

Modulation of Propositions in the United Nations’ “Children, Not Soldiers” Report

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates into the modulation of the propositions in the United Nations’ report entitled “Children, Not Soldiers” to show that, as persuasive and polarized discourse, this report uses modulation (as hedging or emphatics) purposively to praise or to dispraise participants accordingly. This quantitative analysis is carried out along Salager-Meyer’s (1997) and Crismore’s (1990) classifications of hedges on the one hand, and Jalilifar and Alavi’s (2011) analytical procedure of hedges on the other. The study shows that this report uses attitudinal metadiscourse first to perform the acts inherent in hedges (downtoners) and emphatics (intensifiers), but also to polarize the participants with respect to their stances towards children’s rights.

Keywords: United Nations, hedge, children’s rights, modulation, emphatics, attitudinal metadiscourse

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper analyzes the United Nations’ report “Children, Not Soldiers” (CNS henceforth) as an attempt to grasp one of the basic communicative strategies used in political discourse, viz. modulation of propositions (Pindi 1988). When expressing their attitudes towards child issues, people tend to modify their utterances purposively either by hedging (downtoners), or by emphasizing them (intensifiers). In his discussion of attitudinal