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CHAPTER 7

"I HIGHLY COMMEND ITS EFFORTS TO ENSURE POWER SUPPLY": EXPLORING THE PRAGMATICS OF TEXTUAL VOICES IN ITALIAN, CHINESE, AND ENGLISH CSR REPORTS

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1. Introduction

The present study positions itself within the scope of "contrastive rhetoric" (Kaplan 1966, Connor 1996, 2008), also termed "intercultural rhetoric" in more recent literature (Connor 2004, 2008), which encourages comparative studies of rhetorical conventions across cultures. As shown in many studies (e.g., Kaplan 1966, Connor 1996), cultural dimensions have some effects in shaping specific rhetorical conventions: a same genre may present different rhetorical features in different languages and cultures. In a similar way, a same discourse device may present similar or different rhetorical functions or contents when used in different languages. Inspired by such assumption, our study seeks to unveil similarities and differences of rhetorical features of *quoted voices*, or, *direct quotation*, exploited in CSR reports in Italian, Chinese, and English.

On account of the current intense public debate over the social responsibilities of business (e.g., Fassin and Van Rossem 2009), increasing attention has been given to the study of CSR communication in recent years. However, little study has been conducted on the polyphony of CSR from a discourse perspective. Particularly, from what we know, no research has focused on the use of multi voices in the CSR report. This study of direct quotations used in the CSR report, based on previous research on the discourse functions of direct quotations and on APPRAISAL theory (Martin and White 2005), aims to address this scarceness of discourse studies on the polyphony presented in CSR reporting.

This paper aims to provide a more systematic consideration of the rhetoric of direct quotations presented in CSR reports. More broadly, the paper attempts to shed some light on the discourse construction of relations between business and stakeholders. The specific research questions to be addressed include: how are direct quotations used in CSR reports and what functions do they have? How is attitudinal language involved in the direct quotations? How do these functional and semantic features differ across different languages and reports?

The article is structured as follows. The next section provides an overview of literature regarding polyphony in CSR, previous studies discussing functions of direct quotations, and a brief discussion of the Appraisal theory proposed by Martin and White (2005). Next, Section 3 outlines the methods and procedures employed for the analysis. The following two sections discuss the results regarding the functions and attitude language used in direct quotations in the CSR report, with particular attention on a comparative perspective. Finally, the last section seeks to provide some interpretative conclusions related to the research questions.

2. Literature review

2.1 Polyphony in CSR

According to the *Renewed EU strategy 2011-14 for Corporate Social Responsibility* (European

Commission 2011), "enterprises should have in place a process to integrate **social**, **environmental**, **ethical**, **human rights** and **consumer concerns** into their business operations and core strategy in close collaboration with their stakeholders" (European Commission 2011: 6) in order to meet their social responsibility. This integration of issues concerning the company's various stakeholders requires that the company engages in a polyphonic approach to CSR communication.

The notion of polyphony in CSR, as defined by Christensen, Morsing and Thyssen (2011), is an idea combining a multiplicity of voices into a complex concept, which opens a space for individual voices to be independent, instead of being integrated into or dominated by other voice(s) in forms that Castelló, Morsing, and Schultz (2013, 688) would call *monophonic* or *homophonic*. According to this definition, polyphony refers to the diversity and differences (and conflict) of voices which interact with each other dynamically, with a focus on corporations' management and integration of diversity, incompatible values and dissent at a discursive level (Castelló *et al.* 2013, 688).

However, this conflicting CSR interaction seems unlikely to appear in corporate-centric communication such as corporate press releases and corporate reports. Although some CSR reports present voices from stakeholders to create forms of polyphony, these are always lined up with the company, instead of representing different values or dissent. In this perspective, we content that, although the multi-voices presented in the CSR report avert the company from being merely "monophonic", these are substantially "symphonic", following the same conductor. These are far from being "polyphonic", because they do not involve conflicting values to be addressed at a discursive level. The present study attempts to shed light on how multi-voices are constructed into a symphony with the use of direct quotations.

2.2 Functions of direct quotations

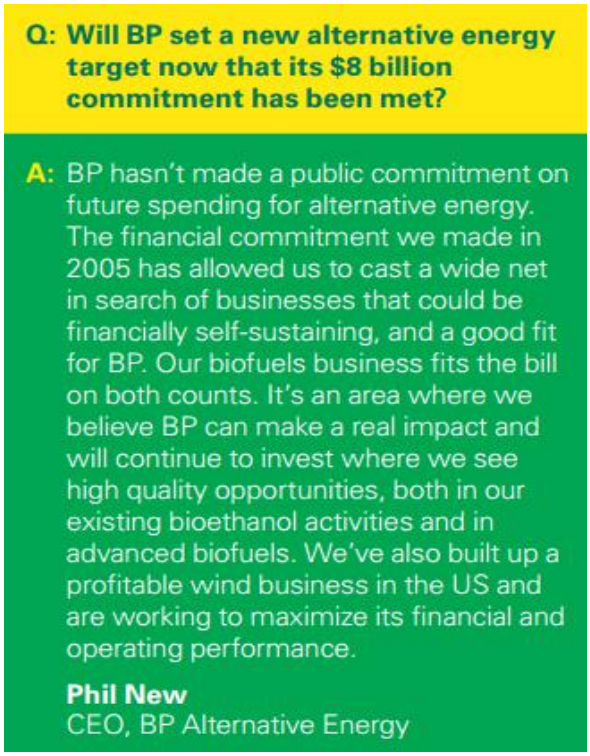
The phenomenon of quotation has been studied in various disciplines, including anthropology, ethnology, discourse analysis, literary stylistics, cognitive linguistics, functional grammar, historical linguistics and language change, language typology, phonetics and intonation, as well as syntax and semantics (see Buchstaller 2014, 36).

In studies of spoken discourse, quotations have been viewed as *demonstrations* (Clark and Gerrig 1990) as opposed to *descriptions of something that has been said*, because they depict only selected aspects of the referents. What the speaker chooses to depict depends on the experience or attitude that s/he wants the listener to have (Clark and Gerrig 1990, 775). This perspective is also useful in understanding how quotations perform their argumentative and persuasive function in written discourse, in the sense that the writer will choose the key elements of quotes in order to support her/his main point.

Studies on quotations have also shown another interesting feature: quotations are "recontextualized" utterances which have been "decontextualized" from their original co- and context (Günthner 1999). By recontextualizing the quotations, speakers/writers adapt them "to their own functional intentions and communicative aims" (Günthner 1999, 3). If this is true in most of the cases, there are limits to how far this is true in the discourse of public relations. Not all the quotations are selective and decontexualized depictions. In the CSR reports, we cannot deny that, some quotations, especially those from internal stakeholders, are likely to have been written specifically to be inserted in the CSR reports. In this case, the quotation can be presented in its original and complete form and content, and cannot be regarded as a "decontextualized" utterance, since it was written and designed with the aim to be placed in the context of CSR reports. In many cases we can presuppose that the

source of the quotation actively participates in providing quotes for the text, rather than being passively quoted. It is more a "voice on purpose", as it is produced on purpose to fulfill a certain communicative aim in CSR reporting. If we consider the example in Fig. 7-1 it is easy to see that, although we cannot be sure that the text provided by the source is originally like this, we cannot deny this either: the text is most likely to have been proposed by the source and possibly negotiated between source and editor.

Fig. 7-1: An extract from BP 2013



Another important perspective that may lead us to understand the nature of quotations is the concept of "constructed dialogue" (Tannen 1986, 1989). Whether a direct speech is quoted from other co-text and context, or designed on purpose, it is a "constructed dialogue" by nature, in the sense that this dialogic interrelationship between the author, the quotee, and the target reader, is constructed by the author to be adapted to the communicative purpose of the text. Our assumption is that, the "averral" voice (Sinclair 1988) in a text with a more or less argumentative and persuasive element is constructed by the author, while quoted text, which apparently seems to be external and thus unmanipulated, is in fact also subjected to the manipulations of the author. For a better persuasive aim, the persuader can select a quotation with a certain stance, present only the most desirable part of a speech, represent the quotee in different ways, and can even design a quotation which fits best the communicative aim.

Looking at quotations as "constructed dialogue", "recontextualized utterance", and "selective depiction" means considering their persuasive potential. This persuasive aspect of quotations is most obvious in genres such as the press and political speech (see Kuo 2010, Smirnova 2009, Calsamiglia and Ferrero 2003). Smirnova (2009) highlights two main functions of newspaper: to inform and to persuade the addressee, aiming at regulating the addressee's behaviour and thinking. Similarly, CSR reports, which should be informative in nature, are also characterized by a hybridity of informative and promotional discourse (Bhatia 2012). Direct quotations, as a marked textual form, are exploited by CSR reporters not simply for informative aims, but also for persuasion (improving corporate image,

building trust, attracting investment, gaining societal acknowledgement).

Drawing on previous studies, we notice that direct quotations can assume several functions in order to achieve persuasive aims.

Firstly, direct quotations are characterized by graphic or prosodic markers, which attribute vividness to the quoted words, and can contribute to highlighting the words and distinguishing them from the running texts, in order to capture the readers' attention. In CSR reports, this graphic effect is strengthened by the availability of multimodal strategies such as box, zoom-out effect, and font colour: the direct quotation can not only be incorporated within the running text by using the traditional quotation mark, but can also be presented independently from the running text, and functions like an independent text segment which accompanies the main text (see Fig. 7-2).

Fig. 7-2: A highlighted direct quotation in HSBC 2013

Secondly, the use of direct quotations can enhance discourse coherence. The content of direct quotations, though sometimes may appear different from what is being said in the main text or speech, is always related in some way to the discourse theme. This discourse echo renders the information more compatible, and enhances the audience's impression by establishing in the audience's mind connected nodes related to one theme.

On the interpersonal level, direct quotation is a tool for establishing interpersonal involvement (Kuo 2010, 181). It provides a sense of *immediacy* (Tannen 1989), and enhances the readers' participation in the communication. By directly quoting the words the reporter(s) has encountered, the text temporarily transfers the reader's perceptual point of view on the position of the reporter, allowing the reader to experience (pseudo-)directly, even emotionally, the voices of others. Consider, for example:

(7-1) "When I walked into Putian gas-fired power plant, I saw four HRSGs (heat recovery steam generator) lining up **neatly without any discharge of smoke dust**, which is different from former

power plant areas where multiple chimneys stand."—Journalist of Xinhua net Li You (CNOOC 2013, Section of "Listening to") (Translation by CNOOC, see Appendix 7-1 for the original version in Chinese)

In Ex. 7-1, the journalist appraises the company directly by showing what he has witnessed (*lining up neatly without any discharge of smoke dust*) as to testify the company's good performance. By citing the journalist's quotation, the text establishes an interpersonal involvement (Kuo 2010: 181), and provides a sense of *immediacy* (Tannen 1989), by shifting the readers' visual point on the position of the writer to be able to experience directly the voice of the "journalist".

The visual effect of the direct quotation can further contribute to enhancing the interpersonal involvement. In general, the presence of other voices creates an image that leads the reader to think s/he is not communicating only with the reporter.

This polyphony *per se* can enhance the credibility of the cited voice, and "position the reader to attach more or less credence to the various pieces of information" (Hunston, 1999, 178). The different types of sources can be relevant. When the source happens to be an important authority, in the field of professions or in the field of politics, the credibility can still be further enhanced by adding more or less "authoritativeness" (Bilbow 1997) to the words. When the source happens to be an experiencer of a certain service provided by the company, the reliability of the information is supposed to be enhanced by the fact that it is verified by an external party. Based on this stronger credibility, direct quotations become an effective device for providing evidence. As mentioned above, a direct quotation enhances interpersonal involvement, and "enables the recipient to witness it for himself or herself, thus lending an air of objectivity to the account" (Holt 1996: 242). Moreover, a direct quotation is a more effective and economical device for providing evidence (Holt 1996: 242), in comparison to indirect long description.

Another important element is the possibility to detach the reporter from the responsibility of the statement. By citing other sources, the reporter shifts the responsibility to the source (particularly when it is specified) (see also Clark and Gerrig 1990, Smirnova 2009). As also noted by Sinclair, attribution "ha[s] the effect of transferring the responsibility for what is being said' (Sinclair 1988, 78).

Finally, a direct quotation can also have different pragmatic functions, or realize different *speech acts* (Searle 1969) according to how it is used. The pragmatic functions of direct quotations can be very different in different genres and registers. Kuo (2010) points out that, in political speech, direct quotation can be used as a tool for vilification of others, in which politicians use direct quotations to vilify their opponents, and at the same time distance themselves from the responsibility of the quoted words. Baynham (1996) suggests that using direct quotation in the classroom can establish and maintain the asymmetrical power relations between teacher and students. In academic discourse, the functions of the quotations are even more characterized by the argumentative nature of the genre, including "establishing links between sources", "comparison of one's findings with other source", "statement of use", and so on (Petrić 2007). Considering the nature of CSR report, these pragmatic functions may not be particularly relevant. One of the aims of the present work is to explore the pragmatic functions of direct quotations in CSR reports.

2.3 Attitude in direct quotations

Apart from functions, this paper also looks at the contents of direct quotations in CSR reports, focusing on the use of interpersonal language, which is an essential element in building persuasive discourse.

The analytical framework that we used is the APPRAISAL theory (Martin 2000; Martin and Rose 2003; Martin and White 2005), which introduces three subsystems of appraisal language: ATTITUDE, ENGAGEMENT, and GRADUATION.

Our focus is on the study of ATTITUDE, which refers to the use of evaluative language in expressing feelings related to emotion, ethics, and aesthetics. It consists of three subtypes: Affect, which is "concerned with registering positive and negative feelings" (Martin and White 2005, 42), such as *glad*, *happy*; Judgement, which refers to "our attitudes to people and the way they behave" (Martin and White 2005: 52), such as *I highly commend its efforts* ; and Appreciation, which is "our evaluations of 'things' " or products and processes (Martin and White 2005, 56), such as *the forum is fantastic*. In our analysis, companies are regarded as "people" and "conscious participants" (p. 59) who conduct behaviour or performance, instead of "things" with business functions.

The message conveyed by textual voices can be relevant (positive, neutral, negative) or not relevant to the attitude/stance of the writer (Thompson 1996). For example, quoted conversations in narratives genre are often not relevant, while in academic genres, reported messages open an "evaluative space" by creating "a distance between the reporter and the content of the message" (Thompson and Ye 1991: 369). Analogically in CSR reports, the quoted speeches reflect the stance of the writer by presenting opinions or attitudes of a specified or not specified source.

The attitudinal language engaged in direct quotations may be *inscribed* or *invoked* (Martin and White 2005). Inscribed evaluation engages explicitly positive or negative words or expressions, while invoked attitude is indirectly realized by seemingly neutral facts, argumentation or contextual information. One thing to be noticed is that, "[w]hen analysing invoked evaluation it is certainly critical to specify one's reading position as far as possible [...] and also to declare whether one is reading a text compliantly, resistantly or tactically" (Martin and White 2005: 62). In the identification of the attitude types, we adopted a compliant reading position, that is, we positioned ourselves in the stance of the companies, to identify positive or negative attitude markers with respect to the companies. However, in the analysis, as linguists we took up a tactical position to "deploy a text for social purposes" (Martin and White 2005: 62) instead of being compliant or resistant to the companies.

It is complex to identify evaluations, especially the invoked ones. As Mauranen and Bondi (2003: 269) note, "[a]s readers and writers, we seem to be vaguely aware of evaluation being constructed in texts we encounter and produce". To lessen subjectivity in our analysis, we will focus on inscribed appraisal with explicit evaluation annotations, which can be identified in a less problematic way.

The borders of the three types of attitudes are overlapping: Judgement or Appreciation may be expressed with affection (e.g., *I felt proud that they won* [Affect + Judgement]; Martin and White 2005: 60), and Judgement of behaviour may be at the same time Appreciation of performance. One solution to address this bewildering aspect is the consideration of *inscribed* and *invoked* attitude. For example, *I felt proud that they won* can be treated as attitude with inscribed affect (*proud*) and invoked judgement ("I approve of the behaviour"), and *he played bravely* can be seen as an inscribed judgement (of the player) with invoked appreciation (of the player's accomplishments) (Martin and White 2005: 68). In our coding, we prioritized inscribed attitude type.

3. Corpus and procedures

The present study aims at investigating how voices of stakeholders are represented in the CSR reports and how they are related to the trust-building process. To accomplish this, we built up a small corpus composed by 18 CSR reports of 2013 published in by banks and energy companies from Italy, China,

and English-speaking countries (UK and USA) (CSR-ICE-T): six in Italian (CSR-Ita-T), six in Chinese (CSR-Chn-T), and six in English (CSR-Eng-T). These companies were selected among the biggest ones based in each country. For the Chinese corpus, we have used ICTCLA2015 for word segment. The basic information of the corpus is presented in Table 7-1.

Table 7-1: CSR-Ita-T, CSR-Chn-T, and CSR-Eng-T

CSR-Ita-T	**Tokens**	**CSR-Chn-T**	**Tokens**	**CSR-Eng-T**	**Tokens**
Edison 2013	39,619	工行 ICBC 2013	20,281	BP 2013	30,262
Enel 2013	59,272	南方电网 CSG2013	33,825	Citi 2013	33,617
Eni 2013	34,905	农行 ABC2013	49,211	HSBC 2013	20,180
IntesaSanpaolo 2013	49,345	招行 CMB 2013	18,981	PSEG 2013	19,205
UBI 2013	55,670	中海油 CNOOC 2013	24,971	RBS 2013	22,182
Unicredit 2013	45,822	中石油集团 CNPC 2013	22,807	Shell 2013	32,219
In total	**284,633**		**170,076**		**157,665**

The procedures we followed are listed below:

1. We identified all the direct quotations in the sample (168 in total). Direct quotations were found in the following reports:

   In Italian: Eni (6), Unicredit (1);
   In Chinese: CSG (15), ABC (45), CMB (19), CNOOC (27);
   In English: BP (12), Citi (21), HSBC (5), PSEG (1), RBS (6), Shell (10).

2. Then, by looking at the discourse relation between the direct quotations and the text, we highlighted the main discourse functions of the direct quotations, and discussed how they worked for the persuasive communication.
3. Afterwards, we identified the pragmatic functions of the direct quotations, and coded the text in terms of the pragmatic functions. When necessary, we attributed more than one tag to the texts.
4. Next, we coded the attitude markers on the basis of the three attitude types proposed by Martin and White (2005): Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation. When necessary, we double coded the resources, since attitudinal categories are sometimes interconnected.
5. Invoked appraisal was not considered in the analysis. The distinction of inscribed and invoked is not clear-cut identifiable, which would add complexity and subjectivity to the analysis.

4. Pragmatic functions of direct quotations in CSR reports

Textual voices can be divided into two major types: *averral* and *attribution* (Sinclair 1988). In the CSR report, the averral voice is that of the company. The company might not be the actual writer of the report, but it assumes the role of a *Principal* (Goffman 1981), that is, "someone whose position is established by the words that are spoken, someone whose beliefs have been told, someone who is committed to what the words say" (Goffman 1981: 144-5). Other voices involved in attribution include those of internal stakeholders, external stakeholders and non-stakeholders, as is demonstrated elsewhere (Bondi and Yu, Forthcoming). Although voices in the CSR report can be represented in embedded genres such as the Auditor's report, this study has focused on those reproduced in the form of direct quotation dispersed in the main body of the report. In particular, this section provides a

discussion of the pragmatic functions that direct quotations may have in CSR reports.

4.1 Pragmatic functions of direct quotations in CSR reports

Apart from the general, prototypical functions of quotes in terms of vividness, interpersonal involvement, discourse coherence, credibility, and objectivity, direct quotations may be associated with different pragmatic functions when used in different genres. In our analysis, by examining all the direct quotations presented in the sample we have identified five categories of pragmatic functions: *Witnessing*, *Providing reasons*, *Informing*, *Committing*, and *Expressing expectations*.

Witnessing.

A quotation assumes the function of "Witnessing" when the quotee acts as guarantor of the goodwill of the company by presenting positive facts, data, feelings, etc., in order to appraise or self-appraise the company, an employee(s), or the company's performance. In our sample, most of the quotations are direct appraisal of the company or its performance, while there are only a few cases used to appraise employees.

In Ex. 7-2, the local people Obukohwo witnesses to the company's positive social impact by talking about what she has experienced in the *Obio Cottage Hospital* (*The hospital is hygienic*, *no power cuts*, *It is very different*), set up by Shell to help the local community in the Niger Delta. In Ex. 7-3, the external partner Mark Andrew gave his witness about their collaboration with Shell (*takes its environmental responsibility seriously*), and put forward the statistics (*an impressive 98.9%*) to evaluate Shell's positive performance.

(7-2) "My husband and I came to Obio Cottage Hospital after recommendation from a friend. The services were free, once we registered with a fee for one year, because of the community health insurance programme supported by SPDC. [...]***The hospital is hygienic*** and is powered by solar and wind energy, so there are no ***power cuts***. ***It is very different*** from other health facilities in the area."—Esuike Joy Obukohwo, Recipient of services at Obio Cottage Hospital, Port Harcourt, Nigeria (Shell 2013, Section of "Working with communities")

(7-3) "We have been working with Shell for over 12 months [...] Shell takes its environmental responsibility seriously. Shell worked with us to achieve an impressive 98.9% recycling and reuse rate of the materials [...]"—Mark Andrew, Project Manager, Veolia Environmental Services, Hull, UK (Shell 2013, Section of "Environment")

In Ex. 7-4, Simon Martin, a manager of HSBC, self-appraises his work performance, and therefore the company's performance, by presenting the advantages (*build trust*, *promote*, *support*) of the action. In Ex. 7-5, the external partner Chen Chang gave witness about the positive collaboration between their group and CNOOC, and further enhanced the appraisal by appreciating (*thanks for*) and stating aspirations (*we hope that*).

(7-4) "Our long-term partnerships with charities build trust, promote sustainable change and support their organisational development."—Simon Martin, Head, Global Corporate Sustainability, HSBC

(7-5) "In the past 13 years, CNOOC faced the challenges together with us, proposing solutions for us,

making Chu Kong Steel Pipe develop into an international enterprise listing in Hong Kong from a small private enterprise. **Thanks for** the cultivation and assistance provided by CNOOC to the suppliers, giving firm support to development of national industry. **We hope that** we can continue to grow and develop together with CNOOC."—Chairman of Chu Kong Pipe Group Co., Ltd. Chen Chang (CNOOC 2013, Section of "Listening to") (Translation by CNOOC, see Appendix 7-1 for the original version in Chinese)

The function of "Witnessing" can be found in voices of different sources, particularly voices from partners, evaluators, clients, and employees.

Providing reasons

A quotation is "providing reasons" when the quotee presents contextual information in order to demonstrate the necessity of an action. In this way, the quotation is used to appraise indirectly the company that accomplished the action. For example:

(7-6) "A **high trust** company will always be a **more sustainable** company—without exception."—Geoff Lye, Corporate Sustainability expert (2013 RBS materiality interview, Section of "Conduct change")

In Ex. 7-6, the quotee does not provide witness in terms of the company's performance. Instead, he presents the necessity of *trust* for a company to be *more sustainable*. In the main text, the main topic is what the company has done to rebuild trust (*Rebuilding trust and customer advocacy through responsible conduct will remain a priority for us in 2014.*). The necessity of *trust* in the reasoning of the quotee, has been used by the quoter to legitimate and emphasize the importance of the company's action, thus building a responsible corporate image. This process is an indirect appraisal. This kind of appraisal is preferred by quotations sourced from external researchers or experts.

"Providing reasons" can be used to emphasize the importance of the company's performance. Moreover, it can also be used to legitimate and mitigate the company's mistake, such as in the following example:

(7-7) "The natural recovery is far greater than what anybody hoped when it happened. The fears of most people—that there would be a catastrophic collapse of the ecosystem in the Gulf—never materialized."—James Morris, Professor of Biology, University of South Carolina (BP 2013, Section of "Update on the Gulf of Mexico")

In Ex. 7-7, the professor reasons upon the oil spill on the Gulf of Mexico caused by BP's operations. He claims that thanks to the great *natural recovery*, there has not been any *catastrophic collapse*. This claim is used by the quoter to mitigate the mistake made by BP, and to justify and appraise BP's "environmental recovery efforts", which are disclosed in the main text.

Moreover, we also noticed that, direct quotations with this function were often voices of external researchers and experts, who are often considered as authoritative images in argumentation.

Informing/Providing information

Beyond appraisal, the direct quotation can also be used to provide information about the company's performance. Instead of incorporating everything in the discursive main text, using the form of direct

quotation as an alternative presentation mode, can contribute to enhancing the readability of the text, and thus highlighting the content (Fig. 7-3). This function of direct quotations is often the case of managers' voice.

Fig. 7-3: A direct quotation used to provide further information, BP 2013

In Fig. 7-3, information related to BP's safety risk management is presented by the Manager's voice in the form of Q&A. On the one hand, the endorsement of the voice of a nominated authority has some effects in enhancing its credibility. On the other hand, the information becomes more vivid by the use of multimodal units like the box which dedicate a particular space to it, and the bright colour distinct from that of the main text on the right hand. These characteristics may lead readers to firstly focus on the direct quotation rather than on the main text.

Committing/Showing Commitment

In our sample, several quotations come from voices of managers representing the company, or employees. In these quotations, a manager or an employee makes commitment for better performance in the future, for the continuity of good practices, or for the preservation of sustainable values and strategies. In comparison to "Witnessing", "Committing" is a more indirect appraisal which self-appraises by highlighting the goodwill or commitment. Consider, for example:

(7-8) "Citi **is dedicated to** being a top company for diversity and inclusion everywhere we operate. While we recognize local customs and cultures, we **will uphold our commitment** to equality and fairness and to provide opportunities for all of our employees to make progress toward personal and professional goals."—Ana Duarte McCarthy, Chief Diversity Officer, Citi. (Citi 2013)

(7-9) "As a technician, I feel well satisfied that I'm able to settle the problems identified in oilfield development and apply the new technology verified by myself in the oilfields. Regardless of the great

difficulty of the projects, **I'm still confident of** overcoming the challenges. This is my CNOOC dream."—CNOOC Research Institute Cao Yanfeng (CNOOC 2013; in the section of "My CNOOC dream") (Translation by CNOOC, see Appendix 7-1 for the original version in Chinese)

In Ex. 7-8, an officer of Citi represents the voice of the company, and makes a commitment to become *a top company* and to *equality and fairness* and *opportunities* for employees, by using commissive language such as *is dedicated to* and *will uphold our commitment*. The quotation self-appraises the company's commitment, thus highlighting the company's goodwill in CSR performance. Ex. 7-9 is an instance of an employee's commitment in work performance. By the use of attitudinal expression (*I'm still confident of*), the employee underlines his commitment in *overcoming the challenges* to help *oilfield development*. This self-appraisal of the employee's goodwill and tenacity, implies to some extent the corporate culture in terms of performance development.

Expressing expectations

A few instances of quotations incorporate also expectations or advices for the company's better performance, as in:

(7-10) "In CNOOC Sustainability Report, the content is rich and the data is comprehensive, but the text is large in quantity with much summary, so the report should strengthen the readability from the angle of stakeholders, adding feedback of stakeholders in the report to make the third party understand what the concern point of company is through the report." GRI Chinese Cooperative Partner and Director of Syn Tao Wang Xin (CNOOC 2013; in the Section of "Listening to") (Translation by CNOOC, see Appendix 7-1 for the original version in Chinese)

(7-11) "[...] I would expect the same leadership from Shell in the market place going forward [...]. This will encourage producers like Raizen to continue with Bonsucro certification. I hope Shell can be that change agent again in 2014 and lead other companies into creating a real market for certified ethanol." Sven Sielhorst Solidaridad's International Sugarcane Programme Coordinator, Utrecht, the Netherlands. (Shell 2013)

Ex. 7-10 shows an external party's advices and expectations (*should*) to the company for a better compilation of CSR report, while Ex. 7-11 presents the expectations (*I would expect*, *hope*) of an external source to "advise" the company to maintain the *same leadership*.

A description of the five pragmatic functions is summarized in the following table:

Table 7-2: Pragmatic functions of direct quotations in the CSR report

Pragmatic functions	**Description**
Witnessing	Witnessing by presenting facts, data, aspiration, prediction, etc., appraising directly the company, employee(s), or the company's performance.
Providing reasons	Reasoning by presenting contextual information in order to demonstrate the necessity of an action, thus appraising indirectly the company that accomplished the action.
Informing	Providing information on the company's performance.
Committing	(The company or an employee) Committing to good performance.

Expressing expectations	(External sources) Expecting the company to do something.

4.2 Cross-cultural comparison

This section focuses on the similarities or particularities in the use of direct quotations across the CSR reports in Italian, Chinese, and English. An overview shows that direct quotations are most frequently used in the Chinese CSR reports, quite frequent in the English sample, while in Italian direct quotations are underrepresented (Table 7-3). The Italian CSR reports, in general, appear to be disclosure-driven and use much less multimodal elements in comparison to the Chinese and English CSR reports. This discursive style may explain Italian reports' disfavor in the use of direct quotations, which can be visual support for informational texts, but are often driven by the needs of persuasion rather than by those of disclosure.

Table 7-3: Frequency and extensiveness of direct quotations in CSR-Ita-T, CSR-Chn-T, and CSR-Eng-T (see also Bondi and Yu Forthcoming)

	Freq.	**Extensiveness* (%)**
CSR-Ita-T	7	0.3
CSR-Chn-T	106	3.5
CSR-Eng-T	55	2.8

*Extensiveness = Tokens of the direct quotations / Total tokens of the reports

On the basis of the definition of the five pragmatic functions, we have annotated manually all the direct quotations in the sample. Each instance may be attributed with more than one pragmatic function. The proportion of the five pragmatic functions in each language is displayed below:

Table 7-4: Distribution of pragmatic functions of direct quotations in Italian, Chinese, and English.

	Witnessing		**Providing reasons**		**Informing**		**Committing**		**Expressing expectations**	
	Freq.	Percent.	Freq.	Percent.	Freq.	Percent.	Freq.	Percent.	Freq.	Percent.
Ita	1	14%	7	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chn	89	84%	11	10%	2	2%	12	11%	6	6%
Eng	46	84%	25	46%	16	29%	8	15%	1	2%

In Italian, all the direct quotations are used with the function of "Providing reasons" (100%), referring to contextual information or general knowledge in order to demonstrate the necessity and importance of an action. However, since the Italian sample is represented mostly by instances from Eni, this might be an individual rhetorical choice rather than a general tendency in the Italian corporate reporting culture. For this reason, in the following pages we will focus on the comparison of the Chinese and English samples, which are considered more representative for their much wider use of direct quotations.

The Chinese and English samples present identical preference for the function of "Witnessing", giving voice to sources who present experiences, facts, data, or aspiration, which is exploited to appraise directly or indirectly the company. This function takes advantage of the prototypical features of direct quotations – immediacy (Tannen 1989), air of objectivity (Holt 1996), and credibility

(Hunston 1999) – to assume some effects of guaranteed trustworthiness in terms of the cited words.

Noticeable differences regard the use of the functions "Providing reasons" and "Informing": in the English sample, these two functions are much more frequently involved (46% and 29%) than in the Chinese sample (10% and 2%). In English, reasoning elements are quite frequently used, independently or to support the contents of "Witnessing". This tendency is very strong in the case of RBS, which was in trust crisis for its computer system problems in 2012. Instead of using the function of "Witnessing" to persuade stakeholders who already lacked confidence, RBS chose to reason on the importance of trust and the important role of the banks, which implies its commitment in rebuilding trust by actual actions. Consider, for example:

(7-12) "Trust in the banking sector is very, very low...We feel that rebuilding trust is closely linked to supporting the economic recovery. Providing useful simple products and supporting customers in difficulty is hugely important."—Senior Policy Advisor, Business Finance Policy, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (RBS 2013)

In the Chinese sample, both reasoning and informational elements are underrepresented. Most cases provide only short comments – the average length of the Chinese direct quotations is much lower than that of English and Italian - on aspects already discussed in the main text, without providing substantial information as is expected in a reporting genre. In comparison, the English instances generally use more words, giving space to "Providing reasons" and "Informing" contents. However, the frequency of the function "Informing" is relatively low in comparison to "Witnessing" and "Providing reasons" in both samples. Considering also the fact that in the keyword lists of all the three samples, one common negative keyword is the collective category of figures (#), one important informational marker in CSR reports, the function of "Informing" appears to be a marginalized instrument not often considered by the company, although this function can be boosted by the inherent implication of objectivity of direct quotations.

In terms of the frequency of "Committing", the two languages present higher similarity. However, one particularity to be noticed is that, in English the act of "Committing" is mostly attributed to high-level managers (as in Ex. 7-8), while in Chinese, many cases of employee commitment are found, especially in the report of CNOOC (as in Ex. 7-9).

The function of "Expressing expectations" is marginalized both in Chinese and English. This is not surprising because expectations from external sources are not closely relevant to evaluative needs. However, it does have some rhetorical effects: the company's act to highlight others' expectations in the report may imply that the company has listened to these expectations and would probably take some actions to fulfill these expectations. It can be regarded as sort of a self-commitment in other people's voice.

5. Attitudes in direct quotations

Subsequent to the analysis of the pragmatic functions, we were interested in the lexico-grammatical and semantic realizations of direct quotations. In a preliminary analysis, we observed the first 200 words in the wordlists of the Italian, Chinese, and English subcorpora of direct quotations, and noticed a frequent presence of evaluative elements in all the three languages (e.g., *sostenibile* "sustainable", *primo* "first", *valore* "value", *fiducia* "confidence", *fondamentale* "fundamental", *importante* "important", *necessario* "necessary", *ambizioso* "ambitious" in Italian; *更* "more", *很* "very", *非常*

"very",*感谢* "thank",*希望* "wish", *重要* "important",*真正* "real" in Chinese; *important*, *material*, *commitment*, *right*, *improve*, *value* in English). In consequence, we attempted to explore this semantic aspect, by adopting the appraisal framework proposed by Martin and White (2005), with a focus on the three types of attitude markers (Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation).

This time, we decided to narrow the scope to three reports for identification of individual particularities for two reasons: on the one hand, we noticed that in some cases individual particularities in the use of direct quotations are more noticeable than cross-cultural particularities; on the other hand, since the Italian sample is much more limited by size in comparison to the Chinese and English samples, this makes the Italian sample insufficient to represent and generalize the lexico-grammatical preference in direct quotations in Italian CSR reporting. Thus, three CSR reports from energy companies – Eni, 南方电网 CSG, and BP – were selected, as the direct quotations used in these reports have respectively similar frequency and extensiveness in comparison to those in other reports. The following table shows the basic information of direct quotations presented in three reports:

Table 7-5: Direct quotations in the three reports

	Eni 2013	南方电网 CSG 2013	BP 2013
Frequency	6	15	12
Tokens	781	1264	1314
Pragmatic functions			
Witnessing	1 (17%)	10 (67%)	10 (83%)
Providing reasons	6 (100%)	6 (40%)	9 (75%)
Informing	-	-	9 (75%)
Committing	-	1 (7%)	6 (50%)
Expressing expectations	-	-	-

Then, these samples were annotated with the three attitude types – Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation – keeping in mind conventional notions in appraisal analysis such as *appraising items*, *appraiser*, and *appraised* (Martin and White 2005: 71). Only inscribed evaluation is considered. Results are summarized in the following table:

Table 7-6: Distribution of attitude types

	Affect	**Judgement**	**Appreciation**	**Total**
Eni 2013	0.6	1.2	5.9	7.7
CSG 2013	1.7	2.2	6.6	10.5
BP 2013	0.6	2.8	5.3	8.8
Total	1.0	2.2	5.9	9.2

*Proportion = Attitudinal words / total tokens (%)

In general, the three reports do not show noticeable differences in the overall frequency of attitude markers, although CSG shows a slightly higher frequency in this respect. One noticeable similarity of the three reports is a clearer preference for Appreciation in comparison to Judgement and Affect. This implies that direct quotations in these CSR reports are more used to evaluate "things", rather than giving explicit judgement towards behaviour (especially of the company and employees) and

expressing positive or negative emotional feelings. This tendency is illustrated in the following example, showing the codes used for annotating evaluative elements: <AP> for Appreciation, <JU> for Judgement, <AF> for Affect

(7-13) Q: Does BP quantify the benefits of its presence to the community?

(7-14) A: BP does not use a single methodology to quantify overall community <AP> **benefits** </AP> for all its sites. We do, however, collect some data <JU> globally </JU>, for example, on community investment. Each BP location decides the extent to which it will quantify overall <AP> **benefits** </AP> of its presence to local communities. Countries where BP has a <AP> **large** </AP> upstream or refining presence, such as Australia, Azerbaijan and the US, <AP> **generally** </AP> have <AP> **more** </AP> data on the overall community <AP> **benefit** </AP> of their presence than <AP> **smaller** </AP> sites or those <AP> **remote** </AP> from communities. Methodologies for quantifying overall community <AP> **benefits** </AP> need to be <AP> **sophisticated** </AP> to take account of different circumstances and types of impact, and to <AP> **balance** </AP> <AP> **negative** </AP> and <AP> **positive** </AP> impacts. We will follow the <AP> **development** </AP> of these methodologies <AF> with interest </AF>.—Elizabeth Wild Social Responsibility Director, BP (BP 2013)

In this example, the director mainly comments on BP's accomplished performance (*large upstream*) or other "things" (*sophisticated [methodologies]*; *positive impacts*; *smaller*). There is only one instance of judgement related to the company's behaviour (*collect...globally*), and one instance of Affect (*with interest*).

While the general quantitative trend in the use of attitude markers is similar in the three reports, differences concern mainly preferences for certain appraising items or appraised object of particular attitude type. When making judgement, in Eni we have not noticed any particular preference for appraising items or appraised, while in BP, direct quotations present a preference in highlighting the fact that BP's business behaviour and practices are closely related to external stakeholders, such as partners or institutions:

E.g., *work closely with the businesses*; *work closely with regulators*; *regularly engage with our contractors*; *to share good practice*; *achieve a closer alignment with the UN Guiding Principles*; *increasingly engaging with policy makers*.

Another frequently appraised human behaviour in the BP sample refers to the consciousness of something, such as:

E.g., *to raise awareness of potential human rights impacts*; *gain a good understanding of how the programme is working for them*; *helped participants to better understand the relationship between business and human rights*; *developing an understanding of how the water is currently used*; *road safety awareness campaigns*.

In CSG, when making judgement, the quoted voices often refer to the company's or employees' performance capacity:

(7-15) Whenever there is a power failure, the employees of China Power will come to make the repair

immediately, even during the night. (Translation by CSG)

Moreover, also the feature of veracity of the company is often stressed when talking about stakeholder involvement:

(7-16) Sincere communication with the stakeholders is outstanding. (Translation by CSG)

Another feature frequently addressed is the company's tenacity and perseverance towards CSR performance:

(7-17) The Report [...] demonstrated CSG's commitments in diverse areas of environmental protection. (Translation by CSG)

One noticeable particularity in the CSG sample concerns the more frequent use of affect markers, in comparison to BP and Eni. In CSG, emphasis was given to the company's concern and affectional dedication in performance improvement. By using attitude terms related to affection (e.g, *真情* "affection", *倾情* "heartily", *心系* "heartily", *情怀* "feelings"), direct quotations imply that the company is affectively involved in striving for better performance. Besides the company, the *emoter* (Martin and White 2005: 72) includes also employees (*自豪* "proud", *不嫌弃* "do not dislike", *亲* "close"), customers (*着急* "worried", *深刻的印象* "deep impression"), and stakeholders (*感谢* "grateful", *喜闻乐见* "be delighted to hear and see"). This frequent use of affect markers can be understood as an attempt by CSG to create emotional empathy within the readership. On the one hand, being attributed with human affection, the company is constructed as a person with affects instead of a profit-making cold blood organization. On the other hand, stakeholders' direct expressions of feelings have some effects in enhancing the quoted voices' interpersonal involvement with the readers.

8. Discussion and conclusions

CSR reporting aims at addressing interests from multi-stakeholders. Inspired by such need, some CSR reports choose to present voices from internal and external stakeholders, in addition to the dominant voice of the company. In our corpus, not all the CSR reports employ this rhetorical choice. The Chinese CSR reports present a more intensive use of direct quotations. This rhetorical preference for direct quotations in Chinese is noticeable also in daily discourse. As highlighted by Connor (1996, 39-40), in the Chinese culture, the use of old or ancient quotations is a sign of being cultured and respectful of authorities.

Although less frequently used, direct quotations are found in all the English CSR reports. In the Italian case, on the other hand, only two CSR reports present instances of direct quotations in a limited quantity. This underrepresentation of direct quotations is in line with the disclosure-driven tendency in the Italian CSR reports, which focus on presenting performance in a discursive way, paying limited attention to the visual aspects of the text.

Although direct quotations reflect voices from different sources, as a corporation-centric genre, the CSR report tends to present various voices in a symphonic way, rather than as conflicting polyphony. This is reflected by the pragmatic functions of direct quotations and the frequent presence of attitudinal markers in CSR reports.

In general, direct quotations have some effects in enhancing vividness and coherence of the

discourse, establishing higher interpersonal involvement. Moreover, it is a rhetorical choice which can contribute to discourse persuasion. The persuasive effect of direct quotations is mainly due to the presence of different voices (in comparison to the one voice running text) and the implicit commitment to moderate "verbatim production" (in comparison to indirect reported speech). These two factors have the function to enhance the credibility and objectivity of the words and thus can contribute to persuasion. Moreover, different types of sources may attribute to the words different degrees of "credibility". Words of authorities from political, professional, or academic fields may be exploited by the writer to add some "authoritativeness" to the text.

In addition to these general functions, direct quotations may present particular pragmatic functions in different genres. In our analysis, we notice that direct quotations in CSR reports present mainly five pragmatic functions: *Witnessing*, *Providing reasons*, *Informing*, *Committing*, and *Expressing expectations*. On the whole, *Witnessing*, in which the quotee presents facts in order to appraise the company, and *Providing reasons*, in which the quotee presents contextual information to demonstrate the necessity of the company's actions, are the two most noticeable functions of direct quotations in CSR reports. In a cross-linguistic perspective, the results show that the Italian instances prefer the function of "Providing reasons", while the Chinese and English samples show much higher preference for the function of "Witnessing".

Moreover, we also noticed that, direct quotations from different types of sources tend to present different pragmatic functions. The function of "Providing further information" is often realized by managers. Voices from researchers and experts are often reported in order to provide reasons and rationales for the company's performance, rather than addressing directly the performance of the company. Words from partners, evaluators, clients, and employees, on the other hand, tend to be more direct and appreciatory in terms of the company's performance.

In terms of attitudinal language, a case study of three selected CSR reports (Eni, CSG, and BP) shows that in all the three cases, the most frequent attitude type is Appreciation, implying that the direct quotations in these reports are more used to evaluate "things", rather than human or corporate behaviour. Affect markers are less frequently used in comparison to Judgement, which may be attributed to the genre features of the CSR report: this document is commonly expected to be objective instead of emotional. However, one noticeable particularity is that in the Chinese sample of CSG, affect markers are more used in comparison to the other two reports. This can be understood as CSG's attempt to create emotional empathy with the reader, by attributing human affection to the company, or by presenting quotees' emotional expressions.

Appendix

Appendix 7-1: Original version of the translated examples

(7-1) 我一进莆田燃气电厂，就看到与以往烟囱耸立的火电厂区不同，这里四台余热锅炉呈整齐的一字排开，几乎看不到有烟尘排出。——新华网记者 李由 (中海油 2013, “倾听)

(7-5) 13 年来，中国海油与我们一起面对挑战，为我们提出各种解决方案，使珠江钢管从一间小小的民营企业发展为在香港上市的国际化企业。感谢中国海油对供应商的培养和带动，给民族工业的发展提供了坚定支持。我们希望能继续与中国海油同成长、共发展。 —— 珠江钢管集团有限公司董事局主席 陈昌 (中海油 2013)

(7-9) 作为一名技术人员，能够解决油田开发中的难题，并将亲自论证过的新技术应用在油田中，心中就会十分满足。纵然该项目难度大，但是我有信心赢得挑战。这就是我的海油梦。——中海油研究总院研究人员曹砚锋 (中海油 2013;“我的海油梦”)

(7-10) 中国海油的可持续发展报告内容很丰富，数据很全面，但文字量很大，总结性语言较多，应该站在利益相关方的角度增加可读性，在报告中增加利益相关方的反馈，让第三者通过报告了解公司关注什么。——GRI 中国合作伙伴、商道纵横董事 王昕 (中海油 2013; “倾听”)

(7-15) 一出现问题，中国电力员工即便夜间也会及时赶来处理 (南方电网 2013)

(7-16) 针对利益相关方的关切坦诚沟通 (南方电网 2013)

(7-17) 报告[...]彰显公司[...]为区域生态文明建设作贡献的决心(南方电网 2013)

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