

## Appraisals in Students' Hortatory Exposition Essays

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### Abstract

This paper aims at describing how appraisals are used by the writer in using the language components for the purpose of developing discussion texts. The focus of the analysis is how the three appraisal sub-systems—attitude, engagement, and graduation—are taught to students. Attitude itself will be further divided into *affect*, *judgment*, and *appreciation*. Engagement is also classified into two, *mono-gloss* and *hetero-gloss*. Graduation is, furthermore, subcategorized into *force (gradable)* and *focus (non-graded)*. Moreover, the functions performed by appraisals used are classified into three positioning, attitudinal positioning, dialogistic positioning, and intertextual positioning.

### Introduction

Discussion essay is an essay that is needed by the university students to help them develop the ability to write the review of related literature when they write the undergraduate theses or the master theses. This kind of essay is a type of the argumentative genres (analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, and discussion) whose purpose is to state an issue and then that issue should be supported by some kinds or arguments from different perspective. Moreover, learning to write this essay also helps students develop their ability in writing a synthesis of some related ideas or in taking the position because at the concluding paragraph they learn how to write these kind of things.

In line with the importance of teaching this kind of essay, the teachers or instructors try to teach it by using several teaching strategies. Some teachers use the Toulmin's model of the argument in helping students develop a discussion essay. Some of the them use the process approach consisting of the stages like planning, drafting, editing, and revising in helping students produce a good discussion essay. In addition, some teachers help students develop a discussion essay by focusing on the teaching of the generic structure and the prominent lexicogrammatical features used in the discussion essays. In short, many efforts have been done by the teachers to help their students develop good discussion essays.

Although many aspects of the discussion essay have been explored by both teachers and students, there is one aspect that is never discussed in detail in the teaching of the discussion essay. This aspect is related to how the writers use the language of evaluation, known as appraisal, in their discussion essay. Thus, this paper aims at discussing the use of appraisals in students' discussion essays. The focus of the analysis is the use of the three appraisal sub-systems—attitude, engagement, and graduation—in students' essays. Attitude itself will be further divided into *affect*, *judgment*, and *appreciation*. Engagement is also classified into two, *mono-gloss* and *hetero-gloss*. Graduation is, furthermore, subcategorized into *force (gradable)* and *focus (non-graded)*. Moreover, the functions performed by appraisals used are classified into three positioning, attitudinal positioning, dialogistic positioning, and intertextual positioning.

### Discussion Essay

When a writer sits down to write an essay there are various types that he can choose from according to requirement or according to his choice. He can write an analytical essay, a critical essay, a discussion essay or maybe a personal essay. The writer can choose to take up a subject and wish to write on that or he may wish to give instructions on some thing he feels the reader needs to know about. It is completely upon the writer as to how he wishes to communicate with the reader. There are so many topics the writer can choose from to convey the message.

Many essay titles require the writer to examine both sides of a case (arguments for and arguments against), and to conclude by coming down in favor of one side as suggestion or recommendation. These may be called '**discussion**', '**for and against**' or '**argument**' essays. Kanpp and Watkins (2005: 194-5) say that unlike the exposition essay that begin with a thesis, a discussion essay uses a 'statement of issue' to show at least two perspectives of the issue being discussed. The 'statement of issue' is followed by at least two sides of elaborated arguments. The number of points and the degree of elaboration shows the level of understanding and the maturity of the writer. The discussion is closed with the conclusion containing a recommendation that states the opinion of the writer and the summary of the evidence presented.

The purpose of discussion essay is to give information which consists of responses, view, or arguments in responding to a social issue or social phenomena. A discussion essay has special text elements which consist of statement of issue ^ arguments for ^ arguments against ^ recommendation/conclusion. The **statement of issue** presents a statement as a general response toward a social issue which becomes the topic to be discussed. Usually the statement of issue is stated briefly, interesting, and also provoked to attract reader's attention to read the details. The statement of issue is meant to orient the readers to the field or the topic to be discussed. For example, if the topic is capital punishment for corruptors, the statement of issue is "*It is not very wise to judge 'good' or 'bad', instead, capital penalty has negative and positive impact.*"

**Arguments for** consists of responses or general views from the society members who agree with the issue. It is meant to expose some opinions that support the issue. On the other hand, **Arguments against** consists of responses or general views from the society members who disagree with the issue because of several consideration. It is meant to expose some opinions or reasons that are against or refuse the issue. **Recommendation/conclusion** is given after presenting both sides of argument (arguments for and arguments against) as the responses to the phenomena. Suggestion or recommendation is presented as the follow up or what to do related to the issue.

The third aspect of the discussion essay is the prominent **lexico-grammatical features** used in this essay. This type of essay usually uses declarative sentences (both positive and negative) in present tense. Conjunctions are used to indicate pro and contra arguments. It usually uses 'verb of being, verb of having, verb of doing as the predicates. Modality is commonly used to indicate the degree of certainty or obligation. The emphasis to what is written can be done by using a grammatical construction sometimes known as 'negative inversion.', such as *Rarely had such a noise been heard, Never..., Hardly ... when ..., Not only ... but also..., and Under no circumstances ...* It is better to use impersonal phrases rather than 'I think', such as *It is widely believed that..., most people consider that fast food is very convenient . . . , and It is generally agreed that....*

### Appraisals

Appraisal is a part of the grammar of interpersonal meaning in the study of Systemic Functional Grammar. It deals with the subjective presence of writers/speakers in texts when they adopt stances toward both materials presented and those with whom they communicate. In specific, appraisal is about the ways the writers/speakers approve and disapprove, enthuse and abhor, applaud and criticise, and with the way the writers/speakers position their readers/listeners.

The theory of Appraisal proposes a taxonomy which includes the systems of **attitude**, **engagement**, and **graduation**. **Attitude** refers to "our feelings, including emotional reactions, judgments of behavior and evaluation of things" (Martin & White, 2005: 35). This system is, in turn, divided into three categories: **affect**, **judgement**, and **appreciation**. **Affect** is defined in terms of "resources for expressing feelings" whereas **judgement** refers to "resources for judging character", and **appreciation** to "resources for valuing the worth of things" (Martin & Rose, 2003: 24).

The system of **attitude** constitutes the main resource for evaluating, adopting stances, constructing textual personas and managing interpersonal positionings and relationships. The other two systems—**graduation** and **engagement**—are considered attendant systems which contribute to the core one and may function simultaneously.

The system of **graduation** encompasses those resources which strengthen or weaken attitude, resources for “adjusting the volume” of items (Martin & Rose, 2003: 41). **Graduation** is subdivided into Force (the strengthening or weakening of the degree of evaluation) and Focus (the sharpening or softening of boundaries between categories in the context of non-gradable items).

**Engagement** deals with sourcing attitudes and the play of voices around opinions in discourse. According to White (2001), this system covers all the resources that the language offers for speakers to express their interpersonal positionings in the texts they produce. This author also specifies that the scope of this system is greater than what is traditionally included under the labels modality, evidentiality and hedging but narrower than what is identified as metadiscourse in other frameworks.

a. *Attitude*

**Attitude** is divided into three areas of feeling. They are **affect**, **judgment**, and **appreciation**. First, **affect** is about resources for construing emotional reaction. It is concerned with registering positive and negative feeling. Do we feel happy or sad, confident or anxious, interested or bored? Second, **judgment** deals with attitudes towards behavior, which we admire or criticize, praise or condemn. Then, **appreciation** involves evaluations of semiotic and natural phenomena, according to the ways in which they are valued or not in a given field (Martin and White, 2005: 42-43).

Martin and Rose (2003: 25) say that when we investigate the way people express their feelings in discourse, there are two general ways that they use. First, people can have good feelings or bad feelings. Thus, we can say that there are positive affects and negative affects. Second, people can also express their feelings in a direct way or in an indirect (implied) way. So, we can say that affect can be expressed directly or indirectly. The following table shows the examples of affect.

Positive		I was <i>happy</i> We even <i>celebrated</i>
Negative		I was <i>torn to pieces</i> I can't explain <i>the pain and bitterness</i> in me.
Direct	Emotional state	<i>Afraid</i> <i>Dissapointed</i>
	Physical expression	<i>Withdrawn</i> <i>Shake uncontrollably</i>
Implicit	Extraordinary behavior	<i>Wander from window to window</i> <i>Rolls this way, that side of the bed</i>
	Metaphor	<i>Ice cold in a sweltering night</i> <i>Eyes...dull like the dead</i>

White (2001b: 4) says that affectual positioning may be indicated through:

- verbs of emotion (mental process) such as to love/to hate, to frighten/to reassure, to interest/to bore
- adverbs (typically circumstances of manner) such as happily/sadly
- adjectives of emotion, such as happy/sad, worried/confident, angry/pleased
- nominalization (the turning of verbs and adjectives into nouns), such as joy/despair, confidence/insecurity

Next, Martin and Rose (2003: 28) state that just like affect, judgment of people's characters can also be done both in positive and negative ways, and they may be judged explicitly or implicitly. However, judgment differentiates between personal judgment of admiration or criticism and moral judgment of praise or condemnation. The following table shows the examples of judgment.

		Direct	Implied
Personal	Admire	<i>Bubbly Vicacious Energetic Intelligent</i>	He was working <i>in a top security structure</i>
	Criticize	<i>What's wrong with him I can't handle him anymore</i>	I can't explain <i>the pain and bitterness in me</i>
Moral	Praise	<i>Their leaders have the guts to stand by their vultures</i>	<i>I envy and respect the people of the struggle</i>
	Condemn	<i>Our leaders are too holy and innocent, and faceless</i>	<i>Those at the top were again targeting the next permanent removal from society</i>

The third types of attitude is **appreciation**. Martin and White (2005: 56) say that with appreciation we turn to meaning construing our evaluation of things, especially things we make and performances we give, but also including natural phenomena. In general terms, appreciations can be divided into our reaction to things, their composition, and their value. As with aspect and judgment, appreciation can also be labeled as positive and negative evaluation.

To avoid confusion as to which is the domain of which, Martin and White defines boundaries between the three subdivisions of **attitude**. The borders are especially helpful for making an objective limit of domains which will enable a researcher to check himself whether what he is doing is still according to what it should be.

The first border to be defined is as to which entity is object to which element of attitude and what points of the entity is to be evaluated. The following table describes this.

Kinds of Attitude	To Evaluate	Points of Evaluation
Affect	Human and other conscious beings	Emotion, feelings, things that happen in the heart.
Judgement	Human and other conscious beings	Behaviour/conduct/character
Appreciation	Things/Phenomena; be it phenomena of nature or linguistics [language-related]	The values, composition, and the things impact on speakers

(based on Martin & White, 2005: 57-60)

To make the differences clearer, there are relational clause formulas [for affect and judgement] and mental clause ones [for appreciation] to check whether the appraisal elements fitly belong to the region they are thought to belong. This is displayed by the table below.

Kinds of Attitude	To Evaluate	Points of Evaluation
Affect	[person feels <b>affect</b> about something]	I feel <b>happy</b> that.
	[it makes person feel <b>affect</b> that [proposition]]	It makes <b>happy</b> that.
Judgement	[it was <b>judgement</b> for person/of person to do that]	It was unfair of you to
	[(for person) to do that was	For you to.... .is <b>unfair</b>

	<b>judgement]</b>	
Appreciation	[Person consider something <b>appreciation]</b>	I consider it <b>beautiful</b> .
	[Person see something as <b>appreciation]</b>	They see it as <b>beautiful</b>

(based on Martin & White, 2005: 58-59)

b. *Engagement*

The second domain of appraisal is **engagement**. In general engagement is 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 the respect to potential responses to that value position—by quoting or reporting, acknowledging a possibility, denying, countering, affirming and so on (Martin and Rose, 2003: 44). Engagement can be further divided into **monogloss**, where the source is simply the author, and **heterogloss**, where the source of an attitude is other than the writer. The following examples show these two types of engagement.

- *Smoking is not good for our heart* (monogloss)
- *Doctors say that smoking is not good for our heart* (heterogloss)

Heterogloss can be differentiated into three resources, such as **projection**, **modality**, and **concession**. Projection is the term used by Halliday (1994) to describe what the speaker/writer do with what other people say or think. Projections may quote the exact words that someone said, in which case ‘speech marks’ are usually used in writing, or they may report the general meaning that was said, which normally doesn’t require speech marks. It is also possible to quote or report what we think or feel. The following examples show these types of projection.

- *Peterson says, “Capital punishment is good for the corruptors”.* (Quoting)
- *Peterson said that capital punishment was good for the corruptors.* (Reporting)

Alongside projection, another way of introducing additional voices into a text a via **modality**. Halliday (1994) describes modality as a resource which set up a semantic space between yes and no, a cline running between positive and negative poles. There two general kinds of modality, one for negotiating services, and the other for negotiating information. The following examples show how modality is used to express engagement.

- Perhaps Jufriзал wrote *Minangkabaunese Grammatical Typology*.
- Jufriзал definitely wrote *Minangkabaunese Grammatical Typology*.
- Jufriзал must have written *Minangkabuanese Grammatical Typology*.

The third resource to consider, as far as heteroglossia in discourse is concerned, is concession. Conjunctions like *but*, that counters expectations, are termed concessive. *But* is the most common conjunction used to signal concession. But there are other examples of conjunctions used for concessions, such as *however* and *although*, and variations on the theme including *even if* and *even by*, *in fact*, *at least*, *indeed*, *nevertheless*, *needless to say*, *of course*, *admittedly*, *in any case*, etc. The following examples are the use of concessions.

- Although this school policy seems helpful to students rationally, most parents think that it is not effective at all.
- If only they come, just mean to please the school management

c. *Graduation*

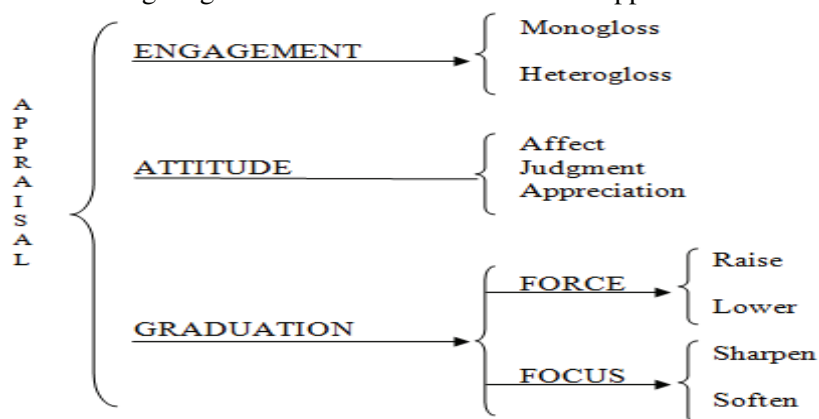
White (2001b: 7) says that under graduation, we are concerned with values which act to provide grading or scaling, either in terms of the interpersonal force which the writer attaches to a sentence or in terms of the preciseness or sharpness of focus with which an item

exemplifies a velour relationship. These two dimensions are variously labeled as **force** (variable scaling of intensity) and **focus** (sharpening or blurring of category boundaries).

Martin and White (2005: 138) say that graduation according to focus applies most typically to categories which are not scalable. Under focus, it is possible to up-scale, or sharpen, the specification so that prototypicality is indicated (eg. *A real* mother, a *true* love) or to down-scale, or soften, the specification so as to characterize as instance as having only marginal membership in the category (e.g. They are *kind of* crazy).

Force covers assessment as to degree of intensity and as to amount. Assessment of degree of intensity can operate over qualities (*slightly* foolish, *extremely* foolish), over processes (this *slightly* hindered us, this *greatly* hindered us), or over verbal modalities of likelihood, usuality, inclination and obligation (it's just possible that, it's very possible that). The term intensification is used to refer to this scaling of qualities and processes. Assessments of amount apply to entities. This provides for the imprecise measuring of number (*a few* miles, *many* miles) an imprecise measuring of the presence of mass of entities according to such features as their size, weight, distribution or proximity (*small* amount, *large* amount, *nearby* mountain, *distant* mountain) (martin and White, 2005:140-141).

The following diagram summarizes the elements of appraisal.



### Appraisals in a Discussion Essay

Appraisal is one of the most important components in the discussion essay. A good discussion essay should use attitude, engagement, and graduation in various ways. Attitude is used to express and strengthen the writer's feeling in the arguments. Engagement is used to express the writer's position in the text, and graduation is used to grade or scale the information provided in the arguments. The following text is an example of a discussion essay to be analyzed by using appraisal theory.

#### ***The advantages and Disadvantages of Distance Learning***

*A few years ago, distance learning was seen as an inferior way but nowadays even famous and established traditional colleges and universities are providing distance learning courses and it is generally considered a way to improve one's life. However, people still argue whether distance learning gives more advantages or disadvantages.*

*Some of them who see the benefit of distance learning will say that distance learning needs no commuting. Of course it saves money and time that students would take. Furthermore, distance learning can be done at any student's convenience. Mostly of the classes of distance learning are asynchronous. It means that students do not have to attend a lecture at a fixed particular time and place. Students can review the assignments and do their homework during off-hours or from home. Additionally, distance learning gives more accessibility. No one can deny it. People with limited mobility may encounter the problem when they take traditional class. With the online class system, the problem is absent.*

*Despite the many advantages, the other people will see that distance learning is costly and needs complex technology. To attend online learning, students must have a computer with a possible access to the internet. Admitted or not, such technology devices are not always*

available for common students. Another disadvantage of distance learning is that it does not provide immediate feedback. Unlikely traditional classroom, students have to wait for the feedback and comment until the instructor has review the works and sent response to them. Most of the time students will study alone. Distance learners may feel isolated or miss the social physical interaction that comes with attending a traditional classroom.

Regarding the individual's learning style, some students are able to learn when there is a live interaction between them and the availability of accompanying teacher while others don't really need it. So before deciding a choice of attending distance learning or not, each student needs to do a fair analysis regarding the kind of person he/she is.

The appraisal system in the first paragraph of the essay can be analyzed as follow:

*A few years ago, distance learning was seen as an inferior [negative appreciation] way but [concessive] nowadays even [graduation: focus; sharpen] famous and established [positive appreciation] traditional colleges and universities are providing distance learning courses and it is generally [graduation: force; soften] considered a way to improve [positive appreciation] one's life. However [concessive], people still [graduation: focus; sharpen] argue whether distance learning gives more [graduation: force: raise] advantages [positive appreciation] or disadvantages [negative appreciation].*

The result of the analysis shows that the first paragraph is rich with the appraisals. It can be seen from the use of 5 appreciations (3 positive and 2 negative appreciations), the use of 2 concessions (*but* and *however*), and the use of 4 graduations (2 *forces* and 2 *focuses*). However, in term of attitude, the first paragraph lacks varieties of attitudes. **Affect** and **judgement** are absent in the first paragraph. This is quite understandable since the topic being discussed is a thing (distance learning) not a person.

Next, the statement of issue formulated in the above essay is “*However, people still argue whether distance learning gives more advantages or disadvantages*”. This statement contains appraisals. The use of the words *advantages* or *disadvantages* indicates that the writer proposes a balance between positive and negative appreciation toward the issue. This appreciation is proclaimed directly. In addition, viewed from **engagement**, the statement of issue is good because by using the heterogloss style, the writer tries to more objective in stating the issue. It is not merely the writer's opinion but other people have the same opinion with the writer.

Second, the result of the analysis of the appraisal system of the second paragraph can be seen in the following box.

*Some [graduation: force; lower] of them who see the benefit [positive appreciation] of distance learning will say that distance learning needs no commuting. Of course [high modality] it saves [positive appreciation] money and time that students would take. Furthermore, distance learning can [mid modality] be done at any student's convenience [positive affect]. Most [graduation: force; raise] of the classes of distance learning are asynchronous [positive appreciation]. It means that students do not have to [negative high modality] attend a lecture at a fixed particular time and place. Students can [mid modality] review the assignments and do their homework during off-hours or from home. Additionally, distance learning gives more [graduation: force; raise] accessibility [positive appreciation]. No one can [mid modality] deny [negative judgement] it. People with limited mobility [negative judgement] may [mid modality] encounter the problem when they take traditional class. With the online class system, the problem is absent [positive appreciation].*

The result of the analysis also shows that the second paragraph is rich with the appraisals. It can be seen from the use of 5 **appreciations** (all are positive judgement). Because this paragraph deals with the positive view about the distance learning, it is quite normal to find that all **appreciations** are positive. Next, the dominant use of mid and modality (2 high modal expressions and 2 mid modal expressions) regarding the degree of certainty indicates that the writer is quite sure with his/her arguments. The minimum use of graduation shows that the writer tries not to grade the information in any occasion. However, in term of **attitude**, the second paragraph lacks varieties of attitudes. There are only two **judgement** expressions and one **affect** used in this paragraph. This is quite understandable since the topic being discussed is a thing (distance learning) not a person. Finally, the minimum use of heterogloss style shows that the writer is more subjective in providing the positive argument about the distance learning. He/she does not try to support his/her point by presenting what other people say about the advantages of the distance learning.

Third, the result of the analysis of the appraisal system of the third paragraph can be

*Despite [concession] the many [graduation: force; raise] advantages [positive appreciation], the other people will [mid modality] see that distance learning is costly and needs complex technology [negative appreciation]. To attend online learning, students must [high modality] have a computer with a possible access to the internet. Admitted or not, such technology devices are not always [graduation: force; raise] available for common students. Another disadvantage [negative appreciation] of distance learning is that it does not provide immediate feedback. Unlike traditional classroom, students have to [high modality] wait for the feedback and comment until the instructor has review the works and sent response to them. Most of the time [graduation: force; raise] students will [mid modality] study alone [negative judgement]. Distance learners may [mid modality] feel isolated [negative affect] or miss the social physical interaction [negative affect] that comes with attending a traditional [negative appreciation] classroom.*

seen in the following box.

The analysis in the above box also shows that the third paragraph is rich with the appraisals. In term of **appreciation**, the writer uses one positive **appreciation** and three negative **appreciations**. Since this paragraph deals with the negative view about the distance learning, it is understandable that the negative **appreciations** outnumber the positive **appreciations**. Next, the dominant use of mid and high modality regarding the degree of certainty indicates that the writer is quite sure with his/her arguments. The minimum use of graduation shows that the writer tries not to grade the information in any occasion. However, unlike the second paragraph, this third paragraph is quite rich with the use of **affect** and **judgement**. This implies that the writer focuses more on the people involved the the topic being discussed, not on the topic itself. Finally, the minimum use of heterogloss style shows that the writer is more subjective in providing the negative argument about the distance learning. He/she does not try to support his/her point by presenting what other people say about the disadvantages of the distance learning.

Finally, the result of the analysis of the appraisal system of the last paragraph can be seen in the following box.

*Regarding the individual's learning style, some [graduation: force; lower] students are able [mid modality] to learn when there is a live interaction between them and the availability of accompanying teacher while others don't really [graduation: focus; sharpen] need it. So before deciding a choice of attending distance learning or not, each student needs to do a fair [positive appreciation] analysis regarding the kind of person he/she is.*



The above analysis show that the number of appraisals used in the last paragraph is less than that of the second or the third paragraph. This is because the writer provides his/her recommendation about the issue and he/she tries to avoid giving evaluation. However, some positive appreciations, mid modality, and graduation are still used by the writer.

### Concluding Remark

This article is intended to provide a very broad-brush overview of the type of linguistic issues covered by the appraisal theory and how this theory is used in analyzing a discussion essay. Appraisal itself is regionalized as three interacting domains—attitude, engagement, and graduation. Although, these three elements are quite common in all text types, the use of appraisal in the discussion essay is very important. The ways affect are expressed, the ways information or arguments are negotiated, and the ways information are graded determine the quality of the essay.

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