the reader, thus establishing a dialogue: the author constructs an author-reader togetherness and creates a kind of solidarity between the two.

They become apparent collaborators in the structuring of the text and in mental activities [...] By using 'let us'-imperatives, the author draws the reader closer and partly erases the author-reader asymmetry. The argumentative function is clear; given that they view things in similar ways, the author can more easily convince the reader.

As the analysis has shown, linguistics book review articles are more overtly argumentative than economics and history texts. The finding that linguistics reviewers are more active users of *let us*-imperatives than their history and economics colleagues confirms Fløttum, Kinn and Dahl's (2006) interpretation of these devices as argumentative.

4. *Textual voices across disciplines*

4.1. *The reviewed book author and the discourse community*

There are many places in the corpora where different sources are given voice in the text. These include the voices of the reviewed book author, the discourse community and the reader. Such voices have a significant role in the construction of the reviewer's evaluative argument.

Let us consider the reviewed author's voice. References to his or her thoughts and theories take the form of reported discourse. More specifically, a plurality of opinions on the reviewed book author's part are introduced and then supported or contrasted with the reviewer's own. The most interesting patterns that have emerged in the corpora are those that involve 'passive moves' (Stati 1994) such as agreement and disagreement, used as forms of converging and conflicting voices respectively. The two patterns identified are: (a) the convergence of an initiating claim introducing the reviewed author's ideas followed by a responsive claim by the reviewer showing agreement (Reporting[^]Agreement); (b) the conflict between an initiating claim followed by a responsive claim showing disagreement (Reporting[^]Disagreement). The following are typical examples in the corpora:

Reporting^Agreement

- (12) Like other researchers, *H suggests* that apparent counterexamples to her constraint are actually borrowings (p. 136). *I totally agree* with *H* (p. 174) that the CS-borrowing distinction is not relevant for CS theory unless it has syntactic consequences. For this reason *I think the best procedure* is to include all forms from the start, and to see whether foreign nouns, for instance, should be classed into different categories on the basis of their syntactic distribution. (LIBRA)

Reporting^Disagreement

- (13) The closer attempt at a theoretical synthesis is probably the essay by Richard Weinstein asserting Los Angeles as “the first American city”. *He argues* that L.A. “is the first consequential American city to separate itself decisively from European models and to reveal the impulse to privatization embedded in the origins of the American Revolution”. *Let us put aside the fact that this assertion is probably disputable, because exaggerated; it would be more satisfactory* to present Los Angeles not as the first American city but rather as the ultimate one to “separate decisively” from the European model. [...] Moreover, *it would be wise* to distinguish between European models [...] In any case, *this proposal is not specifically new* (any urban writer might write about the same on any American metropolis, except perhaps Boston and San Francisco), but nevertheless it proves especially efficient in the case of Los Angeles, which maximizes what already appeared long ago in other American cities. (HIBRA)

In (12) the attributed statement introduced by *suggest* is evaluated positively. The wording *I totally agree with H* expresses the reviewer’s consensus straightforwardly. In (13) the reviewed author’s reported opinion is evaluated negatively by the reviewer (*this assertion is probably disputable, because exaggerated*), who contrasts it with a counter-claim (*it would be more satisfactory to present Los Angeles not as the first American city but rather as the ultimate one to “separate decisively” from the European model*).

In the light of these observations, let us consider the type of action the reviewed book author assumes by focusing on the pragmatic nature of his or her manifestation. Looking at the distribution of the types of

reporting verb combined with the various reviewed authors across the corpora shows a variety of lexicalizations. The most frequent verbal expressions that are common in all three disciplines are *argue*, *suggest*, *note*, *propose*, *find*, *show*, *point out*, *say*, *discuss*, *think*, *believe*, *conclude*. These verbs say a lot about the reviewer's attitude towards the reported content. A verb like *argue* refers to explicit argumentative roles such as disagreement (13). However, a neutral lexicalization like *note* (14) can be associated with expressions capable of realising different degrees of agreement with what is reported, so that two meanings can be lexicalised separately: the reporting (*they note*) and the evaluation of the reported (the modal adverb *rightly*).

- (14) As *they rightly note*, however, there are not many costs associated with marijuana in the current regime [...] (EBRA)

The discourse community is also introduced in the debate between the reviewer and the reviewed book author. Let us consider example (15), where a sequence of voices is highlighted (discourse community – reviewed author – reviewer). The paragraph opens with the opinion offered by the history discourse community (*some scholars appear to be; acknowledging that*). This creates a basis for introducing both the reviewed author's opinion signalling alignment with the reported claim and the reviewer (*My own view*). The movement from the discourse community to the reviewed author and back to the reviewer's interpretation allows the reviewer to construct his position vis-à-vis the discourse community and to emphasise his interpretation:

- (15) Now that republicanism, too, appears to have faded as an overarching paradigm, *some scholars*, perhaps reluctant to take up such theoretical models as the public sphere, *appear to be* having another look at a once-discredited ideology, *acknowledging* that the liberal tradition may still have explanatory power. *Vorländer agrees*, though he emphatically insists, that he is no more an apologist for liberal capitalism than were such predecessors of his as Richard Hofstadter and Hartz, whom he sees as reporting uncomfortable historical facts without necessarily approving them. (*My own view* is that in the sixties and seventies anti-Hartz animus was often driven by a shoot-the-messenger mentality). (HIBRA)

As regards the discipline factor, a closer look at the most frequent reporting verbs associated with the voices of the reviewed book author and of the discourse community across the corpora reveals that, for all the reporting verbs analysed, the most pervasive voice conveyed by their use in the three disciplines is that of the reviewed book author – e.g. *Richard Weinstein [he] argues that* in (13) above. This amounts to 88.11% in history, 85.92% in economics, and 77.33% in linguistics. The results fit well with the main rhetorical purpose of the genre under examination. Since book review articles primarily function to evaluate the knowledge claims of other researchers, I would expect references to the reviewed book author's ideas to be more frequent than those to the other voice, i.e. the disciplinary community (amounting to 11.89% in history, 14.08% in economics, and 22.67% in linguistics).

4.2. *The reader*

Overt references to the reader as general addressee of the reviewer's discourse are made in the corpora by use of expressions like 'reader' or second person pronouns 'you'.

A close analysis of the concordances of 'reader' shows that the reader is often asked to be brought to agreement and disagreement with the reviewer, as shown below:

- (16) However much a sympathetic *reader* may agree with the desire to change existing writing practices [...] (LIBRA)
- (17) As the title suggests, it presents Los Angeles as one of the most, if not the most, original American city and the model of the postmodern metropolis. Nevertheless, due to the multiplicity of essays included, the *reader* never gets a clear idea of how and why Los Angeles is unique, supposing it actually is. (HIBRA)

It is evident that although the reader is introduced as distinct from the reviewer as a 'third person', his voice seems to coincide with that of the reviewer. Here the reviewer adopts the position of an imaginary reader to suggest what any member of the community might think.

As regards the percentage of book review articles that contain explicit mention of 'reader', the results show that linguistics is the

discipline which has the highest overall figures with 0.30 occurrences per 1,000 words, while economics has 0.14 and history 0.12.

Looking at another form of reader address, the second person pronoun ‘you’, I see that there are no significant differences across the disciplines in terms of frequency, as compared to those for ‘reader’. Although much less frequent than the expression ‘reader’, I find that the figures for economics and linguistics are very similar, with slightly higher figures for economics than for linguistics (0.07 and 0.05 per 1,000 words respectively). As for history, ‘you’ is the least commonly used in the discipline (0.03). This result resembles that for ‘reader’: history uses far less references to reader than the other two disciplines. Here is an example of ‘you’ as direct reference to the readership:

- (18) Skidelsky’s first two volumes gave us John Maynard Keynes’s life up to 1937. Skidelsky wrote with wit, charm, control, scope, and enthusiasm. *You* read these books and you knew Keynes – who he was, what he did, why what he did was important, and how he managed to live more different lives in one than the rest of us as granted. (EBRA)

But, as can be seen in the following concordance lines, ‘you’ is also used to refer to people in general, and could be replaced by the indefinite generic subject ‘one’; it is a sort of neutral ‘you’, where no readership’s involvement is actually called for:

pecific difference. This makes sense if	you are dealing with
without exception pointed out that if	you want to say
beyond doubt. But it is also true, if	you turn over the
ves them. To paraphrase Kristeva, if	you wish to seek the
eel unable to offer this advice, unless	you wish to be expose
uld be worse than useless. But, then,	you wonder if such

Table 8. Concordance sample of *you* standing for the indefinite generic subject *one* in the corpora.

5. Conclusions

The data from the corpora offer linguistic evidence of the ways in which the reviewer's authorial identity and textual voices are manifested in single-authored book review articles from a cross-disciplinary perspective.

The study has shown that in the three disciplines under examination single-authored book review articles display a marked preference for first-person singular pronouns for reviewer self-reference. However, considerable disciplinary variation was noted in the use of both first-person singular and plural pronouns. First-person singular pronouns are used more by linguists and economists than by historians. First-person plural pronouns, on the other hand, are used more frequently by economists than by historians and linguists.

As regards the discipline factor, the need for an overt personal presence, for example in linguistics, corroborates the general picture emerging from other studies that "the linguist more often needs to discuss fairly fundamental concepts and argue for his or her understanding of the research field in order to try to ascertain a similar understanding on the part of the reader" (Fløttum / Dahl / Kinn 2006: 261).

It seems reasonable to assume that an important factor behind this tendency is that linguistics book review articles exhibit the strongest degree of argumentation and history the weakest, with economics assuming a middle position. This tendency in the corpora can also be perceptible in verbal use in connection with first-person pronouns. The cross-disciplinary study of concordances and collocates has highlighted an important similarity among the disciplines. This is found within the use of lexicalizations of discourse processes, with an arguer role for the reviewer. It includes verbs such as *suggest*, *argue*, *discuss*, and nouns like *discussion*, *agreement*, *disagreement*, *judgment*. That the arguer role the reviewer takes on in writing book review articles is dominant corresponds well with the purpose of such texts: argument and expression of opinions are actually constitutive of the genre.

When extending the study of first-person plural pronouns to its referential possibilities, I noticed that the majority of cases of *we* across the corpora imply interaction with the reader. For example, when the reviewer writes *as we have seen above*, he opens up for reader

interaction by asking the reader to follow his observations. Further, when the reviewer writes *let us first consider some of the differences* [...], the reviewer includes the reader as a co-participant in his discussion. By using inclusive *we* and *let us*-imperatives, the reviewer draws the reader closer and brings him or her along in the construction of his argument. The argumentative function of the book review article is particularly evident in these cases.

The role of textual voices was also shown to contribute widely to the construction of the reviewer's argument. The reviewer makes distinctive use of interaction with the voices of the reviewed book author, the discourse community and the reader. The data has highlighted how these voices, mustered to set the scene for the discourse, allow the reviewer to construct his positions and to argue with them.

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