



Attitude as Subjective Opinion in the Evaluative Language of Malay Newspaper Discourse

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ABSTRACT

This article is based on a study that advances the concept of Attitude as subjective opinion within Evaluative Language Theory. This concept is also applied in Malay newspaper discourse. Two types of newspapers were used in this study: *Berita Harian/Berita Minggu Singapura (BH/BM S'pura)* and *Berita Harian/Berita Ahad Malaysia (BH/BA M'sia)*. Only commentary articles were selected as study materials, ensuring they were related to the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York that occurred on September 11, 2001. This study is limited to articles with such themes due to their similar context. The study explores the strategies employed by newspapers through their commentators to influence readers, enabling the newspapers to instill the propositions they aim to advance within the readers. This description is based on analytical findings regarding Attitude in Malay newspaper discourse contained within the texts. The study is grounded in Systemic-Functional Linguistics as a linguistic framework for examining the Attitude present in Malay language newspaper discourse. Attitude consists of types such as Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation. The concept of Evaluative Language in Malay newspaper discourse can be explained by outlining these types of attitude.

Keyword: Evaluative Language, discourse, Attitude, Affect, Judgement, Appreciation



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1. Introduction

Evaluative Language can be defined as a linguistic element that is subjective in nature (Egins, 1994). This language contains statements of opinion or views, whether they belong to the author/speaker or other social actors present in the text. Evaluative Language is also synonymous with attitude-laden language because the opinions or views conveyed carry attitudes directed towards a person or a specific situation (Suhaini, 2021). Therefore, because this language is attitude-laden, it is distinguished from non-evaluative language because attitude-laden language has value. This implies that when attitude-laden language is present, an assessment has been made about a person or a specific situation. This assessment is based on values and standards established by the community to which the evaluator belongs and the religion they adhere to. Thus, by viewing language in this way, it can be concluded that the analysis of a discourse based on the evaluative or assessment elements present indicates that it is a form of linguistic description, and in this case, the description

is socio-semiotic in nature. This is because human practices included in discourse or texts can also be seen as generating specific meanings beyond more explicit elements.

The identification of evaluative language can be carried out by analyzing language using a framework known as the Evaluative Language Framework. The descriptions found in the Evaluative Language Framework are based on the principles of Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) (Halliday, 1985), which centers on the system or set of choices available for the author/speaker to use in order to convey meaning according to context (Martin, 2000). In this context, the Evaluative Language Framework serves as the main system, and within this framework, there are smaller systems through which meanings can be interpreted. One of the mentioned systems is the Attitude system, which consists of other subsystems: Affect (assessing feelings or emotions), Judgment (assessing character, behavior, and actions), and Appreciation (assessing objects or things).

The studies look at attitudes and language used for evaluation in newspaper discourse in a variety of settings. To examine attitude resources in news reports, editorials, and opinion pieces, researchers use Martin and White's Appraisal Theory (Nurjanah, 2021; Solihah, 2020). Research indicates that newspapers communicate stance, ideology, and persuasive objectives through the employment of attitudinal markers (Asad, 2022; Indriyani & Widyastuti, 2023; Widiastuti, 2015). When reporting on international issues, cross-cultural analyses show how evaluative language influences political and sociocultural circumstances (Ballesteros-Lintao, 2018). In order to provide indirect expressions of judgment while retaining objectivity, appreciation resources are commonly employed (Ballesteros-Lintao, 2018; Gunawan & Putri, 2019).

1.1.The Revised Evaluative Language Framework

The Revised Evaluative Language Framework serves as the working framework for this study. It was developed based on inputs from other evaluative language frameworks, particularly the foundational framework for English developed by (Martin & White, 2005) and the framework for English newspaper texts advanced by (White, 1998). Data were obtained from Malay newspaper texts, specifically *BH/BM S'pura* and *BH/BA M'sia*, focusing on commentary and report types. Therefore, this framework is suitable for these genres and can also be referred to as the Malay Evaluative Language Framework for commentary and reports in *BH/BM S'pura* and *BH/BA M'sia*. In terms of the entities contained within the Revised Evaluative Language framework, there are no differences in the types of entities found in the Martin's and White's model and the White model. As the focus is on Attitude only, the Revised Evaluative Language Framework can be illustrated as follows:

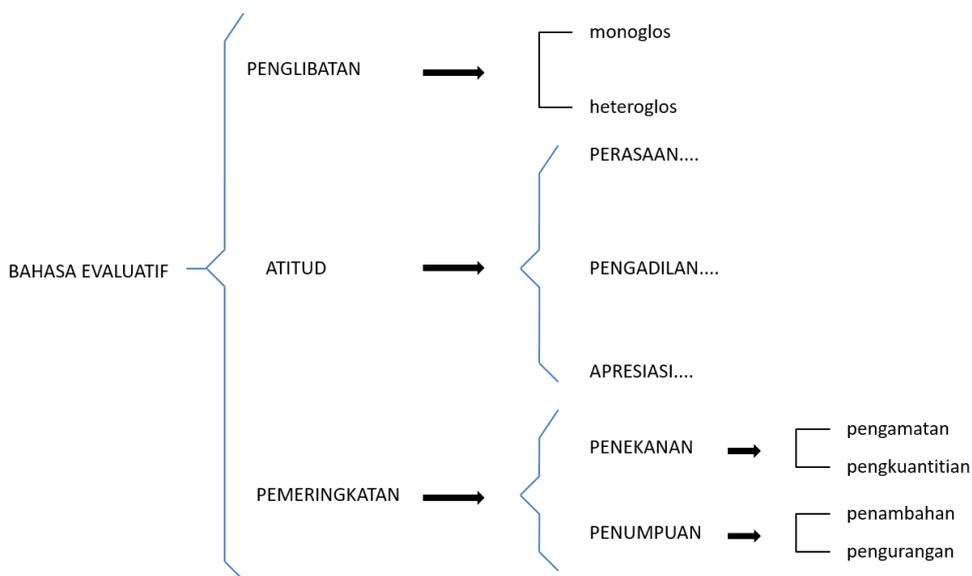


Figure 1 Revised Evaluative Language Framework

Attitude

The Revised Evaluative Language Framework still adheres to its original principle, which is the presence of its first entity, Attitude. This Attitude can also be divided into three sub-entities: Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation. The evaluation of these three sub-entities is based on positive and negative scales. Thus, overall, the Revised Attitude System can be sketched as follows:

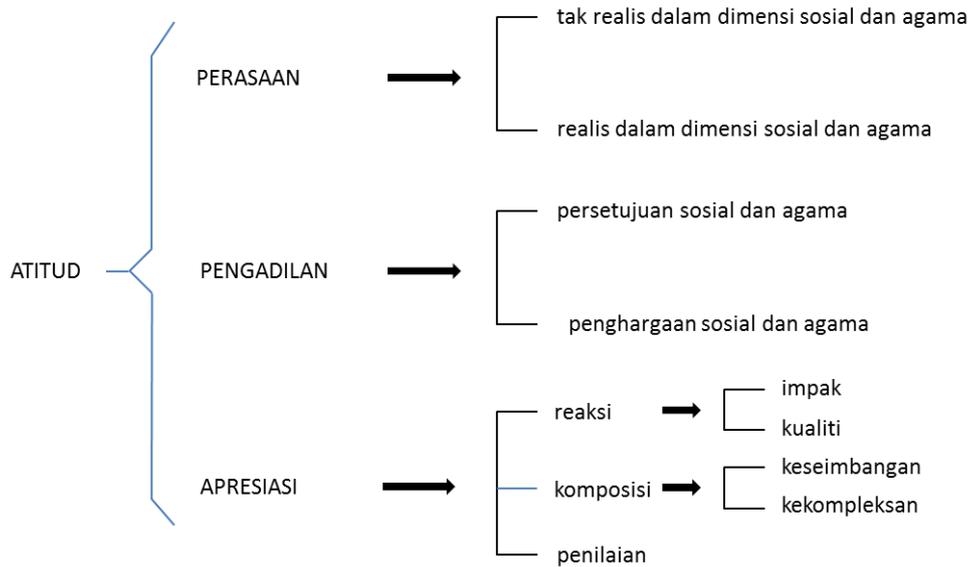


Figure 2 Revised Attitude System

Affect

For the first sub-entity, Affect, the basic categorization of unrealistic affect and realistic affect is maintained. However, adjustments have been made to both main types of Affect in the Revised Affect System. All feelings classified as unrealistic and realistic not only encompass social dimensions but also religious dimensions. This is different from the basic feelings system, where feelings are viewed solely from a social perspective, even if it is not explicitly stated in that system. The religious dimension is included due to the presence of lexis in the data, which has a broader meaning as it encompasses entities that cannot be found in the world.

Unrealistic Affect in Social and Religious Dimensions

Unrealistic feelings are divided into two types: desired feelings (want) and undesired feelings (do not want).

Realistic Affect in Social and Religious Dimensions

Realistic feelings are divided into three pairs: feelings of happiness and unhappiness, feelings of security and insecurity and feelings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Table 1 below summarizes the types and subtypes of feelings in its revised form.

Table 1. Types and Subtypes of Revised Affect

Types and Subtypes of Affect							
Unrealistic Affect		Realistic Affect					
Social Dimension and Religious Dimension		Social Dimension and Religious Dimension					
Desired/Undesired		Happiness/Unhappiness		Security/Insecurity		Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction	
Desired	Undesired	Happiness	Unhappiness	Security	Insecurity	Satisfaction	Dissatisfaction
<i>keinginan</i>	<i>ketakutan</i>	<i>kegembiraan</i> <i>kasih sayang</i>	<i>kesengsaraan</i> <i>kebencian</i>	<i>keyakinan</i> <i>kepercayaan</i>	<i>kebimbangan</i> <i>kejutan</i>	<i>keasyikan</i> <i>kekaguman</i>	<i>kehampaan</i> <i>kebosanan</i>

Judgements

In the revised framework, the sub-entity Judgments still refers to the same concept, which is the interpretation of character, behavior, conduct, temperament, attitude, or any human action. However, this interpretation is not only based on what is agreed upon and valued by society, as found in the original model. But in the revised framework, Social Esteem and Social Sanction have been expanded to include the religion of that society. This is because the collected data indicate that there is Malay lexis expressing evaluations of people, but these evaluations take into account religious perspectives as positive or negative. **Table 2 shows the types and subtypes of Judgments that have been revised.**

Table 2. Types and Subtypes of Revised Judgement

Types and Subtypes of Judgement			
Social and Religious Esteem		Social and Religious Sanction	
Positive (admired)	Negative (criticised)	Positive (praised)	Negative (condemned)
normality (how special?)		veracity (truth) (how honest?)	
capacity (how capable?)		propriety (ethics) (how far beyond reproach?)	
tenacity (how dependable?)			

Table 2 shows the two main types when evaluations are made regarding human behavior: the first is categorized as Social and Religious Esteem, and the second as Social and Religious Sanction.

Social and Religious Esteem

This category views human behavior or attitudes from two perspectives: positive and negative. Thus, for behaviors or attitudes agreed upon by society (social) and religion, they are seen as positive. Such attitudes will be admired. Conversely, behaviors that are not agreed upon by society (social) and religion will be seen as negative and will be criticized. For each category, there are also further types of human attitudes. For instance, in the category of Social and Religious Esteem, these attitudes are divided into three: first, attitudes that represent norms and the absence of uniqueness, categorized under the term 'normality'. Second, attitudes that depict a person's capability, termed 'capacity'. Third, attitudes that depict a person's dependability, termed 'tenacity'

Social and Religious Sanction

This category also views human behavior or attitudes from two perspectives: positive and negative. Thus, for behaviors or attitudes valued by society (social) and religion, they are seen as positive. Such attitudes will be praised. Conversely, behaviors not agreed upon by society (social) and religion will be seen as negative and condemned. For each category, there are also further types of human attitudes. For instance, in the category of Social and Religious Sanction, these attitudes are divided into two: first, attitudes that depict truth, categorized under the term 'truth'. Second, attitudes that depict ethics, termed 'ethics'.

Appreciation

The Appreciation system in the revised evaluative language framework still adheres to its original principles in several aspects. Firstly, it serves as an entity used as a source to evaluate things, phenomena, conditions, situations, and other matters that do not fall under the evaluation of feelings or assessments of human behaviour, attitudes, character, or actions. Secondly, it is divided into three main types: appreciating something as a result of our reactions to it, appreciating something in terms of its composition, and appreciating something through our evaluation of it. Appreciation in all these main types can also be conducted in two dimensions: positive and negative dimensions. However, the Appreciation system in this revised framework includes two additional dimensions before appreciation can be classified as positive or negative. These dimensions are social and religious dimensions. This means that the task of appreciating something can be viewed as positive appreciation from social and religious perspectives or negative appreciation from social and religious perspectives. The Revised Appreciation can be illustrated in the following table:

Table 3. Types and Subtypes of Revised Appreciation

Types and Subtypes of Appreciation				
Social and Religious Dimension				
Positive and Negative				
Reaction		Composition		Valuation (was it worthwhile?)
Impact (did it grab me?)	Quality (did I like it?)	Balance (did it hang together?)	Complexity (was it hard to follow?)	

Reactions

In terms of the subtypes of Appreciation, the revised model still adheres to the original model, specifically in the first subtype, which involves appreciation as a reaction to something. In this subtype, the appreciation expressed is more inclined towards our feelings regarding that phenomenon.

Composition

Composition is the second subtype of Appreciation in the revised model. This means that appreciation can also be directed towards a phenomenon based on its composition. When discussing the evaluation of a phenomenon based on its composition, there are two subtypes: composition in terms of balance and composition in terms of the complexity of the phenomenon.

Valuation

Valuation is a sub-type of Appreciation within the revised model. This type of appreciation refers more to an individual's thought process as it reflects their opinions on certain phenomena. The valuation made are based on the importance and prioritization of these phenomena from the societal perspective, suggesting that what is valued should ideally bring benefits or advantages if viewed positively, and conversely, the opposite if viewed negatively.

2. Methods

The studies on Attitude as Evaluative Language in English press discourse by White (1998) and Attitude as Evaluative Language in English by Martin and White (2005) served as the foundation for this investigation. Based on their findings, this study determined the Attitude as Evaluative Language in Malay newspaper discourse.

The data source of this study came from an editorial published commentary and reports from an online newspaper that was accessible through their official website *BH/BM S'pura* and *BH/BA M'sia*, both on September, 2001. A total of 13 articles from each newspaper were used.

The source was selected because it is a credible online news source and was named the most trusted news in Singapore and Malaysia. Following the materials' empirical investigation, these resources served as the basis for data collecting. Apart from serving as the primary data sources, *BH/BM S'pura* and *BH/BA M'sia* also provided analysis and newspaper stories about the September 11, 2001 terrorist assault in the United States.

This study used qualitative designs, which reflects the strategy taken. The concept of Evaluative Language can be used to gauge the subjectivity in a discourse. The data was examined using the Revised Evaluative Framework namely the Attitude system. As a unit of analysis, each sentence was analysed. After analysis, they were categorized as the evaluative objects that belonged in the evaluative resources. The researcher computed or approximated the frequency of every Attitude subsystem present in the BBC web article. The results were then interpreted into paragraphs by the researcher and placed into tables in order to identify the variety of Attitude that go into rendering and interpreting the functional meaning.

3. Result and Discussion

Result

The kinds and subtypes of Evaluative Language focuses only on Attitude, which has the subtypes Affect, Judgement and Appreciation. The findings are described below.

3.1. Attitude

Attitude is one of the entities analyzed in this study. Since Attitude consists of three entities, the discussion will focus on Feelings, Judgments, and Appreciation. The frequency findings for these three entities are as shown in Table 4:

Table 4. Frequency of Attitude

Attitude	Quantity	Percentage	Total Percentage
Affect	252	12.5%	2022 100%
Judgement	1160	57.4%	
Appreciation	610	30.1%	

Table 4 shows that all three types of Attitude are present in the study data. Among the three, the Attitude type of Judgment occurs the most, with 1160 instances (57.4%). This indicates that the author is more inclined to make assessments of an individual's or a group's behavior or character. This is followed by the author's actions in making Appreciation, which occurred 610 times or 30.1%. The least frequent action by the author was expressing Feelings, with only 252 instances or 12.5% of the time the author expressed their own or others' feelings.

The table below shows examples of Attitudes:

Table 5. Examples of Attitude

No.	Attitude	Examples	Source
1	Affect	<i>Ketika rusuhan berlaku di Indonesia pada Mei 1998, apabila ramai orang Cina Indonesia menjadi mangsa, sebahagian orang Melayu Singapura berasa kurang senang, bimbang orang Cina Singapura akan</i>	<i>BH/BM S'pura, Teks 7, No. 11</i>

		<i>menyalahkan mereka atas apa yang berlaku di Indonesia.</i>	
2	Judgement	<i>“Adalah diharapkan dengan penerangan kita secara rasional dan baik ini, teman-teman kita mereka akan menerima kita sebagai orang Islam yang berfahaman sederhana.”</i>	<i>BH/BM S’pura, Teks 8, No. 7</i>
3	Appreciation	<i>“Bagi kita di Singapura, kita harus berwaspada kerana apa yang dinikmati sekarang ini, kemakmuran dan kemantapan, harus kita pertahan dan dijaga kerana ia telah membantu kita bukan sahaja menikmati kehidupan senang dan makmur tapi juga membantu kita mengembangkan syiar Islam.”</i>	<i>BH/BM S’pura, Teks 9, No. 9</i>

3.1.1. Affect

Two categories of Affect, along with eight subcategories of Affect, have been analyzed. The two categories are unrealistic feelings and realistic feelings. The eight subcategories of Affect are: Desired and Not Desired for unrealistic feelings, and Happy and Unhappy, Secure and Insecure, and finally, Satisfied and Dissatisfied for realistic feelings. The findings for the Affect are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Frequency of Affect

Types of Affect	Irrealis		Realis					
	Desired	Undesired	Happiness	Unhappiness	Security	Insecurity	Satisfaction	Dissatisfaction
Quantity	32	1	17	62	28	80	7	25
Sub-Percentage	12.7%	0.4%	6.7%	24.6%	11.1%	31.7%	2.8%	10%
Percentage	33 13.1%		79 31.3%		108 42.9%		32 12.7%	
	219 86.9%							
Total (%)	252 (100%)							

3.1.2. Judgement

Two major types of Judgement, namely attitudes that gain Social and Religious Esteem and attitudes that receive Social and Religious Sanction, have been analyzed. The subtypes of Judgement for both are: attitudes that indicate Normality, Capability and Dependability for those admired or criticised by social and religious groups, and attitudes that indicate Veracity and Propriety for those praised or condemned by social and religious groups. The frequency of each Judgement entity is shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Frequency of Judgement

No.	Social and Religious Esteem						Social and Religious Sanction			
	Normality		Capacity		Tenacity		Veracity		Propriety	
	(+)	(-)	(+)	(-)	(+)	(-)	(+)	(-)	(+)	(-)
Quantity	68	123	155	143	80	98	37	95	40	321
Sub-Percentage	6%	10.4%	13.3%	12.4%	6.9%	8.3%	3.2%	8.5%	3.6%	27.4%
Quantity and Percentage	191 16.5%		298 25.7%		178 15.3%		132 11.4%		361 31.1%	
	667 57.5%						493 42.5%			
Total (%)	1160 (100%)									

3.1.3. Appreciation

Three main forms of Appreciation—namely, Reaction, Composition, and Evaluation—have been analyzed. From this, the frequency of other types of Appreciation, such as Impact and Quality under the umbrella of Reaction, and Balance and Complexity under the umbrella of Composition, have also been calculated. The findings regarding the frequency of these forms and types of Appreciation can be seen in Table 8 below.

Table 8. Frequency of Appreciation

No.	Reaction				Composition				Valuation	
	Impact		Quality		Balance		Complexity			
	(+)	(-)	(+)	(-)	(+)	(-)	(+)	(-)	(+)	(-)
Quantity	16	43	14	22	37	181	104	166	19	8
Sub-Percentage 1	2.6%	7.1%	2.3%	3.6%	6.1%	29.6%	17%	27.3%	3.1%	1.3%
Quantity and Sub-Percentage 2	59 9.7%		36 5.9%		218 35.7%		270 44.3%		27 4.4%	
	95 15.6%				488 80%					
Total (%)	610 (100%)									

Discussion

The data that is presented is the outcome of the distribution of an entity that has been analyzed. The entity in question is Attitude. The findings for Attitude indicate that all three of its types—Affect,

Judgement, and Appreciation—are present in the texts analyzed. Among these three types, Judgement has the highest frequency, with 1160 instances, accounting for more than half of the total occurrences of the other types. Specifically, Judgement makes up 57.4% of the total. This shows that in the context of an article discussing terrorism, human attitudes become something that is frequently evaluated. The finding in Judgement is followed by Appreciation, with 610 occurrences or 30.1%. The least frequent type is Affect, with only 252 instances, or 12.5%.

Regarding the second type of Attitude, which is Judgement, both main subtypes—those based on Social and Religious Esteem and those based on Social and Religious Sanction—appear in the Malay newspaper discourse. The total for both reaches 1160 instances. However, a comparison between the two shows that Judgement based on Social and Religious Esteem occurs more frequently, with 667 instances, or 57.5%, while Judgment based on Social and Religious Sanction appears 493 times, or 42.5%. In terms of subtypes, Judgment reflecting Propriety occurs the most, with 361 instances, or 31.1%. This shows that in the context of the terrorism that occurs, worldly attitudes, particularly those upheld as the best, such as being ethical, become the focus in the text. This is followed by Capacity with 298 instances, or 25.7%. The next frequencies are as follows: Normality (16.5% or 191), Tenacity (15.3% or 178).

The third type of Attitude is Appreciation. For this type, three main forms of Appreciation—Reaction, Composition, and Valuation—were analyzed. The frequency and percentage for each type of Appreciation are as follows: Reaction occurred 95 times, or 15.6%, Composition occurred 488 times, or 80%, and Valuation appeared only 27 times, or 4.4%. Since Composition is about balance, it can also mean that in a state of chaos caused by terrorism, balance is important to restore the situation to its original state.

Meanwhile, the first type of Attitude, which is Affect, sees the Realis type being expressed more frequently. The total amount recorded is 219 or 86.9%, compared to the Irrealis type, which is only 33 or 13.1%. This shows that the emotions currently being experienced control the behavior of the social actors involved in the context of terrorism. As for the Realis type, the subtypes of Security and Insecurity account for the highest total, with 108 or 42.9%. This indicates that emotions directly related to peace are often expressed in the context of terrorism.

These studies highlight the significance of evaluative language in framing positions, sentiments, and policies in news discourse, emphasizing how subjectivity occurs even within conventions of journalistic objectivity (Ballesteros-Lintao, 2018; Indriyani & Widyastuti, 2023).

4. Conclusion

This revised framework of Evaluative Language introduces religious input into its Attitude system. Therefore, in the Affect system, both Realis and Irrealis types are viewed not only from a social dimension but also from a religious dimension. The same can be said for the Judgment system. Human attitudes and behaviors are first evaluated not only based on the principle of whether they are accepted by society (from the perspective of Social Esteem) but also based on whether they are accepted by their religion (from the perspective of Religious Esteem). Secondly, they are also evaluated based on whether they are valued by society (from the perspective of Social Sanction) but also whether they are valued by their religion (from the perspective of Religious Sanction). Additionally, the third type of Attitude, Appreciation, has also incorporated a religious dimension in its subtypes. These include appreciation based on an individual's reaction to a phenomenon, appreciation related to the composition of a phenomenon, and appreciation based on an individual's evaluation of a phenomenon. Although there have been revisions, the status held by the language that has undergone evaluation remains the same, which is that it represents the subjective opinion of the author or the social actors in the text. This subjective opinion is conveyed through expressions of feelings, judgments about attitudes, and appreciation of the surrounding phenomena, and it can be seen especially in newspaper discourse.

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