

## **Legitimising research differently in different intellectual fields: instantiating different knowledge-knower structures.**

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In the rhetoric of the current academic context, trans- or inter-disciplinary studies are actively encouraged, yet the implications for the discourses of research are as yet poorly understood. An appreciation of the ways in which different disciplines use language differently to mean differently is fundamental to understanding the potential for effective collaboration, and to providing meaningful support to those who study or research across disciplinary boundaries. In this paper I begin to take up this challenge with a focus on one context of research writing, that of the introductions to research articles, across a range of disciplines.

Introductory sections of research articles across disciplines in the sciences, social sciences and humanities share a common generalised social purpose, that is, to construct a legitimising platform from which the writer can proceed to report in detail on their study and the contribution they make to knowledge. They function as a warrant for the writer's study. Within the common generalised function of a research warrant, variations may reflect differences in the nature of the object of study and/or the writer's interpretation of how best to position their own research, but variations also arise in response to disciplinary differences.

In taking a closer look at how the disciplinary context can impact on the construction of the research warrant I draw on two bodies or dimensions of theory. From the sociology of knowledge I connect with theorisations of how different intellectual fields or disciplines represent different kinds of *knowledge structure* (Bernstein 1996, 1999, 2000), or as Maton (2007) articulates different *knowledge-knower structures*, with different codes for legitimating both what can be known and how - epistemic relations - and who can know it - social relations (Maton 2000a, 2000b, 2007). This theorisation of how different kinds of intellectual fields legitimate themselves in different ways would seem to have particular relevance to an analysis of how researchers construct a warrant for their own research, and how they might do so differently in different disciplines.

From Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) I draw on appraisal theory as a basis for exploring aspects of evaluation in the discourse. Of particular relevance here is the dimension of appraisal theory referred to as engagement (Martin & White 2005). Engagement theorises options for the management of other voices introduced into the discourse and the potential such options afford for aligning or dis-aligning the reader with various positions. In this paper I draw on engagement in questioning whether propositions and values expressed in the research warrant are attributable to the writer of

the article or to some other source, and if the latter, whether the writer moves to align us with those propositions and values or to distance us from them. The theory also informs an analysis of how much and what kind of information is provided about those other 'voices' and why, and what it is that those voices are introduced to appraise. From the dual theoretical bases of Bernsteinian sociology of knowledge and SFL I proceed to explore how an analysis of the ways in which research writers engage with other voices in their introductions can provide insights into how disciplines differ in their strategies for legitimising the construction of new knowledge.

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