Research Article

Valuation of attitude usage on students' review writings: An appraisal perspective

Yolanda Marcela Binambuni [a,1] and Setyo Prasiyanto Cahyono [a,2,*]

[a] Universitas Dian Nuswantoro, Imam Bonjol 207, Semarang and 50131, Indonesia
[1] 311202002171@mhs.dinus.ac.id; [2] setyo.cahyono@dsn.dinus.ac.id*
* corresponding author

KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
appraisal attitude evaluation sentiment students reviews	This study explores the evaluative language chosen by students as they express themselves interpersonally in reviewing an article. The ability of students to express evaluations and stances explicitly holds importance for educators, curriculum development, and assessment methodologies. In this study, the researchers focus the study on one type of appraisal system namely attitude. This study employs qualitative research using a criterion-based sampling technique called purposive sample and content analysis for the technique of data analysis (Santosa, 2017). The data sources of this study were 10 texts obtained from students' review writings. In analyzing the data, the researchers apply the appraisal theory developed by Martin and White (2005). The research findings underscore the prevalence of the appreciation subsystem, emerging as the predominantly employed element by students, covering a substantial 75.89% (170 data). Meanwhile, the utilization of affect and judgment is less noticeable, representing 14.29% (32 data) and 9.82% (22 data), respectively. The distinct focus on the appreciation subsystem indicates an inclination among students to express sentiments of values when engaging with the academic article. These research outcomes offer valuable insights into the linguistic choices made by students, enriching our understanding of how the appreciation subsystem assumes a prominent role in representing interpersonal attitudes within academic writing. Furthermore, the implications extend to informing pedagogical practices, curriculum enhancements, and more effective assessment strategies within the context of systemic functional linguistics and applied linguistics education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Interpersonal communication is one of the most significant aspects within academic environments, especially in the context of appraisal (Yu & Liu, 2021). In the academic domain, it is important for students to have the ability of expressing their perspectives and assessments interpersonally through evaluative language (Bondi, M. & Mauranen, A., 2003). Their ability to articulate evaluations and their stances is essential for improving pedagogical practices, enhancing curriculum, and creating more effective strategies of assessments. This ability represents both students' thinking processes and also provides valuable direction for their education and development. With the help of the in-depth analysis of the evaluative language in academic environment, educators can find themselves more aware of the students' learning

journey and design the instructional strategies to develop the critical thinking and analytical skills.

Within students' evaluative language, we can identify the complex interaction between linguistics item, cognition skill, and academic engagement (Azizah, A. & Nugraha, S., 2021). From the stand point of interpersonal communication, the researcher aims to interpret the evaluation inside students' attitudes towards article of a scholarly content. By analyzing the linguistics items of students' evaluative processes, the researcher wants to create implications which can better support students' learning process and facilitate their improvement into proficient appraiser. This study explores on the students' evaluative language within the context of reviewing an academic article, seeking to find results in the linguistic resources utilized by students in expressing their perspectives and evaluation. Through a thorough qualitative analysis and theoretical frameworks of Martin and White (2005) appraisal theory, this research aims to contribute valuable insights into the fields of linguistics and education.

Some studies which have been carried out including the study by Fitriati, Solihah, and Tusino (2018) namely "Expressions of Attitudes in Students' Narrative Writing: An Appraisal Analysis" which aimed to examine the expressions of attitudes in narrative writing produced by students. The study found that students expressed a variety of attitudes in their narrative writing, demonstrating a range of affective, judgemental, and appreciative expressions. Affect is prominently featured in the narrative texts, indicating the students' ability to convey their emotions effectively. The findings suggest that students exhibit an understanding and expression of attitudes in their narrative writing, employing a range of linguistic features to convey their mostly appreciations. The study highlights the importance of appraisal analysis in uncovering the complexities of students' narrative texts and provides valuable insights into how students navigate and express their attitudes through writing.

The second study was conducted by Harti and Kurniawati (2020), the study discussed the significance of writing as a medium for communication and academic expression, particularly in the context of second language acquisition. It aims to explore the evaluative words used by students in their writing, drawing on the framework of Appraisal Theory. The analysis reveals that students' compositions contain a variety of attitudinal markers, with Affect being the most prominent. Affect values indicate the students' feelings of insecurity and dissatisfaction regarding the discussed topic. Overall, the study contributes to understanding students' use of evaluative language in their compositions and underscores the importance of supporting their language and cognitive development in writing.

In this study, the researcher's primary focus is the examination of one system of the appraisal theory: attitude, as invented within the comprehensive framework of Martin and White (2005) appraisal theory. By focusing the research to this particular dimension, the researcher aims to inspect into the ways in which students articulate their evaluative positions, particularly within the context of reviewing the chosen academic article. The researcher employs qualitative research methodologies and purposive sampling technique. Finally, the implications of the study is hoped to provide significant suggestions for teaching methods, curriculum development, and assessment procedure within the sphere of language education and applied linguistics.

2. METHOD

Appraisal theory, as invented by Martin and White (2005), offers a comprehensive framework for analyzing the evaluative language used in discourse. Appraisal theory proposed that language serves not only to deliver information but also to express attitudes or emotions. This framework comprises three main subsystems: attitude, engagement, and graduation. The attitude system focuses on the speaker's subjective evaluations, including their feelings, opinions, and assessments. The engagement system, on the other hand, examines how speakers position themselves in relation to other stances and the topics under discussion. Lastly, the graduation system regulates the intensity and precision of the appraised expressions, allowing speakers to level the strength of their evaluations.

This research specifically aims to study the Martin and White's (2005) framework on attitude. Attitude provide insights into how individuals express their beliefs, opinions, and emotional responses in discourse. Within this framework, attitudes are understood as evaluative orientations towards people, objects, events, or propositions. The attitude system focuses on the linguistic resources and strategies used to convey personal evaluations which serve as markers of the speaker's stance towards a particular subject. By analyzing these linguistic cues, researchers can uncover the underlying perspectives embedded within discourse in the student's writings.

Student writing is a dynamic process influenced by various factors, including language proficiency, educational background, and writing experiences. According to a study by Graham and Perin (2007), students' writing skills are shaped by their prior knowledge and experiences, which contribute significantly to their overall writing competence. Additionally, Hayes (2012) suggests that students' writing development is a gradual process that evolves over time through continuous practice and feedback. These findings underscore the importance of providing students with regular opportunities for writing practice and instructional support to improve their writing skills.

This study uses qualitative research method which offers insights into complex social phenomena, allowing researchers to explore evaluative language in depth. As noted by Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative methods such as interviews, observations, and focus groups facilitate in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives, attitudes, and behaviors. This highlights the importance of qualitative methods in capturing the complexity of human behavior and subjective interpretations. Furthermore, qualitative research methods are particularly well-suited for studying social and cultural phenomena within their contexts. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2018), qualitative inquiry allows researchers to engage in an iterative process of data collection and analysis, enabling them to uncover context-specific meanings.

Purposive sampling is a commonly employed technique in qualitative research, allowing researchers to select participants who possess specific characteristics or experiences relevant to the study's objectives. Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) stated that in qualitative data saturation, purposive sampling was used to ensure the inclusion of participants with diverse perspectives and experiences related to the research topic. By deliberately selecting individuals who could provide rich and varied data, the researchers aimed to achieve data saturation, whereby no new information or themes emerged from subsequent interviews. This underscores the importance of purposive sampling in qualitative research for maximizing the depth and diversity of data collected.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher located all three of the subsystems in appraisal system including both the positive and negative. There are 224 appraising items found in total which comprises of 22 data of affect or 9.82%, 32 items of judgement or 14.29%, and 170 occurrences of appreciation or 75.89%. It is evident that the appreciation prevailed as the predominant subsystem found. The table below shows the data in detail including the items of the subsystems discovered in the study.

Under the attitude category, valuation emerges as the most prevalent sub-category, with 72 items (32.14%), followed by normality with 8 items (3.57%) as well. Interestingly, the inclination towards negative misery and propriety, as well as positive trust and interest is relatively low, constituting only 1 item (0.45%) each. This suggests that students tend to express their positive feelings and perceptions of valuation more frequently than expressing negative affection or judgement and showing trust or interest.

 Within the affect sub-system, students predominantly express positive emotions towards the subject matter. Affection emerges as the most prevalent aspect, with 8 items (3.57%), indicating that students tend to convey feelings of fondness or liking towards the topics under review. Conversely, expressions of unhappiness are relatively rare, with only 1 item (0.45%)

representing feelings of misery. This suggests that students generally perceive the subject matter positively and are less likely to convey negative emotions in their evaluations. Security, satisfaction, and dissatisfaction also play a minor role in students' affective responses, with each comprisinIn the judgement sub-system, students evaluate the subject matter based on various criteria such as normality, capacity, tenacity, and propriety. Normality and capacity emerge as the most dominant aspects, each representing 3.57% and 8.04% of the data, respectively. This indicates that students tend to assess the subject matter based on its conformity to established norms and standards, as well as its capacity or capability. Tenacity and propriety, while less prevalent, still contribute to students' evaluative judgments, albeit to a lesser extent. Overall, students exhibit a tendency to critically evaluate the subject matter based on its perceived qualities and characteristics.

Table 1. Findings of Attitude

System	Category	Appraisal Sub-System	Item		Σ	%
Attitude	Aff	Inclination	Desire	+	8	3,57%
		Happiness	Affection	+	4	1,79%
		Unhappiness	Misery	-	1	0,45%
		Security	Confidence	+	2	0,89%
			Trust		1	0,45%
		Satisfaction	Interest	+	1	0,45%
			Pleasure		3	1,34%
		Dissatisfaction	Displeasure	-	2	0,89%
	Jud	Normality		+	8	3,57%
		Capacity		+	18	8,04%
		Tenacity		+	3	1,34%
		Propriety		+	2	0,89%
				-	1	0,45%
	App	Reaction	Impact	+	20	8,93%
			Quality	+	7	3,13%
		Composition	Balance	+	13	5,80%
				-	2	0,89%
			Complexity	+	49	21,88%
				-	4	1,79%
		Valuation		+	72	32,14%
				-	3	1,34%
Total Attitude					224	100,00%

Within the appreciation sub-system, students express their overall evaluation and perception of the subject matter. The dominant aspect within this sub-system is positive valuation, representing a significant portion of the data at 32.14%. This indicates that students overwhelmingly perceive the subject matter positively and assign value to it. Conversely, negative attitudes towards the subject matter are relatively rare, with only 2.68% of the data falling under this category. This suggests that students tend to exhibit favorable attitudes and appreciation towards the topics they are reviewing, reflecting a generally positive disposition in their evaluations.

4. CONCLUSION

In summary, the analysis of students' evaluations encompasses all three subsystems within the appraisal system, capturing both positive and negative dimensions. Out of a total of 224 appraising items, 22 items (9.82%) pertain to affect, 32 items (14.29%) to judgement, and a significant majority of 170 items (75.89%) to appreciation. Notably, appreciation emerges as the most prevalent subsystem observed in the study. The comprehensive breakdown presented in the table below offers a detailed overview of the items identified within each subsystem.

The findings underscore the prevalence of positive attitudes among students towards the subject matter, as evidenced by the substantial representation of appreciation items. While affect and judgement are also present, they constitute a smaller proportion compared to appreciation. This indicates a general inclination towards positive evaluation and appreciation among students, suggesting a favorable perception of the topics under review. Moreover, the presence of both positive and negative dimensions within the appraisal system reflects the students' nuanced approach to evaluating the subject matter, encompassing aspects of emotional response, critical judgment, and overall appreciation.

5. REFERENCES

Applebee, A. N., & Langer, J. A. (2011). A snapshot of writing instruction in middle schools and high schools. *English Journal, 100* (6), 14–27.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3* (2), 77–101.

Charmaz, K. (2014). Constructing grounded theory (2nd ed.). Sage.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches (4th ed.). Sage.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). The Sage handbook of qualitative research (5th ed.). Sage.

Graham, S., & Perin, D. (2007). A meta-analysis of writing instruction for adolescent students. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 99* (3), 445–476.

Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods, 18* (1), 59–82.

Hayes, J. R. (2012). Modeling and remodeling writing. *Written Communication, 29* (3), 369–388.

Wigfield, A., & Eccles, J. S. (2000). Expectancy–value theory of achievement motivation. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 25* (1), 68–81.

Yu, S., & Liu, C. (2021). Improving student feedback literacy in academic writing: An evidence-based framework. *Assessing Writing, 48*, 10525.