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**AN APPRAISAL ANALYSIS OF ATTRIBUTE IN  
JOURNAL ARTICLES ON LANGUAGE STUDIES  
IN ENGLISH**

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 RATIONALE**

In regard to writing journal – a kind of academic magazine that reports on a specific interest to a particular community, especially journal articles on language studies, some sections are truly difficult to manage. For instance, writing Introduction and Literature Review chapters in journal articles are not an easy-to-achieve task. These two chapters are particularly important. Introduction, the first chapter of a research paper, displays the general introduction of a topic or a statement. Another significant chapter is Literature Review, this chapter explores scholarly articles, research papers and other sources which are appropriate to a specific topic or theory and also provides context for a thesis by identifying past research. By looking through Introduction and Literature Review chapters, readers will decide if they should continue to read that article or not and if the article is relevant to their research or not.

As Introduction and Literature Review chapters are vital sections of a journal article, much attention has been paid to make it well-written, unique and credible. An effective way to make the Introduction and Literature Review chapters credible is using Attribute, which manifest itself in citation, that is to cite facts and words from different authors. Attribute (or Attribution) is a subtype of Engagement system in Appraisal theory (or Appraisal framework) developed by Martin and White (2005) which serves to help

expressing the writer's attitude of appraising/evaluating other authors' cited ideas or findings in research works. This aspect of acknowledgement has been widely attended to in the extensive literature on reported speech and citation, especially as it operates within academic discourse.

Appraisal theory has been applied to several works and studies. Körner (2000) 's Ph.D. dissertation named *Negotiating Authority: The Logogenesis of Dialogue in Common Law Judgments*, mainly discussed the evaluative language in legal discourse. Hoods (2004)'s study *Appraising Research: Taking a stance in academic writing* also employed Appraisal Theory as theoretical framework for the analysis. In *Evaluation in Media Reporting: A comparative analysis in BBC, CNN and Aljazeera reports*, Birot (2008) examined the reason why evaluative language is important in media reporting under Appraisal framework. Gales (2011) analyzed interpersonal stance in threatening discourse with her work: *Identifying interpersonal stance in threatening discourse: An appraisal analysis*. It is obvious that different perspectives of Appraisal theory have been adopted in years. However, a system of Appraisal theory is still open for discussion of the evaluative aspects of various genres, that is Engagement system in appraising the academic works. As mentioned above, Attribute is a subtype of this system and this semantic category has been manifested with a wide range of linguistic resources in many journal articles. Unfortunately, though much has been written about how to write a literature review of research works

or articles, little has been discussed concerning the evaluative aspects of the linguistic resources resorted in the Engagement system, specifically the category of Attribute. The validity and reliability of sources of information in quotes in this section of the academic work still need having a closer look into the evaluative aspects of the language resources. In academic writing, it will often be necessary to refer to the research of others and to report on their findings. In order to do so, we have to use reporting verbs such as 'Evans (1994) **suggests** that....'; 'Brown (2001) **argues** that....'. The difficulty with using reporting verbs is that there are many different verbs, and each of them has slightly different, and often subtle shades of meaning. Using the correct words relies, as much as anything, on making the correct interpretation of what the writer you are studying is saying.

In this paper, Attribute appears in the Introduction and Literature Review Chapters of *Journal Articles on Language Studies in English* (JALSE) has been chosen to be the topic/data of the research “*An Appraisal Analysis of Attribute in Journal Articles on Language Studies in English*”.

Hence, “*An Appraisal Analysis of Attribute in Journal Articles on Language Studies in English*” will give who those are interested in this topic a new insight into Appraisal theory concerning the manifestation of Attribute. Furthermore, this topic will present the syntactic realizations, semantics and pragmatics features of Attribute in English as well.

## **1.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **1.2.1. Aims**

The study aims to examine Attribute in the Introduction and Literature Review Chapters of JALSE from an Appraisal theory approach in order to help learners to have a better understanding of the evaluative meanings and the motivations of using Attribute in this genre of academic work.

### **1.2.2. Objectives**

This study aims to fulfill the following objectives.

- To describe the syntactic realizations of Attribute used in the Introduction and Literature Review Chapters of JALSE;
- To discover the semantic features of Attribute used in the Introduction and Literature Review Chapters of JALSE;
- To analyze the pragmatic features of Attribute used in the Introduction and Literature Review Chapters of JALSE.

## **1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study intends to answer the following questions

- What are the syntactic realizations of Attribute used in the Introduction and Literature Review Chapters of JALSE?
- What are the semantic features of Attribute used in the Introduction and Literature Review Chapters of JALSE?
- What are the pragmatic features of Attribute used in the Introduction and Literature Review Chapters of JALSE?

## **1.4. SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The study only deals with the instances of Attribute extracted

from Introduction and Literature Review chapters of journal articles from 2013 to 2017 about the issues of language studies from IJRSLL.

### **1.5. OUTLINE OF THE STUDY**

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. LITERATURE REVIEW**

As mentioned earlier, various academic works such as research papers, journal articles have been used Appraisal theory as a primary framework in analyzing the evaluative aspects of language used in the genre of research. Furthermore, several perspectives of Appraisal theory also became the topic of many works. Attribute, which can be understood as reporting or quoting ideas and thoughts of other writers/speakers, is a subtype that belongs to Engagement system in Appraisal theory. In the Engagement system, Attribute represents a clause based on the subjectivity of an external voice. There have been numerous studies using the system.

Tran and Thomson (2008) explored the nature of ‘Reporter voice’ in a Vietnamese hard news story. The article, which was taken from the Nhan Dan Daily (The People’s Daily), reports on the Iraqi war, particularly the Abu Ghraib prisoner scandal. The Attitude and Engagement system of Appraisal theory was mainly used as the examination tool to explore the reporter’s opinions and ideological positioning expressed in this article. The research shows that the reporter takes a personal attitude towards the affair being reported along with the strategies that he/she used to engage other parties in support of his/her viewpoint.

In Wang and An’s journal article (2013), the co-authors applied Appraisal theory to study the rhetoric and stylistic features of

Chinese academic book reviews. A corpus of 30 Chinese academic book reviews were examined from the perspective of Attitude system and Engagement system. They used these systems to present their opinion on the book under review, as well as to position their authorial voices with concern to the other voices and alternative positions. Its findings suggest that these systems of Appraisal theory work effectively to assist the book reviews to negotiate their inter-subjective positions with the book authors and the general readers.

On the other hand, Chusna and Wahyudi (2015) investigated Appraisal devices on the “X Factor Indonesia” commentaries in view of Appraisal theory. Through the research, they discovered the existence of “Appraisal theory” on X-Factor judges’ commentaries. Additionally, differences in how the judges operate the appraisal devices can be observed through the percentage of the following eight elements: affect-attitude (12,71%), judgement-attitude (44,91%), appreciation-attitude (42,37%), force-graduation (91,67%), focus-graduation (8,33%), mono-gloss- engagement (0%), Dialogic contraction-engagement (62,68%) and Dialogic expansion-engagement (40,29%).

The previous studies have adopted some perspectives of the Engagement system as the approach of investigation. However, little or almost no prior research has looked into subtypes of the Engagement system as the topic for studying. Meanwhile one of the Engagement subtypes – Attribute, a semantic category realized linguistically by reporting verbs, has recently recorded a study related

to it. Nguyen and Pramoolsook (2015) presented a study of reporting verbs in 24 TESOL Master's thesis Literature Review chapters written by Vietnamese postgraduates. This study revealed that these Vietnamese writers have a habit of randomly use reporting verbs without being aware of their rhetorical functions. Moreover, mistakes and nonidiomatic expressions were also identified in this study. Regarding the evaluative potentials of reporting verbs, and the tense and voice uses, these writers were likely to be unfamiliar with using reporting verbs to achieve the communicative purposes of Literature Review chapters. These findings suggest that clear instructions should be provided to help beginner writers effectively use reporting verbs in their M.A. theses. Though, the study mentioned above did not use Appraisal theory or Engagement system as the framework for studying reporting verbs and other linguistic structures to realize Attribute used in journal articles. The present research is expected to contribute to the Attribute area of the Engagement system of Appraisal theory with a closer look into the linguistic realizations of this subsystem to reveal more information about the form and function of this semantic category.

## **2.2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.2.1. Systemic Functional Linguistics**

Systemic Functional Linguistics (hereafter SFL) is an approach to language developed mainly by M.A.K. Halliday and his colleagues during the 1960s in the United Kingdom, and later in

Australia. SFL explores the notion of language function in social contexts.

SFL identifies three kinds of meaning, or language metafunctions as presented in Figure 2.1: ideational, interpersonal and textual. These three kinds of meaning are related to clause structure as well: Ideational meanings deal with clause as a representation are concerned with construing human experience: how the individual perceives the world. Interpersonal meanings deal with clause as an exchange are concerned with negotiating social relations: how people are interacting. Textual meanings deal with clause as a message are concerned with information flow in a text: how ideational and interpersonal meanings are systematized. These meanings correspond respectively to the register variables field, tenor, and mode.

Each metafunction is about a different aspect of the world and is concerned with different kinds of meaning of clause. Though these metafunctions are regard as conveying simultaneously in language, Appraisal theory focuses primarily on the interpersonal function (Martin & White, 2005).

### **2.2.2. Appraisal theory**

Appraisal theory or appraisal framework has emerged over a period of almost two decades as a result of work conducted by a group of researchers lead by Professor James Martin of the University of Sydney. Located within the framework of SFL, Appraisal theory is concerned with the interpersonal meaning in

language. It is a particular approach to discover the language of evaluation, to express attitude and emotion of writers/speakers towards their texts and their readers, to explain how they present themselves in texts, and how they build an ideal audience for their texts. (Martin & White, 2005, p. 1)

### **2.2.3. An overview of Engagement**

As Martin and White (2005) state, Engagement is concerned with “the linguistic resources by which speakers/ writers adopt a stance towards the value positions being referenced by the text and with respect to those they address”. Engagement is divided as monoglossic and heteroglossic.

Each has two sub-categories as shown in Figure 2.5, they are: disclaim and proclaim, entertain and Attribute.

Since the present research attends to investigate Attribute in journal articles on language study in English, the following section is devoted to Attribute and its subtypes.

### **2.2.4. Attribute in English**

As Martin and White (2005) indicate, “Attribute: by representing proposition as grounded in the subjectivity of an external voice, the textual voice represents the proposition as but one of a range of possible positions...”

Attribute is further sub-categorized into two subtypes: acknowledge and distance.

- Acknowledge: X said..., X believes..., according to X, in X's view

- Distance: X claims that, the myth that...., it's rumoured that

As Attribute refers to such linguistic resources as reporting verbs, in Table 2.2 below, the main reporting verbs in English are classified in terms of their function, and their strength, and will be treated as one of the linguistic tools for realizing Attribute used in JALSE.

Table 2.2 Reporting Verbs in English (Sharpling, 2014)

<b>Function and strength</b>	<b>Example verbs</b>
<p><b>NEUTRAL:</b> verbs used to say what the writer describes in factual terms, demonstrates, refers to, and discusses, and verbs used to explain his/her methodology.</p>	<p>describe, show, reveal, study, demonstrate, note, point out, indicate, report, observe, assume, take into consideration, examine, go on to say that, state, believe (unless this is a strong belief), mention, etc.</p>
<p><b>TENTATIVE:</b> verbs used to say what the writer suggests or speculates on (without being absolutely certain).</p>	<p>suggest, speculate, intimate, hypothesise, moot, imply, propose, recommend, posit the view that, question the view that, postulate, etc.</p>
<p><b>STRONG:</b> verbs used to say what the writer makes strong arguments and claims for.</p>	<p>argue, claim, emphasize, contend, maintain, assert, theorize, support the view that, deny, negate, refute, reject, challenge, strongly believe that, counter the view/argument that, etc.</p>

### **2.3. SUMMARY**

In summary, this chapter has reviewed the previous studies relating to this study. It has also presented the problems to be investigated in the perspectives of SFL and Appraisal theory. All of these theories serve as the background of the study and will all be the foundation for analysis in the chapter 4. The framework we outline, then, is directed towards providing a systematic account of how such dialogistic positionings of Attribute are achieved linguistically. It helps to depict the means to characterise a speaker/writer's interpersonal style and evaluative strategies according to what kind of heteroglossic communicative setting of other voices and alternative viewpoints they build up for their text and according to the mode they choose to engage with that setting.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN**

The study applied both quantitative and qualitative methods for the aim of exploring Attribute in the Introduction and Literature Review Chapters of JALSE from an Appraisal theory approach in order to help learners to have a better understanding of the evaluative meanings and the motivations of using Attribute in this genre of academic work. The quantitative method was employed to estimate the occurrence and the frequency of different sub-categories of Attribute in JALSE. The qualitative method was used to analyze linguistic features in terms of syntactic, semantic and pragmatic features.

#### **3.2. RESEARCH METHOD**

The study is to explore the linguistic features of Attribute in Introduction and Literature Review chapters of JALSE from an Appraisal theory approach. To achieve the aims and objectives, the researcher used quantitative and qualitative with descriptive methods.

The quantitative method was needed to determine the frequencies of occurrences of different types of Attribute. The qualitative one was adopted to describe different realizations of Attribute in terms of syntax and semantics in JALSE. The descriptive method was employed in order to give a detailed description of the syntactic and semantic features of Attribute. A combination of analytic and synthetic methods was utilized to identify and classify

pragmatic features of Attribute in Introduction and Literature Review chapters of JALSE.

### **3.3. DATA COLLECTION**

The data were primarily taken from IJRSL. The instances of Attribute were extract from journal articles from 2013 to 2017 about the issues of language studies.

#### **3.3.1. Sampling**

The study aims to identify and collect the instances of Attribute that stated in the working definition of the research.

Attribute can be found in Introduction and Literature Review chapters of JALSE from IJRSL. These Attribute can be a phrase or a clause with the function that fits the working definition of the study.

The sampling was done in random manner to have the equal opportunity to occur in the corpus.

#### **3.3.2. Procedure of data collection**

#### **3.3.3. Instrument of data collection**

Google Search Engine was used to find journal articles resources as well as JALSE. All files saved as PDF.

After collecting and investigating Attribute in Introduction and Literature Review chapters of JALSE, Attribute was analysed and classified qualitatively in terms of semantic, syntactic and pragmatic features. Statistical tables were also made to show quantitatively the distribution of Attribute in JALSE.

### **3.4. DATA ANALYSIS**

Attribute used in Introduction and Literature Review chapters of JALSE were observed and qualitatively and quantitatively analyzed according to these following aspects:

- Syntactic realizations of Attribute in reference to the functional framework and how these linguistic units are distributed and organized in clause as exchange.
- Semantic features of Attribute in view of appraisal and in semantic components of clause as representation.
- Pragmatic features of Attribute in reference to the potential implications derived from the scale of certainty.

The results of the analysis are then presented in mainly qualitative manner (in words and nominal scales). Frequency of Attribute is presented in tables

### **3.5. SUMMARY**

This chapter presents the research design as descriptive one which was guided by the objectives and research question in seeking both qualitative and quantitative information about Attribute in JALSE, the research methods, the procedure to collect data and the dimension in analyze the data.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1. SYNTACTIC REALIZATIONS OF ATTRIBUTES IN JALSE

**4.1.1. Attribute in form of Matrix clause structure**

**4.1.2. Attribute in form of Adverbial clause structure**

**4.1.3. Attribute in form of Elliptical Adverbial clause structure**

**4.1.4. Attribute in form of Prepositional Structure**

**4.1.5. Syntactic Realizations of Attribute in Clause as Exchange**

**4.1.6. Summary**

To sum up, the choice of adopting verbal structures and prepositional structures as Attribute in journal articles positions the writer in relation to the reported authors and the reported information. With different reporting verbs and prepositional phrases, the writer shows his/her evaluation and stances towards the reported authors and the reported information and this evaluation is realized in the clause as exchange where Attribute serves the interpersonal function in forms of matrix clause, adverbial clause and prepositional phrase in the MOOD of a declarative sentence.

#### 4.2. SEMANTIC FEATURES OF ATTRIBUTES IN JALSE

**4.2.1. Semantic representation of Attribute in Ideational clause**

*4.2.1.1. Attribute as reporting locution in verbal process*

**4.2.1.2. Attribute as reporting ideas in Mental process**

**4.2.1.3. Attribute as reporting ideas in Circumstance of**

**Angle/Source**

**4.2.2. Scale of Certainty of Attribute in JALSE**

**4.2.3. Acknowledge Attributes in JALSE**

**4.2.4. Distance Attributes in JALSE**

**4.2.5. Summary**

Below is the summary of the the semantic function of 2 subcategories of Attribute

<b>Acknowledge</b>	<b>Distance</b>
- formulations are dialogistically expansive	- formulations are dialogistically expansive
- locutions with <i>no overt indication</i> as to where the authorial voice stands with respect to the proposition	- <i>explicit</i> distancing of the authorial voice from the Attributed material
- <i>associate</i> the proposition being advanced with voices and/or positions external to that of the text itself	- <i>detaches</i> him/herself from responsibility for what is being reported
- present the authorial voice as <i>engaging interactively with</i> those external voices	- mark explicitly the internal authorial voice as <i>separate from</i> the cited, external voice.
- <i>no specification</i> as to where the authorial voice stands with	- <i>explicitly</i> ground the proposition in an individualised,

respect to the proposition as neutral or disinterested	contingent subjectivity, that of some external source
<b>Linguistic resources for Attribute and examples</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Nikolov (2003, p. 6) also declares ...</i></li> <li>- <i>As Norton (1995) argues, ...</i></li> <li>- <i>Cummins (1994) states ...</i></li> <li>- <i>According to Romanowski and Sergey (2001), ...</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Eriksson, Krampe and Tesch-Romer (1993), for instance, claim ...</i></li> <li>- <i>Anzali (1985) claims ...</i></li> <li>- <i>It is believed that ...</i> (Vandergrift, Goh, &amp; Marreschal, 2006))</li> </ul>

### **4.3. PRAGMATIC FUNCTION OF ATTRIBUTE IN JALSE WITH IMPLICATIONS**

#### **4.3.1. Attribute as modification of the Illocutionary force of Representative**

##### **4.3.1.1. Signaling the Neutrality of Reporting modes**

##### **4.3.1.2. Signaling the Tentativeness of Reporting modes**

##### **4.3.1.3. Signaling the Strength of Reporting modes**

#### **4.3.2. Implications signaled by Attribute in Reporting**

#### **Locution/Idea**

### **4.4. SUMMARY**

This chapter has presented the syntactic features of Attribute in terms of linguistic structures that realize the evaluative function of signaling dialogistic expansiveness in clause as exchange and clause as message to highlight their position in the locution/idea in

declarative sentence where the selected mood matches directly with the assertive/representative speech act with instances of Attribute in most cases appear as interpersonal theme. The chapter also depicted the semantic functions of Attribute in two subcategories: Acknowledgement and Distancing in signaling explicitly/covertly the authorial voice with respect to the proposition. The last part focused on the pragmatic function of Attribute, which dealt with the implications that the writer may intend the readers to draw on interpreting the linguistic markers to view the cited proposition as something arguable, controversial and acknowledged.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

#### **5.1. CONCLUSIONS**

Syntactically, in attributing a cited proposition in JALSE, the writer was found to be offered with a variety of the linguistic choices of adopting verbal structures and prepositional structures as Attribute to signal the positions the writer may adopt in relation to the reported authors and the reported information. With these linguistic resources, the writer can show his/her evaluation and stances towards the reported authors and the reported information and this evaluation is realized in the clause as exchange where Attribute serves the interpersonal function in forms of matrix clause, adverbial clause and prepositional phrase in the MOOD of a declarative sentence where the selected mood matches directly with the assertive/representative speech act with instances of Attribute in most cases appearing as interpersonal theme. The quantitative result indicates that indicates that Matrix clause with reporting verbs was most frequently adopted to express the authorial voice, besides that, Prepositional phrase is another choice that was often used as well as compared with Adverbial clauses containing reporting verbs.

Semantically, instances of Attribute used in JALSE were found in two subcategories: Acknowledgement and Distancing in signaling explicitly or covertly the authorial voice with respect to the proposition. These instances of Attribute can be semantically represented with the function of the Attribute components serving as

reporting Locution where verbal process were common in terms of the reporting modes which accounted for 70% of the total number. As compared, instances of reporting mental process were found to make up only 15.7% whereas the cases of Circumstance: source/view were close in comparison with those of Mental process (14.3%).

Regarding the pragmatic function of Attribute, the analysis of the modification of the illocutionary force of a representative act and the implications that the writer may intend the readers to draw on interpreting the linguistic markers used to Attribute the report shows that the writer may modulate the force of reporting modes in 3 dimensions: signaling the writer's neutrality, tentativeness and strong commitment to the cited proposition. In doing so, the writer may use kinds of linguistic structures with reporting verbs and prepositional phrase to invite the readers to view the cited proposition as something arguable, controversial and acknowledged for reaching the implications intended by the writer him/herself.

## **5.2. IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.2.1. To the Teachers**

Teachers of English probably apply the research results for their teaching. Teachers need to stress the importance of using Attribute to writing papers to learners to persuade and convince readers. Furthermore, teachers may help their learners/ students out of confusing in the use of various Attribute formulations in English by distinguishing them between English and Vietnamese thanks to the results of this study. Specifically, teachers need to make their

learners aware of the fact that English writers tend to use less mental process for quotation. Also, English writers rarely utilize inserted information after a noun group and a prepositional phrase. Besides, teachers can design exercises in which learners realize types of Attribute and express their alignment or disalignment simultaneously when using a formulation of Attribute to quote outside information.

### **5.2.2. To the Learners**

In the process of the second language acquisition and proficiency language learners may face a range of problems due to interference. Among of them, many learners may have difficulties with understanding and using Attribute formulations effectively. These difficulties derive from various syntactic realization forms as well as different semantic categories of Attribute. Thus, syntactically, this research provides learners of English with basic knowledge of Attribute formulations to realize and utilize them in any discourse easily and successfully. Attributes are typically realized through a verbal group, a nominal group or a prepositional phrase. That is to say, they are identified as a process, a participant or a circumstantial element respectively in the view of Functional Linguistic. However, based on the differences, Vietnamese learners of English should use less affection processes to attribute outside information on writing or translating to ensure its truth and objectiveness. It is also necessary to apply circumstantial elements variously when quoting another source.

Semantically, learners can show the degree of attitude and their position towards the quoted materials effectively to persuade their own readers. For example, if they would like to enhance the truth of the quoted information, they should choose it from high status sources and use such positive verbs as confirm, show, indicate, declare, etc. If not, learners can employ some neutral verbs such as say, tell, state, think, report and so on to gain the neutrality with the attributed source. In addition, thanks to the study outcomes of semantic features of attribution, understanding of these characteristics enable learners of English to convey the author's evaluation or engagement with their own quoted information to readers when translating.

### **5.3. LIMITATIONS**

Despite the researcher's attempt, there are still some shortcomings in the research. The previous studies which are relevant to the issue are not enough extensive due to the shortage of references. Additionally, the study merely exemplifies the syntactic realizations of attribute in view of SFL with typical language structures, its semantic features and its pragmatic aspects in view of Appraisal but did not go into detail concerning a full list of reporting verbs as well as the other structures.

### **5.4. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

With the limitation of the thesis, the researcher proposes some suggestions for further studies to complete the whole picture of the concept of Attribute.

- A contrastive analysis of Attribute in English and Vietnamese academic articles
- A study of Attribute in parts of theses on language study in English and Vietnamese