Appraisal in Self-Development Books

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the use of evaluative language in English self-development books. The study investigates the dominant appraisal system types, such as attitude, engagement, and graduation, in five selected English self-development books. The methodology combines qualitative and quantitative research design, using the model of Martin and White (2005). The Software Unit Analysis Model (UAM) Tool program is utilized to sort and count the Appraisal Types. The findings reveal that English writers primarily focus on attitude type and employ the monoglossic dialogic positions.

Keywords Appraisal System, Attitude, Engagement, Self-Development.

التقييم في كتب التنمية الذاتية

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الملخص

تبحث هذه الدراسة عن استخدام لغة التقييم في كتب التنمية الذاتية باللغة الإنجليزية. وتتضمن الدراسة أنواع أنظمة التقييم السائدة في خمسة كتب مختارة للتنمية الذاتية باللغة الإنجليزية، مثل (الموقف والمشاركة وكثافة الموقف). تجمع المنهجية المتبعة في البحث الطريقية النوعية والكمية، وذلك باستخدام نموذج مارتن ووايت (٢٠٠٥). وتستخدام أداة تحليل وحدة البرمجيات (UAM) لفرز أنواع التقييم وإحصائها. وأظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن الكتّاب

الإنجليز يركزون بشكل أساسي على نوع "المواقف "ويستخدمون مواقف محادثة أحادية لجذب انتباه القراء.

الكلمات المفتاحية: نظام التقييم ، الموقف، المشاركة ، تطوير الذات.

1. Introduction

The systematic and successful self-development process can alter the attitudes and habits of self-reliant readers. This process dramatically displays how writers of self-help literature shape readers' thoughts and attitudes. Consequently, it is crucial to comprehend writers' attitudes and how they use language to engage with and influence readers. The best way to approach how writers' attitudes are manifested in such books is through a discourse semantic study, i.e., the study of meaning beyond the clause, as well as with "*how evaluation is established, amplified, targeted and sourced (Appraisal)*" (Martin &White, 2005, p.9). The current study seeks to conduct a discourse analysis investigation on a discourse semantic level of attitudinal and evaluative language. This analysis is based on the Systemic Functional linguistic approach developed by Martin and White (2005). The approach primarily focuses on the interpersonal metafunction to examine how writers of self-development books express opinions and emotions and convey approval or criticism towards various things or individuals. Therefore, this study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the prevailing type of appraisal (attitude, engagement, and graduation) utilised in the English and Arabic self-development texts selected, and what is the significance of its prevalence in motivating readers toward development?

2. What is the most prominent type of engagement (monoglossic or Hertoglossic)?

2. Background

1. Martin and White Appraisal Theory (2005)

Appraisal is defined as "the technical term for a set of systems within systemic functional linguistics that has been developed to map evaluation in texts." (Horarik & Issac, 2014, p.67).   In their seminal work, *The Language of Evaluation: Appraisal of English*, Martin and White (2005, p. 1) explore the interpersonal in language, keeping track of the subjective presence of writers/speakers in texts as they adopt stances towards both the material they offer and the individuals with whom they communicate. Their work focuses on how writers/speakers approve and disapprove, accept and reject, applaud and criticize, as well as how they position their readers/listeners to do the same. Appraisal involves the construction of communities of shared emotions and values through texts, as well as the linguistic mechanisms for the exchange of emotions, preferences, and normative judgements. It also involves on how writers build specific authorial identities or personae for themselves, how they align or dis-align themselves with existing or possible responses, and how they construct an intended or ideal audience for their texts. (Martin &White, 2005, p.1) The Appraisal System is an instrumental key to the analyses of self-development books. Hence, it is a must to introduce a satisfactory account of self-help genre to open an eye on the genre of the data selected in the current study.

2. Attitude System

Attitude refers to how speakers or writers express their feelings in a text, including emotional reactions, behavioral judgments, and item appreciation. Attitude is seen as a system of meanings and is mostly expressed in interpersonal relationships. It is viewed as an invitation for others to align themselves with the speaker's values, creating a community based on shared beliefs. The attitude system includes three semantic domains: affect (expressing positive and negative feelings),

judgement (attitudes toward behavior), and appreciation (evaluations of semiotic and natural phenomena).

3. Engagement System

Engagement consists of linguistic devices that express the writers/speaker's viewpoint or dialogic position on a specific proposed value. The concept of dialogism as influenced by Bakhtin's (1981, cited in Hood, 2019, p.394) states that all written or spoken communication is 'dialogic'. Bakhtin differentiates between a 'single-voiced' and a 'multi-voiced' text when he refers to as 'monoglossia' and 'hetroglossia' respectively, signifying the dialogic positions. (Note: The term 'voice' applies to distinct writer's position (Hood, 2019, p. 398). Additionally, 'voice' denotes a typical organisation or configuration of the co-occurrence of appraisal options that occur within a specific situational context (Martin and White 2005, p.164). Therefore, monoglossic refers to the internalspeaker / writer's voice, and the speaker/ writer is the sole source of a proposition. In this case, the propositional claims leave no room for the negotiation or alternative positions, for example (The banks have been greedy). The other dialogic position is hetroglossic which concerns the external voice, in other words, the speaker/ writer's source is external; referring to locutions which function to recognise the text's diverse communicative background, for example (There is the argument though that the banks have been greedy) (Martin & White, 2005, p. 99-100; Hood, 2019, p. 394). When speaking or writing, one ultimately reflects on the impact of referring to prior discourse, whether spoken or written. Meanwhile, speakers/writers anticipate the reactions of potential, actual or imagined listeners/ readers (Martin & White, 2005, p. 92).

3. Methodology

The methodology adopted combines qualitative and quantitative research design to conduct the analysis of five selected English self-development books as shown in Table (1)

Table (1) *The English Books Under Analysis*

No.	Book Title	Author	Date of Publishing	Publisher
1	Sometimes you win sometimes you learn	John C. Maxwell	2013	Hachette Book Group
2	The First 20 Hours: How to Learn Anything Fast	Josh Kaufman	2014	Portfolio Penguin
3	The 5 AM club: own your Morning Elevate your Life	Robin Sharma	2017	Harper Collins
4	The 80/20 Principle: The Secret to Achieving More by Less	Richard Koch	2017	Penguin Random House
5	Atomic Habits: An Easy and Proven Way to Build Good Habits and Break Bad Ones.	James Clear	2018	Penguin Random House

Data Analysis

Sample Text Analysis of Text 1:

Sometimes You Win Sometimes You Learn By John Maxwell (2013)

Maturity Is the Result of Finding the Benefit in the Loss

First, you have to learn from your mistakes and losses. That's been the common theme throughout this book. Learning is what investor Warren Buffett has done. People today know him as one of the richest men in the world. This elder statesman is well respected for his financial skill and wisdom, but those qualities have come as a result of learning from his losses. He says, "I make plenty of mistakes and I'll make plenty more mistakes, too. That's part of the game. You've just got to make sure that the right things overcome the wrong ones." Buffett's mistakes include paying too much for businesses (Conoco Phillips and USAir), buying into sinking businesses (Blue Chip Stamp), missing great opportunities (Capital Cities Broadcasting), hiring poor managers, and running operations himself when he shouldn't have. Yet one of the reasons he is so successful in the face of his losses is that he learns from his mistakes but he doesn't dwell on them. I believe the key to

being free from the stranglehold of past failures and mistakes is to learn the lesson and forget the details. That brings not only mental advancement but emotional freedom.

Learning from our mistakes is wonderful, but it means little if you don't know how to turn the lesson into a benefit. That comes when we take what we've learned and apply it to our future actions. That's what I have tried to do, though it took me a while to learn how to do it. Here are some examples of difficulties I faced, how they affected me emotionally, and how I tried to change my thinking and find the benefit of the experience:

When I was over my head writing a Bible commentary: I felt discouraged, I wanted to quit, and I defined myself as soft. However, I kept working, I got help, and I acquired new ways to learn. Two years later I finished the project. The benefit of the experience: I redefined myself as tenacious. And I never again allowed the challenges of a writing project to prevent me from following through and finishing it.

When I had a heart attack: I realized I had taken my health for granted. I defined myself as undisciplined, and I worried about what the future might hold. But I allowed the experience to change the way I ate and exercised. I began to swim daily. I redefined myself as disciplined in this area for the first time in my life. The benefit: I am living a healthy life every day so that I have additional years with Margaret, our children, and our grandchildren. When my mother died: I lost the person who gave me unconditional love every day for the first sixty-two years of my life. I was overcome. I felt lost. How many people have someone like that in their lives? And to lose that! But then I realized what a gift she was, and I felt grateful. The benefit: I determined to be that unconditionally loving person in more people's lives.

When I lost a million dollars in a bad business decision: I felt sick because we had to sell some investments to cover the losses, and we

couldn't really afford it. I chastised myself because I thought I had been too careless. The benefit: I made some necessary changes in my decision making process and I felt much wiser because of the experience.

These key experiences changed me. They taught me lessons, and I benefitted when I applied those lessons. When I was young, I mistakenly thought that as I got older and gained experience, I would make fewer mistakes and suffer few losses. That hasn't been true. What I've discovered is that I still make mistakes and face losses, but I learn more quickly from them and am able to move on much more quickly on an emotional level. If you want to gain the benefits learned from your losses and mistakes, don't allow them to take you captive emotionally. Banker and speaker Herbert V. Prochnow asserted, "The fellow who never makes a mistake takes his orders from one who does." Why? Because the person who advances in his or her career takes risks, fails, learns, and applies the lesson to gain the benefit. Observe any successful person, and you'll see someone who doesn't see a mistake as the enemy. If they have any regrets, they are likely to be like that of actress Tallulah Bankhead, who said, "If I had my life to live over again, I'd make the same mistakes, only sooner" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 199-201).

The Appraisal System in English Text

The main topic of text 1 is concentrated around the theme of learning from mistakes and losses. Interpersonally, the text positions the reader as someone who can learn from their mistakes and losses, that's why the writer tries to put great emphasis on the reader by focusing on personal behavior.

Table (4.1) shows the statistical distribution and percentages of the appraisal system's three sub-systems (Types): attitude, engagement,

and graduation. Each system is analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively using a mixed-method design.

Table (4.1)_Appraisal System in English Text 1_

APPRAISAL-TYPE	appraisal	
	N	**%**
- attitude	89	60.3
- engagement	66	45.2
- graduation	21	14.4
Containers:	**146**	

Table (4.1) illustrates that the attitude type is the most prominent system in Text 1 that contains 779 words. Conversely, the graduation type is the least dominant, while the engagement type falls in between. A more in-depth explanation of the three types is clarified through the subsequent tables.

1. Attitude

The Attitude-type, which is further subdivided into three other subtypes: affect, judgment, and appreciation is shown below:

ATTITUDE-TYPE	appraisal	
	N	**%**
- affect	29	19.9
- judgement	40	27.4
- appreciation	20	13.7
Containers:	**146**	

Table (4.2): _Attitude- Type in English Text 1_

Table (4.2) demonstrates a clear indication of the dominant category, which is judgment, followed by affect and appreciation. An expanded explanation of each type is provided in the following paragraphs with the relevant tables.

A. **Affect:** The first table is the representation of Affect- Type which is a sub-system of attitude.

Table (4.3): *Affect-Type in Englsih Text 1*.

AFFECT-TYPE2	appraisal	
	N	%
- un/happiness	9	6.2
- dis/satisfaction	8	5.5
- in/security	12	8.2
Containers:	146	

Table (4.3) presents the primary focus of the affect system on the in/security feature, rather than dis/satisfaction and un/happiness features.

The text conveys distinct emotions, such as a sense of insecurity, as evidenced by the writer's expression of remorse for having neglected his health, as well as the concern regarding his future "*I realized I had taken my health for granted*". The aforementioned feelings undergoes a transformation into resolute motivation, aimed at altering one's way of living and cultivating greater self-control as in "*I began to swim daily*". The writer's satisfaction and sense of fulfillment are evident as they express gratitude for the chance to lead a healthier lifestyle and allocate more time to their loved ones.

B.   Judgment

There are five features under the subsystem of judgment which are represented in a sequential manner as normality, capacity, tenacity, propriety, veracity. The following table shows the distribution of attitude across the aforementioned features.

Table (4.4): *Judgment-Type in English Text 1*

JUDGEMENT-TYPE	appraisal	
	N	%
- normality	4	2.7
- capacity	28	19.2
- tenacity	8	5.5
- propriety	0	0.0
- veracity	0	0.0
- unclear	0	0.0
Containers:	146	

Capacity is the most prominent characteristics of Judgment-Type, surpassing other features. Text 1 places significant emphasis on the judgement of human behavior as in "*Learning from our mistakes is wonderful, [.....] when we take what we've learned and apply it to our future actions.*" This emphasis on human ability implies that individuals has the power to acquire knowledge, adjust to new circumstances, and create constructive transformations as a result of their old experiences, which ultimately result in personal development and achievement.

Tenacity is clear in *" when I applied those lessons",* and "*I began to swim daily",* to refer to capability of people. Whereas normality is overtly conveyed through a specific selection of vocabulary, such as "investor," "richest," and "well-respected", to point out to Warren Buffett as an admirable exemplar of human behavior to be modeled by others

C.   **Appreciation:**

The final element within the affective subsystem of attitudes relates to the evaluation of various entities and facets of the outside world. The table below displays the distribution of appreciation:

Table (4.5): *Appreciation- Type in English Text 1*

APPRECIATION-TYPE	appraisal	
	N	%
- reaction	11	7.5
- composition	8	5.5
- social-valuation	1	0.7
Containers:	146	

The practice of appreciation is commonly utilized to assess a variety of entities, including but not limited to natural and manufactured objects, textual materials, and conceptual frameworks such as plans and policies. *Reaction* is the most dominant feature in the appreciation- type as demonstrated in table 4.5.   For example, "*maturity is the result of finding the benefit in the loss*" and "*These key experiences changed me*".

Reaction- type refers to the product or process that is analyzed in terms of the effect it has or the quality it possesses. The feature of composition is exemplified in "*I defined myself as soft. However, I kept working*" as the writer wants to make a balance between the challenges he faces to overcome his mistakes in work. The concept of social valuation is exemplified in the statement "*Observe any successful person*" as it acknowledges that success is perceived differently across various societies.

Polarity and Explicitness

The following table presents polarity of the Attitude System in all of its components, encompassing the three categories of affect, judgment and appreciation.

Table (4.6) *Attitude-Polarity in English Text 1.*

ATTITUDE-POLARITY	appraisal	
	N	%
- positive-attitude	51	34.9
- negative-attitude	22	15.1
- nuteral	3	2.1
Containers:	146	

Text 1 exhibits a clear widespread adoption of a positive attitude within its attitudinal system. The prevailing emotions of the text are one of positive polarity, indicating an optimistic view conveyed throughout. The feelings expressed by the user exhibits a fluctuation from positive to negative and then to neutral, followed by a return to a positive attitude. For instance, the user initially expresses a positive emotions by acknowledging the transformative impact of certain experiences, as in "*These key experiences changed me, I benefitted when I applied those lessons.*", but subsequently shifts to a negative sentiment by recounting a significant financial loss. The writer then adopts a neutral stance by stating that a particular claim is untrue such as "*That hasn't been true,*"

before reverting to a positive sentiment by highlighting the application of a lesson for personal gain as in "*applies the lesson to gain the benefit*". The text emphasizes the importance of embracing mistakes as an essential element of the learning process, rather than viewing them as obstacles.

Table (4.7) *Explicitness in English Text 1.*

EXPLICITNESS	appraisal	
	N	%
- inscribed	63	43.2
- invoked	16	11.0
Containers:	146	

Table (4.7) illustrates the clear utilization of evaluative language by the incorporation of inscribed expressions that is related to individual development such as, "maturity", "benefits," and "emotional freedom".

Invoked expression is also utilized in correlation with symbolism to signify an issue of personal growth. The expression "*Key experiences*" serves as a representation of significant events in an individual's life that have contributed to their personal growth and understanding. The word "*Lessons*" implies the acquisition of wisdom and knowledge derived from diverse experiences, including situations that are both positive and negative.

2. Engagement

The Appraisal theory comprises three basic systems, with the second system being the engagement one. It serves to demonstrate the writer's position in either the monoglossic or heteroglossic dialogic positioning. Additionally, writers employ various strategies to engage readers, including the use of pronouns, questions, narratives, and directives. The following tables present the distribution of engagement elements conveyed as in number and percentages.

The Dialogic Position

In this subsection, the distribution of monoglossic and hetroglossic dialogic positions is elaborated.

Table (4.8) *Engagement System in English Text 1*

ENGAGEMENT-TYPE	appraisal	
	N	%
- mono-glossic	51	34.9
- hetero-glossic	15	10.3
Containers:	146	

Table (4.8) illustrates that monoglossic feature holds greater dominance over the heteroglossic dialogic positioning. The writer utilizes little reference to other voices in displaying his point of view. Thus, the writer primarily utilizes pronouns as the prevailing grammatical structure in their writing to engage the readers as in "They taught me lessons, and I benefitted when I applied those lessons," when the writer exploits the whole text sharing his own ideas and experience with readers to involve them in considering his story of success.

Table (4.9)

Hetroglossic –Type of Engagement in English Text 1

HETERO-GLOSSIC-TYPE	appraisal	
	N	%
- proclaim	0	0.0
- disclaim	8	5.5
- expand	7	4.8
Containers:	146	

Hetroglossic dialogic position is used by presenting certain quotes such as that by Warren Buffett "*I make plenty of mistakes and I'll make plenty more mistakes, too. That's part of the game. You've just got to make*

sure that the right things overcome the wrong ones." The writer emphasizes the notion that prioritizing positive actions over negative ones is crucial for success. This is exemplified by the quote of Tallulah Bankhead's "*If I had my life to live over again, I'd make the same mistakes, only sooner.*" Therefore, the use of hetroglossic position is employed to entertain the writer's opinion by refereeing to other voices to support his own voice.

Conclusion

Based on data analysis, some conclusions are derived as follows:

1. Regarding appraisal type in the five English texts analysed, the attitude system is the most used in data examined. Self-development books use appraisal language to connect with readers' attitudes and view these attitudes as natural and acceptable. This connection may reassure readers, minimize disaffection, and promote self-acceptance. Self-development writers attempt to alter negative thoughts and habits and encourage positive thinking by helping readers see things differently. This cognitive reforming may help readers overcome challenges, build resilience, and think positively.

2. The monoglossic type of engagement is prominent in the five English texts, because English writers often employ personal experiences and persuasive assertions to motivate readers to follow their journey to success.

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