

## SYSTEMIC LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF TEXT APPRAISAL ON STUDENTS'THESES WRITING IN ENGLISH

Magdalena Ngongo  
Artha Wacana Christian University, Kupang  
[magda\\_tars@yahoo.com](mailto:magda_tars@yahoo.com)

### ABSTRACT

This paper is aimed to describe text appraisal of thesis writing, as one of the requirements to fulfil undergraduate degree of English teaching. There are 10 English theses writing taken to be analyzed qualitatively. These theses are written by undergraduate students who got 'A' grade in their theses examination. Based on the analysis, it was found out that in thesis writing, text appraisal employed covers three types of attitude, namely affect, appreciation and judgments. In addition graduation and engagement can be also included in language evaluation in which engagement is the most used. Referring to the attitude, judgment is more used than affect and appreciation. This fact indicates that the students' theses writing more personal and emotional than appreciative. Engagement was also most used than graduation. This fact indicates that undergraduate students make use of types of expand namely, entertain as well as attribute, whereas in graduation they more concerned for intensification and quantification and had very limited concerns or even ignored the use of sharpening and softening resource. This fact might suggest that students should be taught and trained more relating to writing, such as academic writing that specifying in evaluating language.

Keywords: text appraisal, theses writing, systemic

### ABSTRAK

*Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan penilaian teks penulisan skripsi, sebagai salah satu syarat untuk memenuhi gelar sarjana mengajar bahasa Inggris. Ada 10 skripsi dalam Bahasa Inggris dianalisis secara kualitatif. Skripsi ini ditulis oleh mahasiswa yang mendapat nilai 'A' dalam ujian skripsi mereka. Berdasarkan analisis, ditemukan bahwa dalam penulisan skripsi, teks penilaian yang digunakan mencakup tiga jenis sikap, yaitu mempengaruhi, penghargaan dan penilaian. Evaluasi bahasa yang paling digunakan. Mengacu kepada sikap, penilaian lebih digunakan daripada pengaruh dan penghargaan. Fakta ini menunjukkan bahwa skripsi mahasiswa ditulis dengan lebih pribadi dan emosional. Keterlibatan juga paling sering digunakan daripada kelulusan. Fakta ini menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa menggunakan jenis memperluas sedangkan dalam kelulusan mereka lebih cenderung untuk intensifikasi dan kuantifikasi dan memiliki perhatian yang sangat terbatas atau bahkan mengabaikan penggunaan*

*sumber daya. Fakta ini mungkin menunjukkan bahwa siswa harus diajarkan dan dilatih lebih lanjut berkenaan dengan cara menulis, seperti menulis akademik yang menentukan dalam mengevaluasi bahasa.*

*Kata kunci: appraisal teks, penulisan skripsi, sistemik*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Writing a thesis for students of English study program of Artha Wacana Christian University (AWCU), Timor, Indonesia is necessary for them as one of the requirements to be fulfilled in the undergraduate degree. Students must write a thesis based on their capacity, interest and field of study, such as teaching English or local languages. It is realized that writing thesis for students needs times to do it. "It is widely acknowledged that writing is seen as a site of interaction between writers and readers." (Liu 2013:1). Through written texts, writers construct solidarity and alignment with potential or target readers (Thompson, 2001 in Liu, 2013). This kind of evaluation and interaction has been a well established research area in the academic context, and different scholars, for different purposes, had employed different terms to account for phenomena such as attitude (Halliday, 1994), stance (Biber & Finegan, 1989), evaluation (Hunston & Thompson, 2000), metadiscourse (Crismore, 1989; Hyland, 1999) and appraisal (Martin, 2000). It seems that there have some researchers or scholars have conducted or studied on evaluation of language or appraisal, such as Hood, 2004; Hyland, 2002; Hyland & Anan, 2006. They had specify study to interpersonal language use relating to the important of constructing a critical voice and

building persuasion in argumentative writing.

Concerning to those previous study, the writer realizes that evaluating language is essential too if it is studied from academic writing especially theses writing written by EFL undergraduate students. Therefore, based on Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005, Martin 1997) this study concerned to address this linguistic studies on interpersonal meanings in EFL undergraduate students' English writing.

Appraisal theory was developed by Martin (1997, Martin, 2000; Martin & Rose, 2003; Martin & White, 2005). It is developed from view of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) that has a purpose to describe various ways of linguistic realization of interpersonal meanings in language use. It has three subsystems, namely attitude, engagement and graduation. It is stated that each them has certain sub-subsystems.

Appraisal has three subsystems, (Martin, 1997:18) namely affect, judgment and appreciation, and each subsystem has certain subcategories. Moreover Martin stated that affect deals with the resources for construing emotion, judgment relates to resources for judging behavior in 'ethical term', and appreciation concerns to the resources for valuing objects 'aesthetically'. Those resources relates to appraisal, including

additional resources for amplification and engagement. Those types of appraisal “ have positive and negative dimension that correspond to positive and negative evaluation of text ...”(Martin, 1997:24)

Appraisal is one of three major discourse semantic resources construing interpersonal meaning. Moreover, Martin and White (2005: 35-38) stated that appraisal covers three interacting domains, namely attitude, engagement and graduation. Attitude deals with feelings, including emotional reactions, judgment of behavior and evaluation of things.

Engagement concerns to the sourcing of attitudes and the play of voices around opinions in discourse. It concerned with the ways in which resources such as projection, modality, polarity, concession and various comment adverbials position the speaker/writer with respect to the value position being advanced and with respect to potential responses to that value position – by quoting or reporting, acknowledging a possibility, denying, countering, affirming and so on.

Graduation relates to grading phenomena whereby feelings are amplified and categories blurred. It is also stated that attitude itself is divided into three regions of feeling, namely affect, judgment and appreciation. Affect deals with resources for construing emotional reactions, judgment is concerned with resources for assessing behavior according to various normative principles, and appreciation covers the resources for construing the value of things. Therefore, graduation concerned with gradability. For attitude, since the resources are inherently gradable, graduation has to do

with adjusting the degree of an evaluation that relates to how strong or weak the feeling is. This kind of graduation is included as ‘force’ realizations covering intensification, and quantification ; ‘focus’ realizations covering sharpening and shortening.

Based on those views of language evaluation in text, the writer can say that analyzing EFL undergraduate written text is needed to be studied in order to get complete understanding of how students in their academic writing in this case in their theses writing applied language evaluation. It is hoped that this study will give contribution to EFL teaching such as in teaching academic writing in which one aspect to be specify in it is language evaluation.

## II. METHOD

This study was taken from ten academic writing or theses writing written by ten undergraduate students of English study program at AWCU, Indonesia. The students recently had graduated on February, 2015. This study was aimed to describe the undergraduate students’ interaction to some writers’ views .These theses writing were as final project for undergraduate students to fulfil one of requirements for undergraduate degree.

Based on the evaluation of examiners these students who wrote these theses were graded ‘A’. These ten theses are purposively taken in order to describe and analyze students’ language evaluation. Those theses then were analyzed qualitatively based on appraisal theory. Therefore this type of study can be classified as documentary analysis. The use of simple number in this

study was aimed just to give or support more information to the analysis of language evaluation.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part concerns to language evaluation analysis that based on the resources of appraisal system in which covers attitude namely, attitude (affect, judgment, appreciation), engagement and graduation. This pattern is regarded as a

brief outline of appraisal (Martin, 1997; Martin and White 2005). The resultant rhetorical effect of the predominance of appreciation values is to make the text sound more appreciative than emotional or judgmental (Hood, 2004 in Liu 2013).

Based on the analysis it was found out that there were varieties of appraisal subtypes resources used. Information relating to number of language evaluation is presented on table one below.

Table 1.  
Types of language used in academic writing (theses writing)

Ss' writing	Types of Appraisal					Total
	Affect	Judgment	Appreciation	Engagement	Graduation	
1	5	20	5	42	12	84
2.	11	38	3	31	17	100
3.	9	20	8	30	9	76
4.	4	8	3	39	11	65
5.	9	37	15	36	32	129
6.	4	21	-	27	8	60
7.	7	3	4	23	21	58
8.	10	6	2	47	11	76
9.	3	7	6	29	13	58
10.	7	14	11	9	15	56
Total	69/9%	174/23,%	57/7,4%	313/41%	149/19,5%	762

This table shows the distribution of appraisal system used in writing. It shows that the total use of appraisal system in ten writing is 762. Engagement system was the most (313 or 41%) used and followed by judgment is 174 (23%), graduation is 149 (19,5%), affect is 69 (9%), and appreciation is 57 (7,4%). This fact indicates that students used most engagement system and less used of appreciation. They are more personal in showing behavior of judgment as

resources of attitude. Information in detail of each type/subtypes of appraisal system are presented orderly in the following.

#### 3.1 Affect in Theses Writing

Attitude showing affect subtype was less used than judgment but more use than appreciation. The affect type of appraisal showing behavior or attitude in theses writing showed that the number use of affect type using security was the most used (49) and followed by happiness (11) and

satisfaction (9). Almost all are expressed in positive than negative since positive consisted of 55 and negative was only four number. It seems that affect values were rated low if compared to judgment values even it was higher than appreciation. Resources of security, happiness and satisfaction were used since the undergraduate students stated their attitude by expressing their feeling to what they read and then they stated their confidence, admiration, happiness from positive and negative attitude. Data relating to affect system can be seen in the examples one and two.

- (1) Based on the theoretical views of listening and dictogloss above, the writer **believes** [+affect: security] by using dictogloss technique the students' skill in listening will improve...  
Thesis writing number 1 (page 26)
- (2) The writer **hesitated** [-affect: insecurity] to select between these Manulai 2 and Manulai 1...  
Thesis writing number 8 (page 39)

The example number one and two show resources of attitude relating to positive (No.1) and negative attitude (No.2). Resources for positive affect were realized more positive than negative one.

### 3.2 Judgment in Text Writing

The resources of judgment type of appraisal system were realized by the use of social esteem and social saction. Social esteem relates to normality, capacity and tenacity. Whereas social saction covers veracity and propriety. The use of judgment in theses writing was 174 (23,5%). It has the highest resources used of attitude system than affect and appreciation.

The use of social esteem values was higher (148 use number) than social saction (26 use number). Social esteem covers 19 number use of normality, 125 for capacity, and 4 for tenacity in which there was not expression use of negative behavior. While social saction covered 19 number use for veracity and 6 for propriety in which only one use number for negative propriety expression. The use of both values in theses writing implies the writers' evaluation of people's intellectual capacity and normality. Social saction value relating to ethics were not concerned. The examples of judgment types can be seen the following data.

- (3) These alternative approaches and methods **can be applied** [+judgment :capacity] in English teaching classroom... Thesis writing number 4 (page 1)
- (4) Its is **clear** [+judgment: tenacity] that sentences are created by combining words, phrases or even clauses.

Thesis writing number 2 (page 9) It seems that the parameters for organizing judgment are reflected by the use of grammatical distinctions in the system of modalization (Halliday,1997). Resources of normality is to usuality, capacity is to ability, tenacity is to inclination, veracity is to probability, and propriety is to obligation.

### 3.3 Appreciation in Text Writing

Appreciation values was the lest used than judgment and affect. It just consisted of 57 (7,4%) number use. Referring to appreciation subtypes, there were 11 use number of reaction in which 9 were used for positive and 2 for negative, 13 use number of composition in which 11 were used for positive and 2 for negative, and 33 for valuation in which 28 were used for

positive and 5 for negative. This fact implies that explicit valuation were more specified for things or event. This phenomenon shows the same as what Liu found (2013:46). Writers had very limitation of negative attitude of appreciation. They more have positive attitude to the human views and they quoted, paraphrased or even summarized them for the contribution of their writing.

Even though the use number was least, they still had concern to it by evaluating language as source of attitude system. Examples of data concerning to the use of appreciation values are as follows.

- (5) Body part idiom is very important  
[+ appreciation: valuation]in learning  
a language, ...  
Thesis writing number 2 (page 9)
- (6) Learning English through the  
Number Head Together Strategy is  
very significance.  
[+appreciation: valuation]  
Thesis number 3 (page: 43)

### 3.4 Engagement system in Writing

Engagement system in theses writing covers the resources use of contractive and expansive. These two subsystem also consisted of other subsystem, namely disclaim and proclaim for the type of contract and for expand relates to entertain and attribute. It was found out that there were 313 ( 41%) engagement type used. It was the highest used than attitude and graduation. This fact implies that writers more concerned to attribute. They cited and also paraphrase. The number use of contract was 61 that covered 16 use number for disclaim and 45 for proclaim; whereas the use number of expand was 252 that

consisted of 94 use number for entertain and 158 for attribute. Writers seems that they make use of expand types, entertain and attribute.

This fact implies that writers more concerned to expand by acknowledging. It seems that type of citation was more typically used, beside that the writers also paraphrase and summarize. They were less to proclaim or state their view and also they rarely had disclaim. This fact showed that the use of citation was prefer. This fact also found out by Pascual and Unger (2010) that "the highly recurrent use of this type of citations appears to be typical in the disciplines of Chemistry and physics, ...." Examples of engagement are as follows.

- (7) Gardner argues that [+engagement:  
attribute] we should view  
intelligence as the ability to solve  
problems ....  
Thesis writing number 4 (page 7)
- (8) We can say that [+contract:  
proclaim) the MI in ELT classroom  
must be [+expand: entertain] a tool  
to help students develop a better  
understanding and appreciation of  
their strength.  
Thesis writing number 4 (page 12)

### 3.5 Graduation in Theses Writing (Academic Writing)

Graduation system covers two sets of resources, namely Force and Focus. The number use of graduation system in theses writing was 149 (19%). Almost all force values that covered 73 number use of intensification and 74 number use of quantifier dominated the use of graduation system since graduation related to focus only had 2 use number of sharpening and none for softening. This implies that writers

just concerned intensification and quantification and had very limited concerned or even ignored sharpening and softening resources.

The graduation values of intensification and quantification were almost balance. Data of graduation system are presented in these following examples.

(10) It is because they have **many** [force: quantification] experience and they have passed many conditions and situations. Thesis writing number 5 (page:39 )

(12) The effort from the community activities would be for a **genuine** [focus; sharpening] attempt to be made....

Thesis writing number 5 (page:51 )

#### IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The results of this study has shown that EFL students' evaluation of language through their interaction to writers' views covered some types of appraisal system resources. Therefore, it can be concluded that language evaluation in theses writing of

EFL undergraduate students concerned more judgment subtype as showing behavior or attitude than affect and appreciation. Engagement type also be concerned since they make use of expand subtypes, entertain and attribute, and are less in contract namely disclaim and proclaim. Relating to graduation, undergraduate students concerned also to intensification and quantification and they ignored to sharpening and softening.

The results of this study makes use of appraisal theory and also is accordance to some previous studies relating to the contribution of understanding appraisal system. Therefore, it could be suggested that future research are conducted in order to have complete understanding on appraisal theory by having more EFL varieties of academic writing from different field of study. It could cover also positive and negative evaluation, and high, median, and low one. It is also suggested to EFL lecturers in their teaching could give more exercises dealing with language evaluation.

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