# Forming an Opinion in Second Language Evaluative Texts

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**Abstract:**

This paper explores the process by which students develop their writing style and tone while constructing scholarly propositions. The focus is on the students' ability to manipulate the evaluative elements that influence their writing, in order to demonstrate both successful and unsuccessful argumentative strategies. The study demonstrates the manner in which the APPRAISAL framework for systemic-functional linguistics explains the presence of authorship in the academic writing of students. The attitude module of Assessment, namely the classifications of Engagement, and Attitude, as well as Graduation, emphasize the predominant language employed by the students to convey either an adverse or constructive voice of authorship in their work. The results have significant consequences for assisting and encouraging the development of scholarly writing abilities in English as foreign language (EFL) environments. They contribute to our understanding of how undergraduates acquire the ability to express their own perspective in their written argumentation.

**Keywords:** Authorship, Appraisal Theory (AT), Evaluative Language, *Writing Style, EFL*

**Note:** The research is **NOT** based on an M.A thesis or a PhD dissertation (if any).

## 1. Introduction:

The authorial Attitude in this work refers to the way the author's voice interacts with other voices, including the presumed reader. The engagement approach may be accomplished in writing by the author's deliberate selection of certain linguistic trends. Therefore, by satisfying the expectations of the speech society as a whole the author is able to disclose their expressive skills and exchange information about their ideas. This includes assessing, assisting, incorporating different viewpoints in the writing, and creating information that benefits the audience (Hyland, 2008). The author's perspective on the topic's issue is also conveyed via different morphological

elements, referred to as the authorial stance. The act of writers presenting their own to audiences and expressing their perspective on the subject matter is referred to as adopting an authorial orientation or attitude. It exemplifies the application of language in social situations. Adopting a position of authority is an essential ability in effective composing, not just in explicitly controversial texts often linked to the scientific disciplines and arts, but also in other scholarly works that may provide "objective" assertions. The manner in which an author's individuality is manifested throughout their writing has always piqued the interest of experts. Academia authors use multiple techniques to express oneself in their writing. However, one especially notable approach is use first-person pronouns to build a voice that is authoritative and bolster arguments (Cheung, Y. L., & Lau, L., 2020).

Du Bios (2007) compiled a set of resources for examining a triangular position. In accordance to the stance triangle, in contrast to the assertions of other experts, a posture consists of three distinct actions. Du Bois use the words assessment, assignment, and synchronization to delineate distinct aspects of a unified action. Du Bois argues that taking a stance involves evaluating an item, positioning oneself, and aligning with others, as stated in Englebreston's work from 2007.Hyland's paper "Model of Interaction in Academic Discourse" provides a comprehensive definition of posture, including its many aspects and purposes. The posture paradigm is comprised of four components: Self Mentions, Attitudinal Expressions, Boosters, and Hedges. The author further describes attitude as the "voice" of a literary piece, exemplified by the writer's incorporation of indigenous linguistic elements to acquaint the target audience with the writer, the writer with the reader's perspective, and the writer with their own self. The subsequent expressions can be employed to communicate this concept: According to Hyland (2008), the tone that writers want to convey to readers or a proposal depends on the extent to which they are ready to participate within it.

The Appraisal Theory (AT) centered around Systemically-Functional Linguistics (SFL) and developed by Martin (2000), Martin & Rose (2003), and Martin & White (2005), examines and classifies the components that persons use while engaging in Attitude activities. Appraisal theory, although being relatively young, has solidified its position as a strong framework for comprehending societal processes. This concept has served as the foundation for various investigations conducted in various fields. Due to its extensive scope of potential applications, this theory has served as a source of inspiration for writers across all styles, such as exceptional literary work,

academic works, political discourse, judicial studies, and behavioral studies. Based on their individual areas of focus, some of the articles used the whole appraisal framework while others chose certain elements for the research. The main objective of such academic efforts was to examine and differentiate how diverse educational specialties use language in their evaluation and content comparability.The subset of Appraisal employed in this research, called Attitude, refers to the interpretations employed by individuals or texts to assign a subjective value to participants and procedures. This metric might be based on sentimental reactions or socially acquired systems of values (Martin & Rose, 2003). The Attitude may be classified into three components, as outlined by Salvi in 2010:

i.  Affect refers to occurrences that are characterized in terms of sentiments or feelings. Affect goes into two types: positive-affect and negative-affect.

ii. Judgment refers to the assessment of human conduct in relation to punishment or societal norms. Moreover, judgment is divided into five subdivisions:

1. Normality
2. Capability
3. Tenacity
4. Propriety
5. Veracity

iii.    Appreciation refers to the evaluation of items and goods based on standards of visual appeal as well as forms of societal worth, rather than focusing on how people behave (Jalilifar, A., et al., 2012).
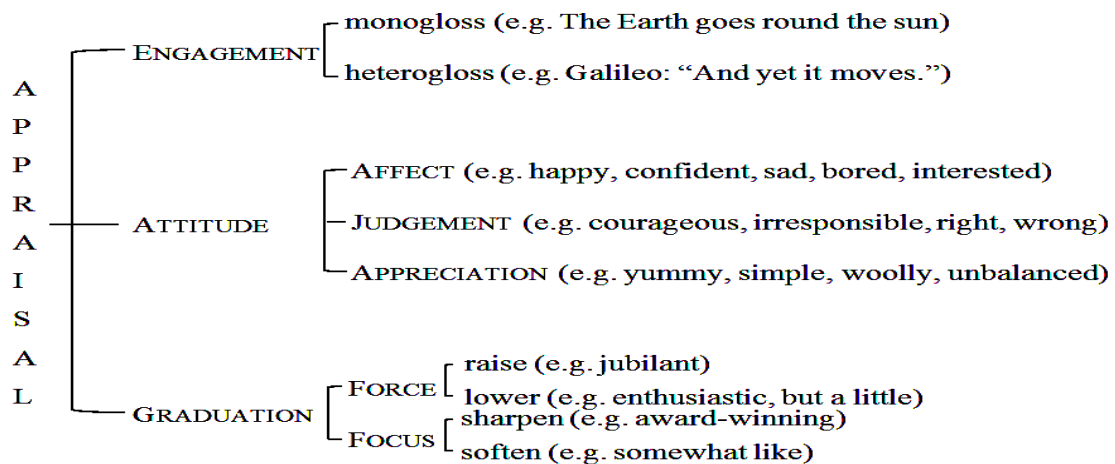
**Figure (1) illustrates the network of the appraisal system, specifically focusing on attitude. The diagram is based from Martin and White's study in 2005.**

1) **ENGAGEMENT** refers to the process of recognizing the specific way in which meanings are expressed and articulating the significance of using one meaning over the other (Martin & White, 2005). It is composed of two separate assets:

*a) Monoglossia* refers to the absence of relates to other perspectives, such as stating that the sky is blue or the Earth goes round the sun without mentioning any alternative perspectives.

*b) Heteroglossia*, on the other hand, involves including the links to other opinions. For example, one might say "in accordance to scientists, the Earth moves around the sun" or use statements like "Scientists claim that the Earth travels around the sun" or "The scientists are certain that the Earth moves around the sun" to acknowledge alternative perspectives.

2) **ATTITUDE** refers to our sentimental responses, assessments of behavior, and evaluations of objects (Martin & White, 2005). The composition of this entity has three distinct components: AFFECT, JUDGEMENT, and APPRECIATION.

*a) AFFECT* – assets for conveying sentimental contends and reactions (e.g. exuding joy, unpleasant, sorrowful, favorable (regarding a person), content, etc.);

*b) JUDGEMENT* – assets for showing standards (e.g. correct, incorrect, moral, accountable, etc.) and;

*c) APPRECIATION* – assets for demonstrating preferences in aesthetics (e.g. exquisite, unappealing, delectable, uncomplicated, etc.).

3) **GRADUATION** according to Martin and White (2005), GRADUATION involves the intensification of emotions and the blurring of categories throughout the process of assessing. The materials are categorized into two main components: FORCE and FOCUS.

*a) FORCE* – assets employed to modify the extent of assessments. The concept is split into two classifications: **increase**, which includes words like more effectively, most effectively, etc., and **decreased**, which includes words like a relatively little, a carefully, slightly, smallest bit, etc.

*b) In terms of FOCUS*, assets are utilized in a non-gradable setting to modify the vitality of limitations among groupings and create fundamental and supplementary forms of issues (Martin & White, 2005). The concept is

separated into two categories: **sharpening** (e.g. award-winning, all alone, etc.) and **softening** (e.g. kind of, kind of, slightly like etc.).

## 2. Methodology
### 1- Data Retrieval & Methodology

Martin & Rose define appraisal as the examination of perspectives mediated inside a book, including the intensity of emotions, the origins of standards, and the alignment of users. The concept involves the assessment of several aspects, including individuals' qualities, character, and emotions (Martin & Rose, 2007).

The objective of this research is to provide a description of two main aspects:

1) **The application of the Appraisal Framework to convey the perspectives among learners in their written form, and**

2) **The implications for English education that arise from this research. The research is characterized as exploratory and explanatory in style. The exploratory technique was used to uncover the pupils' perspectives as demonstrated in their essays.**

Furthermore, this research aims to elucidate the realization of social significance through language via Martin and Rose's (2003) Appraisal Techniques.

The information needed for the current investigation have been gathered throughout the academic year 2023-24. The study investigators, who were also the professors of the course, instructed learners to complete an assignment as a component of their coursework in the academic writing class. The focus of this research is on analyzing how social connotations are expressed via the use of terms or statements to convey dispositions in the source material. Specifically, the info was acquired via written sources. Following a preliminary debate and sharing of views on the impact of social networking sites on their lives, learners were instructed to produce and convey their thoughts towards "societal Network".

The research included a total of 90 freshmen who specialized in English at Ma'muon University College in Iraq. The research participants include of male and female individuals around the ages of 22 and 26, who all happen to be native Arabic speakers and are now in the 3rd level of their education. They had previously completed two semesters in academic writing, specifically focusing on composing paragraphs and drafting essays. The language of teaching is English and students must complete their tasks in

English. Nevertheless, there are instances when it is crucial to employ Arabic due to a vital requirement.

The researcher used the Attitude framework proposed by Martin and Rose (2003) (shown in Figure 1) to guide our data assessment. An individual's attitude may be further broken down into three parts: affect, judgment, and appreciation. After reading each of the 46 writings thoroughly, the study investigators identified and categorized all disposition statements as either "affective," "judgmental," or "appreciative" (see Figure 1).

## 2. Findings and Interpretation

This study aims to analyze the manner in which students convey their authorial voice in their academic composition. Put simply, this study examines how individuals express favorable or unfavorable opinions on specific subjects, specifically focusing on the issue of "Social Networking". The students have the opportunity to compose an argumentative essay on the subject matter as a mandatory task over the duration of the educational program. Undoubtedly, the student acquires the skills necessary to compose an argumentative essay and has an initial grasp of how to approach the topic. In addition, they were instructed to study, engage in group discussions, and utilize the internet to enhance their understanding of the subject matter they were going to compose an essay related to.

The researchers employed a qualitative approach to analysis as it provides a more suitable correlation across manifestations of Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation. This method goes beyond interpreting individual terms and phrases and instead focuses on the whole statement, considering tags that aid in the assessment procedure. In order to maintain uniformity, just one of the researchers is responsible for analyzing the learner's writings. To assure agreement, a second researcher analyzes 25 percent of the written work (Vinagre, M., & Corral Esteban, A. 2018, p.342). The Attitude buzzwords are present in the content in various forms such as verbs, adjectives, nouns, verbs, and phrases. Consequently, the examiners identified and emphasized such manifestations in order to categorize and analyze the findings.

Merely the most obvious manifestations of Attitude were discovered and analyzed. According to assessment researchers, these expressions can be categorized as positive or negative based on a set of established standards, and they have the ability to increase or decrease in intensity (Hood, 2004). The aggregate amount of Attitudes across every manifestation in the analyzed data is 360. The data comprises 165 instances (46.8%) of Affect, 136 instances (38.7%) of Appreciation, and 30 instances (17.7%) of Judgment.

The results indicate that students are able to convey their opinions on the assigned topic by utilizing terms from the Attitude group, notably Affect and Appreciation.

The findings indicate that the structure of attitudes in the academic writings of those attending university reflects how individuals effectively convey their thoughts to achieve the intended expressive objective of the written work. The pupils predominantly employed repeated and uncomplicated vocabulary to convey their stance on the subject matter they were composing about. According to Fitriati et al. (2018), college students demonstrate their command of language via writing by utilizing frequent terms when developing grammar and lexicon.

As a result, the students often describe specific occurrences in relation to their sentiments or sentiments, as shown in the instances that follow:

**1. I concur that social networking exerts a detrimental impact on those around us. (Adverse Effect)**

**2. Social networking provides individuals with the opportunity to connect and engage in different endeavors. (Optimistic Attitude)**

The evaluative statements of Affect are valuable for conveying the pupils' emotions throughout composition (ibid, p.335). The predominant manifestations of Affect are predominantly optimistic indicating that the majority of students exhibit their emotions of joy and contentment by utilizing these evaluative elements in an optimistic manner.

In the present research, the predominant occurrence was of Affect statements, indicating signify that learners conveyed their sentimental response to the presented subject matter, regardless of the extent to which it had been adverse or good. They were enthusiastic about showing a willingness to openly communicate their own emotions and encounters, compared to passing judgment or evaluating others' encounters or ideas regarding social networks, regardless of whether they are favorable or bad. The learners' writings contained affect buzzwords such as "delight, discontent, really want, anxiety, frustrate" which indicate the expression of optimistic or adverse emotions regarding a certain thing, procedure, or situation (Margarita Vinagre, p.342).

The prevalence of affective expression indicates the level of happiness or discontent that students have towards social networking in our study. Nevertheless, the research reveals that there is a higher occurrence of positive affect opposed to adverse affect. In our situation, students demonstrate a tendency to articulate their social principles in a constructive way, indicating

a sense of connectedness and involvement with the concepts they convey. Put simply, individuals of this nature have a tendency to openly communicate their personal sensations and sentiments instead of passing judgment on conduct or beliefs, or showing appreciation for an occurrence. The explicit articulation of emotions demonstrates a sense of assurance in the statements made, as one is being "genuine, straightforward, genuine, clear, and candid" regarding the occurrence being addressed (Rohmawati, 2016, p.32).

Appreciation is the second subcategory of Attitude in the texts that students have written. "Appreciation" refers to the process of judging things in light of commonly held ideals, say Martin and White (2005) [Martin & White, 2005, p. 45]. In contrast to judgment and attitude expressions, which might convey how pupils feel about individuals, appreciation expressions show how they feel about something. As such, "originating from an individual perspective to an organizational context" (Jalilifar, A., et al.,2018, p.89) is how appreciation works. Manifestations like (vital, sophisticated, helpful, excellent, etc.) and Adverse Appreciation (ineffective, awful, awkward, sluggish, confused, etc.) show that students in this research respect social networking. The students' compositions include instances of both constructive and adverse appreciation, as seen below:

1. *The sheer volume of social networking news may be quite daunting for the average person. (Adverse Appreciation)*
2. *Using social networking sites is an excellent strategy for learning and progress. (Optimistic Appreciation)*

Through the use of Appreciation, students evaluate the worth of various entities (such as humans, processes, art, texts, etc.) in either a good or negative manner. The same source the research identifies instances of Appreciation in students' written form, which manifest as Adj., Adv., N., and V. The learners express their appreciation for social networking sites by examining their responses to others' ideas and perspectives, and emphasizing the societal expectations around the use of the internet. They endeavor to express focus and concern in their appreciation and judgment of the societal regulations, offering comments and assessments of accepted practices and their sentiments towards others' behavior on digital platforms.

Judgment is a final component of Attitude that is seldom included in students' writings. The judgment represents the students' assessment of the subject they are composing on. Judgment may manifest in either an unambiguously or tacit manner, meaning it can include either the act of valuing or criticizing a phenomena or someone. In the instance of the students' screenplay, they often

convey their evaluation in a favorable manner via the use of adjectives such as "vigorous impressions of..., delightful, potent, amazing, and appealing" Conversely, they might communicate an adverse judgment through manifestations including "strange, uncommon, imprudently, awful, being unappealing..." Illustrated by the following instances:

**1. Many young individuals imprudently allocate a significant amount of time on the internet, rather than engaging in recreational activities with their peers outside. [Adverse Judgment]**

**2. Social networking is a potent instrument that facilitates the connection between individuals who have similar interests. ( Optimistic Judgment)**

The judgment demonstrates the students' perspective on social networks, including the recognition, critique, and commendation of behaviors, phenomena, or individuals, which may be either unfavorable or favorable (Setieya, M., & Husein, R. 2019, p.278). In the analyzed documents, learners exhibit a high level of sensitivity when it comes to critiquing others. Put simply, they appear to be reluctant to express a certain viewpoint or reluctant to criticize those who rely on social networks.

In summary, the assessment of emotions is referred to as Affect, the assessment of objects is known as appreciation, and the assessment or attitude towards an individual is termed Judgment. Therefore, the aforementioned findings indicate that students may experience positive emotions that demonstrate their enthusiasm in the subject they are composing on. Their emotions might manifest both favorably and adversely in regards to affect and attitude, which were determined to be the predominant factors in their composition. Appreciation, on the contrary hand, is the act of favorably or adversely analyzing or appraising something. The learners expressed a genuine appreciation for social networking sites as a significant tool for education, connecting, and personal growth. During the process of evaluation, pupils interpret and form either a favorable or unfavorable response towards someone. The occurrence of judgment occurrences seems to be less frequent compared to Affect and Appreciation, suggesting learners as communicators might not have the proficiency to nurture these vital abilities.

**Conclusion:**

The present research offers a novel addition to the domain of writing for academic purposes. The study revealed that the students' disposition towards composing is a significant factor and is shown in several aspects. The research used evaluating hypothesis, specifically focusing on the attitude

component of evaluation, which has three distinct groups (Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation). The aim was to investigate students' perspectives on attitude in educational writings. The purpose of this research is to demonstrate how third-stage college learners may express their emotions, evaluations, and/or admiration throughout the process of composing. The findings revealed that the students had a tendency to articulate their thoughts and sentiments using the affect category, regardless of whether they are adverse or optimistic. Additionally, they employed valued terms since they believe that they might foster greater engagement with their audience. Ultimately, they utilized a reduced number of evaluative statements, suggesting that the learners might not have the capacity to effectively persuade audiences of their perspective. The findings suggested doing additional research, particularly in the field of university education, in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how writing for education may be enhanced. This research should focus on exploring how students can effectively express their unique perspective, stance, and critical analysis in their written work.

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## تكوين رأي في النصوص التقييمية باللغة الثانية

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**مستخلص البحث:**

يستكشف هذا البحث العملية التي يطور بها الطلاب أسلوبهم ونبرتهم الكتابية أثناء بناء المقترحات العلمية. ويركز البحث على قدرة الطلاب على التلاعب بالعناصر التقييمية التي تؤثر على كتاباتهم من أجل عرض وجهات النظر المربحة والفاشلة. وتوضح الدراسة الطريقة التي يشرح بها إطار التقييم اللغوي الوظيفي النظامي وجود التأليف في الكتابة الأكاديمية للطلاب. وتؤكد وحدة الموقف في التقييم، أي تصنيفات التأثير والتحكيم، فضلاً عن الاعتراف، على اللغة السائدة التي يستخدمها الطلاب المستهدفون لنقل صوت سلبي أو بناء للتأليف في عملهم. والنتائج لها عواقب كبيرة في المساعدة وتشجيع تطوير قدرات الكتابة العلمية في بيئات اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية. وهي تساهم في فهمنا لكيفية اكتساب الطلاب الجامعيين القدرة على التعبير عن وجهة نظرهم الخاصة في حججهم المكتوبة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية :** *التأليف، نظرية التقييم، اللغة التقييمية، أسلوب الكتابة، اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.*

**ملاحظة :** هل البحث مستل من رسالة ماجستير او اطروحة دكتوراه ؟ **نعم :**          **كلا :** ✓