From abstracts to video-abstracts:
Academic argumentation in genre hybridization

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the influence of the advent of digital media technologies on academic discourse. Specifically, it addresses the changes in the argumentative realizations of two academic genres belonging to the same genre colony, written abstracts (WAB) and video abstracts (VAB), in management journals. The study proposes an analysis of the rhetorical strategies used by authors to express their authorial selves and to create a relationship with the readers. Specifically, the study addresses the role and changes in metadiscourse, focusing on *stance* (hedges, boosters, self-mentions, attitude markers) and *engagement markers* (reader pronouns, directives, questions, shared knowledge, asides) as means for writers to guide readers and display an appropriate professional persona. These elements are an important aspect of persuasive writing and may be employed differently due to the genre hybridization caused by the multimodal shift of the textual realization. Results of the analysis will show that metadiscursive items are far more present in VABs than in WABs, thus highlighting a greater interactivity in the construction of the academic argument as regards both the presence of the author and the search for scholarly solidarity communality with the parent discourse community.

Keywords: video abstract, management, academic discourse, metadiscourse, genre hybridization.

1. Introduction

Nowadays advances in digital media technologies and the pervasiveness of online media content have completely changed the way in which scholars share their research. From traditional scholarship, we have moved to "multimodal scholarship", that is the use of multiple digital mediums

(e.g. still and moving images, interactive digital objects, audio, data sets, geospatial data, and text), often composed, displayed, or linked together, and disseminated across an array of digital publishing platforms (e.g. websites, blogs, mobile applications, and social networks) in order to communicate research (Spicer 2014: 2). These new multiple digital mediums have provided researchers with unprecedented opportunities to enhance their articles' accessibility and visibility and, as a consequence, to improve their chances of being cited (Coccetta 2020: 305).

Some scientific publishers (e.g. Elsevier, Sage, Taylor & Francis, Wiley) have begun to provide the option on their websites for authors to send their papers accompanied by a video abstract (VAB) in addition to the traditional one (WAB = written abstract). As defined by Spicer (2014: 3), a video abstract is a short video that should be no longer than 5 minutes and which briefly communicates an author's research "through a more personal, media rich medium that is better adapted for internet sharing (e.g. websites, blogs, mobile applications, and social networks)". Video abstracts are generally hosted on a journal's website, but they can also be published on their *YouTube* channel or on other platforms such as *Vimeo*, thus extending the participatory framework of research (Askehave – Nielsen 2005) by making it available not only to a specific audience (i.e. the discourse community of the scholar), but also to a potentially infinite number of internet surfers as ratified participants.

Interactivity is a secondary, but no less important aspect of "multimodal scholarship" on Web 2.0. When a video abstract is published on *YouTube*, for example, its content can be immediately commented on by viewers, which creates an interaction between the author and the audience. Hence, video abstracts seem to have brought academic discourse to a new level, from the Information Age to the Relationship Age (Myers 2010), in which research can be discussed directly in the new media arena.

Even though the wider reach of video abstracts may encourage scholars to use this new genre to increase their number of citations, this new type of academic text is still not widely diffused, and is limited to just a few disciplines, especially in the context of hard science journals. As for humanities, we find even fewer instances of video abstracts and these are circumscribed to economics (especially for econometrics and management research) that can be considered half-way, since it is a social science that also has recourse to statistics and mathematics.

Furthermore, despite the fact that the first video abstract was published around 2009 (Berkowitz 2013), this recent academic genre has received only

limited attention as far as linguistic analysis is concerned and studies have mainly focused on the hard sciences and only on genre structure (Plastina 2017; Coccetta 2020).

Starting from these premises, this paper analyses a corpus of management video abstracts comparing them to their written counterpart to better highlight changes due to "genre hybridization" (Bhatia 2004) and addresses the following research questions: 1) what are the variations in the use of metadiscourse devices, such as *stance* and *engagement markers*, as means for writers to guide readers and display an appropriate professional persona? 2) Are there any differences in the rhetorical interaction between writer and reader? 3) Does the interplay between visual and verbal mode influence the rhetorical realization of the relationship between producer and receiver of the academic message?

The paper is structured as follows: section 2 provides a literature review of the linguistic research on the abstract as genre, including the most recent studies on video abstracts; section 3 describes the materials under investigation, the corpora collected, and the methodological procedures adopted. Then, the results drawn from the comparative analysis of the corpora are presented in section 4. Finally, section 5 offers some concluding remarks in light of the results obtained.

2. Literature review: The abstract

The study of academic discourse has become an area of great interest over the last three decades, especially from a genre perspective (e.g. Swales 1990, 2004; Bhatia 1993, 2004). Research in the field has mainly focused on highly conventionalized written academic genres and the WAB has attracted the attention of a number of researchers (see, among others, Salager-Meyer 1990; Bhatia 1993; Dos Santos 1996; Bondi 1997, 2001; Martín-Martín 2003; Dahl 2004; Lorés-Sanz 2009; Samraj 2005; Pho 2008; Bondi – Lorés-Sanz 2014). As Bondi (1997: 396) suggests, "abstracts would seem to provide excellent material for genre analysis. Their textual structure is comparatively easy to identify, and their size is manageable for different types of linguistic analysis".

Genre-based studies in English on WAB have received quite a lot of scholarly attention (see, among others, Dos Santos 1996; Hyland 2000; Lorés-Sanz 2004; Cross – Oppenheim 2006; Swales – Feak 2009), across different disciplinary fields (Samraj 2005; Busch-Lauer 2014; Tankó 2017), and across cultures (Diani 2014).

In this extensive literature on the WAB as a genre, we find, however, a notable gap to date created by a lack of attention to the nature of interactive persuasion and to the importance of interaction in the creation of academic arguments. This absence of investigations on the topic may be due to the limited length of these texts which, on the one hand, makes them perfect for genre analysis, but, on the other, less fruitful as for variety of linguistic realizations. The role of academic persuasion through interaction has only been dealt with in longer publications such as research articles (see, among others, Bondi 1997; Hyland 2000, 2005, 2008).

Another remarkable paucity in the literature is represented by the limited attention paid to VABs as a genre that, unlike the written abstract, has not yet been thoroughly investigated from a linguistic point of view. To the best of our knowledge, few discourse analytical studies have focused on the VAB so far (Plastina 2017; Coccetta 2020) and they have mainly focused on the rhetorical structure of VABs published in medical journals.

The present study, thus, attempts to advance our understanding of this new academic genre by considering a social science, namely management, and providing a preliminary analysis of the argumentative strategies involved in the producer-receiver relationship. The results of this investigation may produce some useful guidelines for scholars who will face the new academic challenge of producing "multimodal" academic genres in the near future.

3. Materials and methods

3.1 Materials

This study was carried out on two small comparable corpora of abstracts in the field of management. We use the expression "comparable corpora" here since we collected the two versions, written and video, of the same research paper abstract, thus two different textual representations of the same academic genre. The two corpora are composed as follows: the first one is made up of 80 video abstracts (VAB corpus, 31,816 tokens); whereas the second one is constituted by their written counterparts (WAB corpus, 10,670 tokens). The materials for the analysis were collected from four management journals, namely the *British Journal of Management* (Wiley), the *Journal of Management* (SAGE), the *Journal of Management Reviews* (Wiley), and the *Strategic Management Journal* (Wiley) in a timespan from 2014 to 2020.

These journals were selected after putting the keywords "video abstract", "management", "journal" in a search engine. These are, in fact, the only journals in the management field which offer the possibility to provide video abstracts. The 2014-2020 timespan was chosen because 2014 was the year in which 3 out of the 4 journals started to publish video abstracts, so we decided to collect all the instances from that year on. The oral part of the VABs was manually transcribed in order to obtain textual data ready for the corpus analysis.

The following table shows the number of VABs and as a consequence also of WABs gathered for each journal.

Table 1. Number of WABs and VABs collected for each journal

Journals	No. of VABs/WABs (2014-2020)
British Management Journal (BMJ)	10
Journal of Management (JM)	2
Journal of Management Review (JMR)	3
Strategic Management Journal (SMJ)	65
TOT	80

The video abstracts collected range from a length of 2 to a maximum of 8 minutes on average, and they are all available both on the journal website as well as on YouTube.

As for the visual modes involved, the VABs in the corpus make use of a variety of visual realizations and not all the VABs present the author/s as the protagonist/s of the video. The following table classifies the VABs according to the type of visual mode contained:

Table 2. Types of visual mode realized in VABs

Journals	Author/s as protagonist/s	PowerPoint presentation (including tables/graphs)	Images (drawings/ photos)	Mixed representations (author/s + PPT/images)
BMJ	6	1	\	3
JM	1	\	1	\
JRM	2	1	\	\
SMJ	23	8	21	13
TOT	32	10	22	16

Interestingly, the table highlights that there is a preference for the presence of the author/s in the VABs either alone or with the aid of some visuals (e.g. ppt, images). These data may be relevant when considered in relation to the metadiscursive devices used by the authors. Visual realizations can also have an influence on the genre structure of the VABs as well as on the argumentative strategies employed and, as a consequence, on the producer-receiver relationship.

As regards the structure of VABs, Coccetta (2020: 312-314) claims that often the genre framework of VABs is less predictable than that of WABs since they do not follow the classical moves identified by Swales (1990): Introduction, Methods/Materials, Results, Discussion. Indeed, VABs may vary their structure from VA to VA adding some subphases with different communicative purposes, and Coccetta in her paper provides a useful grid (2020: 312-313) highlighting the additional moves and their communicative function in VABs. The following table applies Coccetta's framework and shows the subdivision of the VABs collected in the corpus according to their move structure:

The rhetorical analysis of management VABs shows that they maintain all the principal moves identified for WABs in the literature (i.e. *IMRD structure*). In addition, as highlighted by Coccetta (2020) for medicine video abstracts, management VABs also present some new moves due to the hybridization of the genre caused by multimodality (e.g. *Greeting, Speaker's introduction, Thanking viewers, Encouraging further contact, Encouraging further reading, Acknowledgements, Institutional affiliation, Credits).* Interestingly, the presence of these new moves is more frequent in the VABs where the authors are physically protagonists of the video or in videos where they interact with a PowerPoint or with images/tables related to the research. In these VABs, we find a more action-oriented (Coccetta 2020: 314) attitude where authors encourage readers to contact them by asking for further information (*Encouraging further contact* move) and to read the full paper by going to the url of the journal (*Encouraging further reading* move). Conversely, VABs where only visuals (e.g. PPT, images/tables) are used seem to have a stronger adherence to the classical IMRD structure of the genre being more information-oriented (Coccetta 2020: 313), as they provide more information about the research described in the paper. As for the new moves, they frequently add those moves which are again information-oriented, as for example *Speaker's introduction* that provides personal information about the speaker.

Table 3. Moves in the VABs – distribution in the corpus

Moves	Communicative function	BMJ	JM	JMR	SMJ
Paper information	Providing information about the paper (e.g. title, author(s), etc.)	10	2	3	65
Greeting	Greeting the audience	9	1	2	37
Speaker's introduction	Indicating speaker's name and affiliation	6	1	2	46
Topic announcement	Announcing the topic of the paper	10	2	3	65
Establishing a territory	Providing the context for research	4	1	2	44
Establishing a niche	Identifying a gap in the literature	6	1	1	25
Purpose	Indicating the objectives of the study	10	2	3	65
Methods/Materials	Describing the methodological framework of the analysis and the data	9	2	2	58
Results	Summarizing the results	10	2	3	65
Conclusions	Drawing the key conclusions	10	2	3	65
Thanking viewers	Thanking the audience for watching	9	1	2	36
Encouraging further contact	Encouraging the audience to contact the speaker	5	1	1	24
Encouraging further reading	Encouraging the audience to read the full paper	4	1	1	27
Acknowledgements	Thanking co-authors	\	\	\	12
Institutional affiliation	Indicating the affiliation for which the researcher(s) work(s)	4	2	1	48
Credits	Indicating the person(s) who contributed to the VAB creation	\	\	\	\

3.2 Methods

As for methodology, the present study is based on Hyland's framework for *stance* and *engagement* in academic writing (2008: 5-7). These two elements involve the accomplishment of interaction in academic genres.

Specifically, *stance* refers to "the writer's textual 'voice' or community recognized personality" (Hyland 2008: 5). It is an attitudinal marker that is writer-oriented and deals with the way in which scholars present themselves and convey their judgements, opinions and commitments. *Stance* includes metadiscursive resources such as:

- *hedges:* devices which withhold complete commitment to a claim made;
- *boosters:* the opposite of *hedges*, they express the writer's certainty in his/her claim;
- *attitude markers:* items that indicate the writer's affective attitude to what is stated; they convey surprise, agreement, importance, frustration, affect and appraisal;
- *self-mentions:* the use of first person pronouns and possessive adjectives (*I, my, me, exclusive we/our/us*) to present information (Hyland 2000) and the discoursal self.

Secondly, *engagement* concerns the ways in which the writer "brings readers into the discourse" (Hyland 2008: 9). The function of elements in this class is mainly to anticipate possible objections from the reader by engaging them in an appropriate way. This set of strategies allows writers to anticipate readers' reactions to their arguments and to assist them in constructing an effective way of reasoning (Hyland 2008: 9). *Engagement markers* include:

- *reader pronouns:* explicit reference to the reader in the text such as second person pronouns *you/your,* first person plural pronouns *we/our* when used with an inclusive purpose;
- *directives: imperatives* and *obligation modals* that engage the readers in three kinds of activity: 1) *textual acts:* direct readers from one part of the text to another or to another text; 2) *physical acts:* indicate to readers how to perform an action in the real world; 3) *cognitive acts:* guide readers in the interpretation of an argument by inviting them to *consider, note, think about* some claim in the text);
- *personal asides:* they consist of brief interruptions in the argument to address readers directly in order to offer a comment on what has been said;
- *appeals to shared knowledge:* signals used to explicitly mark for readers something as familiar and accepted, e.g. *well known, obviously*;
- *questions*: dialogic elements to involve readers and to stimulate curiosity as well as to guide them to the writer's point of view.

To achieve its purposes, the study relies on a two-fold perspective combining both quantitative and qualitative observation of data. On the one hand, quantitative data were obtained with corpus linguistics tools (*wordlists, concordances* and *collocations* [Wordsmith Tools 7 (Scott 2016)]) in order to identify the most frequent patterns of *stance* and *engagement* in the corpora. On the other hand, qualitative data were gathered through discourse analytical tools to determine the influence of the visual mode on the kind of metadiscourse involved in the hybridization of the genre.

In the next section, the results emerging from the analysis of the two corpora are presented, with special reference to the differences in the use of *stance* and *engagement markers* due to the hybridization of the genre in the video mode.

4. Results

A quantitative study was first carried out to record the number of occurrences of *stance* and *engagement markers* in the two corpora. The analysis yielded the following comparative results:

Table 4. Stance and engagement markers in each corpus (per 1,000 words)

Feature	WAB corpus	VAB corpus
Stance	*16.1*	*40.6*
Hedges	2.9	12.1
Attitude markers	1.7	5.2
Boosters	0.4	4.6
Self-mentions	11.1	18.6
Engagement	*0.2*	*9.54*
Reader pronouns	\	8.8
Directives	\	\
Questions	0.2	0.5
Shared knowledge	\	0.3
Asides	\	\

At a glance, Table 4 shows that metadiscursive elements are far more common in the VAB corpus, and the most striking difference between the two corpora lies in the use of *engagement markers* that are almost inexistent in the WAB corpus. This immediately highlights the more interactive spirit

of video abstracts. In VABs, authors seem to always maintain eye contact with the viewers by looking straight into the video camera searching for an interpersonal relation with them in order to align the receivers with the presentation of the arguments and thus gain credibility through solidarity with the peer disciplinary community.

Another significant variation between the two corpora concerns *stance markers*, which are more than twice as frequent in the VAB corpus as in the WAB corpus, with *self-mentions* that dominate frequencies in both corpora. According to Hyland (2002: 16), this behavior is typical of soft-science academic writing where scholars are less concerned with generalizing their claims for the sake of objectivity and are keener on showing their personal perspective which distinguishes the writers' work from that of others. However, when we have a closer look at their realizations in the corpora, namely the use of *I, my, me, exclusive we/our/us*, we discover that writers represent themselves in different ways: in WABs authors rely only on the use of the first plural pronouns, whereas in VABs scholars also present their research taking recourse to the first person singular pronouns (3.6 ptw), especially in videos where the author is the protagonist or in mixed situations in which we can see both the presenter and the PowerPoint slideshow.

Furthermore, the similar frequencies between *hedges* and *self-mentions* in the VAB corpus can be interpreted considering their relation in the construction of academic argumentation. With *self-mentions*, the authors strongly identify with a particular argument, trying to gain credit for their viewpoint (Hyland 2008: 16), but at the same time they need to downplay their claims by using *hedges* in order to remain open to "heteroglossic diversity" (Hyland 2008: 14) in the community. Thus, in VABs, even in the authorial construction of the self, we can observe a receiver-oriented perspective sharing a personal research viewpoint, but not imposing it on the audience.

In the next sections, we will have a closer look at the textual rendering of the most frequent items of *stance* and *engagement* by giving some examples in context.

4.1 *Stance*: Authorial presence in the argumentative construction of knowledge

The most frequent visual realization of the VABs collected in the corpus involves the presence of the author/s of the research either by themselves or in a mixed form with a slideshow presentation aid (60%). This is reflected

in the high frequency of *self-mentions* which are often accompanied by *hedges, boosters* and *attitude markers*. As management can be considered a soft-knowledge field, it is more interpretative (Hyland 2008:14) and results may be influenced by contextual factors and variables. Scholars' arguments are frequently built through claim-making negotiations with the receivers of the parent discourse community and claims have to be expressed cautiously by using *hedges* or *attitude markers*, as the following examples show:

(1)   **I believe** it **can** be used as a teaching material in a doctoral seminar and since **our article may give** some insights for researchers who specialize in this field. (*Journal of Management* – VAB)

(2)   […] so **I think** an implication from that is that for not just science parks but universities and accelerators anyone who's interested in training entrepreneurs. (*Strategic Management Journal* – VAB)

Modals and cognitive verbs in the example downplay the evaluation of what has been argued, thus highlighting the subjective viewpoint on the claim. Interestingly, the use of cognitive verbs is almost inexistent in the WABs and *hedges* are often found in impersonal constructions, thus not involving authorial presence as in the following example:

(3)   In addition, several issues for future research are proposed, which may provide useful insights for both literature and practice. (Strategic Management Journal – WAB)

As shown by the example, in WABs authors seem to be more concerned with generalizations rather than with subjective viewpoints and with providing the reader with objective claims rather than with personal interpretations of their research.

Moving on to the use of *boosters* related to *self-mentions*, VAB authors rely on *boosters* when dealing with methods and results of their research since these parts are more open to questions. As a consequence, scholars need to establish the importance of their work by restricting the possibility of criticisms and alternative interpretations and, to achieve this aim, they have recourse to *boosters* which are typical of the more colloquial style used in videos. The following example provides an instance of this strategy related to methodology:

(4)   **Our article** provides **really important** methodological advances. These
        not just help us ascertain the mechanisms we've just explained, but
        are also **tremendously useful** in advising other researchers trying to
        get into emerging economies research how to try to go about studying
        and rigorously collecting data in these contexts. (British Management
        Journal – VAB)

Even though we find a limited presence of *boosters* in the WAB corpus
(0.4 ptw), their function is the same as for VABs and they are almost always
used in the methods section to highlight the fruitfulness of the procedures
employed in the research as demonstrated by example 4, or to show the
importance of the study in the literature panorama as in example 5:

(5)   Environmental dynamism reduces the negative effect of TMT gender
        and educational-level faultline strengths on strategic change while
        in fact revealing **a notable positive effect** between TMT age-faultline
        strength and strategic change. (British Management Journal – WAB)

(6)   **This paper** provides **important insights** into how executive search
        firms can successfully manage their reputations to overcome major
        threats to their organizations. (Journal of Management Review – WAB)

As suggested by the examples, however, authors of WABs show a higher
degree of impersonality associated with *boosters* (e.g. *this paper, environmental
dynamism*) in order to promote the objectivity of their claims. They subordinate
their own perspective to suggest that the importance of the results achieved,
or the value of the methods used, would be the same independently of their
role as researchers.

4.2 *Engagement*: Audience involvement in the argumentative construction of knowledge

Besides the creation of authorial credibility through *stance,* authors may also
decide the degree of participation of the audience to highlight or downplay
their claims through *engagement markers.* Engagement devices are concerned
with the various ways scholars relate to their readers by bringing them into
the discourse in order to anticipate possible objections (Hyland 2008: 17). As
we observed in Table 3, *engagement markers* are far less frequent than *stance*
elements in both corpora with, however, a higher frequency in the VAB
corpus (9.54 v. 0.8 ptw).

A striking difference between the two corpora concerns *reader pronouns* as they are inexistent in the WAB corpus, whereas they are the most frequent category in the VAB corpus. In VABs, as a matter of fact, authors often bring the receivers into the discourse by using different strategies. First of all, especially in the VABs where the researcher is the protagonist, scholars tend to involve their audience through expressions typical of face-to-face interaction associated with the second person singular pronoun *you*, as shown in example 7:

(7) **If you are interested** in this field **please read** my article, I welcome any questions or comments. Please **feel free to contact** me by email. Thank you for viewing to the end (Journal of Management Review – VAB)

As it is possible to observe in the example, there is an explicit engagement with the receivers, and the purpose seems to be a promotional one: to convince the audience to read the whole paper.

On other occasions, the VAB authors use the relationship with the audience in order to highlight the suitability of the methodology by encouraging the receivers to follow the research strand proposed, as in example 8:

(8) We hope that our paper will **encourage you to go out and engage with the visual as researchers** and **to analyze it in your work**. **Enjoy the paper!** (British Management Journal – VAB)

Even in the previous example, the reference to the audience is straightforward and involves expressions of face-to-face interaction (e.g. *enjoy the paper*). The suggestion that the receiver should embrace the line of research proposed in the VAB, and as a consequence in the paper, could be seen again as promotional, but it is also a way of giving value to claims made in the study.

The presence of *reader pronouns* is also frequent in VABs when the authors create a *scenario* (Gülich 2003: 233), taking the receivers into the procedures of the paper or into a specific example by sketching a possible situation that could also be experienced by the receivers themselves. Example 9 provides an instance of this strategy related to *reader pronouns*:

(9) If **you walk through** and **don't like what you see** on the other side **you can't get back** to where you were before, but most decisions aren't like that they are changeable, reversible (Strategic Management Journal – VAB)

A second frequent *engagement device* in the VAB corpus is the use of questions. The majority of the questions found in the corpus are rhetorical and present the author's opinion in the form of interrogatives. However, this strategy enables the scholar to simulate a dialogue with the audience and at the same time to present a claim by responding to the question immediately. Example 10 shows an occurrence of this question pattern associated with the second person singular pronoun *you:*

(10)   What do these two firms have in common, you might ask? The answer is that they share the same strategy [...] (Journal of Management – VAB)

In contrast, *engagement markers* are almost totally absent from WABs, and authors do not seem interested in bringing the audience into the discourse; this could be because of the different medium involved or maybe because in written publications we find other means of inclusiveness in the discourse community (i.e. shared knowledge, inclusive *we*).

In the next section, some concluding remarks on the results of the analysis are given.

5. Concluding remarks

The present paper focused on the video abstract, a new academic genre that has received limited attention in the literature (Plastina 2017; Coccetta 2020). Since the analysis of VABs has only been carried out with reference to hard sciences, we proposed a study on a soft discipline, i.e. management, and we compared video abstracts to their written counterparts. Another noticeable paucity in the literature is represented by the limited attention paid to VABs as a genre that, unlike the written abstract, has not yet been thoroughly investigated from a linguistic point of view. To the best of our knowledge, few discourse analytical studies have focused on the VAB so far (Plastina 2017; Coccetta 2020) and they have mainly focused on their rhetorical structure in corpora of VABs published in medical journals.

Our study has attempted to move a step forward in our knowledge of this new academic genre by considering a social science (e.g. management) and to provide a preliminary analysis of the argumentative strategies involved in the producer-receiver relationship focusing in particular on *stance* and *engagement*. Moreover, the VAB corpus was compared to its written counterparts (WAB corpus) to highlight changes due to "genre hybridization" (Bhatia 2004).

Starting from *stance*, the analysis of metadiscursive items showed that these elements are far more frequent in VABs than in WABs. In VABs, the author persona is strongly represented by the use of the first person singular pronoun *I* as *self-mention*, thus placing him/herself in a central position in respect to the research conducted. This strategy enables the scholar in the VAB to show their personal perspective and to distinguish his/her work from that of others. In addition, this strong *self* representation may also be due to the fact that, in VABs, most authors act as protagonists sometimes just by themselves without any graphical support, whereas a few appear in a mixed form accompanied by a slide show. As a consequence, this makes it easier to personalize the textual content produced. This personal approach is less evident in the WAB corpus, in which scholars are more concerned with generalizing their claims and where we found only the first person plural pronoun *we* as self-reference. In WABs authors seem to build their arguments by showing a more objective position and searching for credibility through solidarity with their peer disciplinary community. This point is also evident in the different use of *boosters*; in WABs they are usually found in impersonal constructions, whereas in VABs they are often associated with the personal realizations. (e.g. *our study*, *my paper*)

Moving on to *engagement markers*, here we found the most striking difference between the two corpora. In fact, *engagement devices* are almost inexistent in the WAB corpus. This immediately highlights the more interactive spirit of video abstracts. In VABs authors seem to focus on the audience, searching for an interpersonal relation with it in order to involve the receivers in the construction of the arguments. Reader pronouns were the most frequent *engagement marker* in the VAB corpus, whereas they were absent from the WAB corpus. Since the authors of VABs expose themselves in narrating their research by constantly referring to the audience, they seem to appeal to scholarly solidarity (Hyland 2008: 17) and to claim communality with the discourse community. This strategy enables them to anticipate possible readers' objections through collegiality of interpretation.

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