



THE EVALUATION OF INVESTIGATOR'S INVESTIGATION REPORTS USING APPRAISAL FRAMEWORK

Sarma Panggabean¹, Ernawati Br Surbakti², Yessy Octaviana³, Martua Reynhat Sitanggang Gusar⁴

^{1,3,4}Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, HKBP Nommensen University, Jl. Dr. Sutomo No. 4-A, Medan, 20217

²Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Lhokseumawe State Polytechnic University, 24301

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ABSTRACT

Legal discourse, specifically Investigation Reports (Berita Acara Pemeriksaan/BAP), serves as a critical evidentiary foundation in the criminal justice system. Ideally, these documents must embody strict neutrality and objectivity to ensure fair legal proceedings. However, a significant research problem persists: the potential infiltration of subjective evaluative language that may compromise legal clarity, fairness, and procedural justice. Despite their profound legal weight, there is limited empirical understanding of how linguistic appraisal mechanisms operate within various BAP types. Unchecked evaluative language risks introducing bias, manipulating narrative perspectives, and creating legal ambiguities that could adversely affect suspect rights and judicial outcomes. This gap necessitates a critical linguistic examination to uncover hidden subjectivities within ostensibly objective legal texts. Consequently, this study aims to evaluate the language used in Investigation Reports by applying Appraisal Theory to analyze Attitude and Positioning patterns. This research employed a qualitative descriptive design supported by corpus analysis using the Simple Concordance Program (SCP). The data consisted of eight types of Investigation Reports obtained from the Galang Sub-district Police Station. The analysis focused on identifying evaluative lexical items and their distribution across report types. To ensure analytical reliability, appraisal categories were classified based on predefined criteria, and cross-checking was conducted to reduce subjectivity. The findings indicate that negative Attitude dominates the Suspect Investigation Reports (35.7%), while negative Positioning is most prominent in Confiscation Reports (24.2%). In general, Suspect Reports show the highest frequency of appraisal usage (97.99%), suggesting a high degree of evaluative language in representing events. These findings highlight the importance of linguistic awareness in drafting investigation reports, particularly in maintaining neutrality and clarity to avoid potential misinterpretation. The prevalence of negative appraisal suggests an inherent bias that could influence judicial outcomes, underscoring the urgent need for standardized linguistic protocols in legal documentation to uphold justice and procedural integrity.

Introduction

Legal discourse, specifically Investigation Reports (Berita Acara Pemeriksaan/BAP), serves as a critical evidentiary foundation in the criminal justice system. Ideally, these documents must embody strict neutrality and objectivity to ensure fair legal proceedings. However, a significant research problem persists: the potential infiltration of subjective evaluative language that may compromise legal clarity, fairness, and procedural justice. Despite their profound legal weight, there is limited empirical understanding of how linguistic appraisal mechanisms operate within various BAP types. Unchecked evaluative language risks introducing bias, manipulating narrative perspectives, and creating legal ambiguities that could adversely affect suspect rights and judicial outcomes. This gap necessitates a critical linguistic examination to uncover hidden subjectivities within ostensibly objective legal texts.

Consequently, this study aims to evaluate the language used in Investigation Reports by applying Appraisal Theory to analyze Attitude and Positioning patterns. This research employed a qualitative descriptive design

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The findings indicate that negative Attitude dominates the Suspect Investigation Reports (35.7%), while negative Positioning is most prominent in Confiscation Reports (24.2%). In general, Suspect Reports show the highest frequency of appraisal usage (97.99%), suggesting a high degree of evaluative language in representing events. These findings highlight the importance of linguistic awareness in drafting investigation reports, particularly in maintaining neutrality and clarity to avoid potential misinterpretation. The prevalence of negative appraisal suggests an inherent bias that could influence judicial outcomes, underscoring the urgent need for standardized linguistic protocols in legal documentation to uphold justice and procedural integrity.

Materials and Methods

The Framework of Appraisal

To address the complexities of how investigators frame information, this research utilizes Appraisal Theory. Appraisal is an extension of the interpersonal metafunction within Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). It provides a sophisticated, structured framework for analyzing how language users in this case, police investigators use words to share emotions, pass judgments, and value various phenomena (Rasheed, 2020). The Framework of Appraisal was primarily developed by Martin and his colleagues (Martin, 2000, 2003; Martin & White, 2005) as a means of mapping the “evaluative” territory of language. While other scholars like Biber (1999) and Hunston (2011) focused on “stance” and “evaluation,” Martin’s framework is particularly robust for forensic discourse because it categorizes interpersonal meaning into three distinct subsystems: Attitude, Engagement (Positioning), and Graduation.

1. Attitude: This subsystem is concerned with our feelings and emotional reactions (Prastikawati, 2021). It is further divided into: Concerned with feelings, including emotional reactions (Affect), judgments of character (Judgment), and evaluation of things (Appreciation).
2. Engagement: This deals with the “play of voices.” It examines how writers/investigators position themselves in relation to other viewpoints. For instance (Manzella, 2025), does the report state “the suspect *admitted*...” (suggesting truth) or “the suspect *claimed*...” (suggesting doubt)? Deals with the play of voices around opinions how writers position themselves in relation to other viewpoints.
3. Graduation: This focuses on the “volume” or intensity of the appraisal. It looks at how speakers amplify or diminish their evaluations (Vo & Viet Le, 2025) (e.g., “he was *extremely* aggressive” vs. “he was *somewhat* upset”). Focuses on the “volume” of the appraisal how speakers amplify or diminish the intensity of their evaluations.

In a police report, these elements are rarely neutral. The investigator’s choice of an adjective a reporting verb can fundamentally alter a prosecutor’s perception of a suspect’s credibility (Jol & Stommel, 2021). By utilizing the System Concordance Program (SCP), this study seeks to evaluate the investigator’s language, attitude, and positioning to determine if the suspect’s answers were recorded faithfully or skewed to meet institutional expectations. (e.g., “the suspect *admitted*” vs. “the suspect *claimed*”) can fundamentally change the prosecutor’s perception of the suspect’s credibility.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design with a discourse-analytic approach grounded in Systemic Functional Linguistics, particularly Appraisal theory specifically utilizing the Appraisal Theory framework developed by Martin and White. The choice of a qualitative design was driven by the research objective: to explore the complex nature of meaning-making within the legal system. Unlike quantitative research that seeks to generalize results through statistical correlations, this study aimed to provide a “thick description” of how language functions as a tool of evaluation and power within a specific institutional context. The descriptive nature of this design allowed the researcher to meticulously depict the linguistic phenomena as they naturally occur within official documents, without manipulating variables. By adopting SFL as the

analytical lens, language was treated not merely as a set of grammatical rules, but as a resource for making meaning (social semiotics). Specifically, the Appraisal framework provided the necessary tools to dissect the interpersonal metafunction of the text how investigators establish their stance, express feelings, and position themselves relative to the suspects and witnesses through the "Investigation Reports" or *Berita Acara Pemeriksaan* (BAP). This approach is particularly suited for uncovering the subtle, often subconscious, evaluative patterns that may lead to the rejection of files (P19) by prosecutors.

The primary data for this research consisted of official legal documents known as Investigation Reports (BAP). These documents represent a critical genre of institutional discourse where spoken interactions (interviews and interrogations) are transformed into a permanent written record. The data source was the Galang Sub-district Police Station (Polsek Galang), located in North Sumatra, Indonesia.

To ensure a comprehensive analysis of the investigative process, the study utilized eight distinct categories of Investigation Reports. This research used eight kinds of Investigation Reports issued by Police Department (in this case referred to investigator) which language was evaluated based on Attitude and positioning patterns : (i) BAPS (Witness Investigation Reports), (ii) BAPT (Suspect Investigation Report), (iii) BAPh (Detention Investigation Report), (iv) BAPk (Arresting Investigation Report), (v) BAPTKP (Crime Scene Investigation Report), (vi) BAPy (Confiscation Report), (vii) BAPPH (Legal Advisor Report), and (viii) BAPPO (Missing Person Report) (Amin, 2020).

These documents represent formal written discourse derived from interviews and interrogations involving witnesses, victims, and suspects. As institutional texts, they reflect how spoken interaction is transformed into written legal documentation, making them highly relevant for discourse analysis. These Investigation Reports were the primary data used as the primary discourse made based on interviews and interrogations the witness, victim and suspect (Gretzel & Collier de Mendonça, 2019) these texts are highly relevant for discourse analysis because they are not neutral transcripts; they are reconstructed narratives where the investigator's voice often overlays the original speaker's intent. Purposive sampling was used as the method of data collecting (Poria et al., 2019). This non-probability sampling method was chosen to ensure that the selected documents possessed specific characteristics relevant to the research problem namely, reports that contained significant narrative elements and evaluative language, rather than purely administrative forms. It was conducted by collecting documents of BAP (Investigation Report) from the collection procedure involved obtaining formal permission from the Head of the Galang Sub-district Police. Once access was granted, the physical files were accessed. To adhere to ethical research standards and maintain confidentiality (Nolen, 2020). After data were collected and recorded in computer, they were analyzed by using SCP (Simple Concordance Program). By using this program, every Appraisal word was analyzed in phrases and clauses in syntagmatic and paradigmatic way (Lestari Kasih Grasella Nahampun et al., 2022). Then, the eight types of BAP were analyzed by using parameter of Appraisal category (Wang et al., 2021). All themes used as data were distributed and interpreted in order to see the status and type of semantic and grammatical categories of discourse based on Appraisal framework (Al-Busafi, 2022). The distribution of Appraisal resources across the eight types of reports was compared to identify dominant patterns. The findings were interpreted to reveal how investigators linguistically construct stance, evaluation, and interpersonal positioning toward suspects, witnesses, and events.

This methodological combination of corpus tools and qualitative analysis ensured both systematic data handling and contextualized interpretation of evaluative language in legal investigative discourse. The corpus was processed using the Simple Concordance Program (SCP). To refine the data, a 'Stop List' was manually curated to exclude non-evaluative functional words (e.g., prepositions, conjunctions, and proper names). The 'Appraisal Lexicon' was then developed by identifying lexical items that carry evaluative weight (Affect, Judgment, Appreciation) as defined by Martin & White (2005). To ensure the validity of the manual classification and minimize researcher bias, this study employed inter-rater reliability. Two independent linguists cross-checked the classification of the appraisal lexicon. Any discrepancies were discussed until a consensus was reached, ensuring that the categorization of Attitude and Positioning remained objective and consistent. This research strictly adheres to legal research ethics. Access to the Investigation Reports (BAP) was officially granted by the Galang Sub-district Police Station. To ensure the protection of all parties involved, a rigorous de-identification process was applied; all personal names, specific addresses, and identifying

details of suspects and victims were completely anonymized. Furthermore, the analysis was conducted solely for linguistic purposes without interfering with any legal processes or outcomes.

Results and Discussion

Results

The corpus-based analysis using the Simple Concordance Program (SCP) reveals distinct evaluative patterns across the eight categories of Investigation Reports (BAP). Rather than being neutral administrative records, these documents exhibit a high density of appraisal items that reflect the investigator's framing of suspects and witnesses.

Witness Investigation Report

SCP analysis found 415 types of total vocabulary for the profile of witness investigation report; through the word count project found 1498 tokens. Thus, it is around 0,27703605 types/tokens out of 10,722404508 types/sqrt. Therefore, the word frequency based on Yule's token type is 74,001%.

Table 1.1 Witness Investigation Report

Word Frequency	Number of Words (Types)	Cumulative Vocabulary	Cumulative Word Count (Tokens)	Vocabulary Percentage (%)	Word Count Percentage (%)
1	209	209	209	50,36145	13,95194
2	69	278	347	66,98795	23,16422
3	37	315	458	75,90361	30,57410
4	15	330	518	79,51807	34,57944
5	16	346	598	83,37349	39,91989
6	6	352	634	84,81928	42,32310
7	14	366	732	88,19277	48,86515
8	8	374	796	90,12048	53,13752
9	8	382	868	92,04819	57,94393
10	2	384	888	92,53012	59,27904
11	3	387	921	93,25301	61,48198
12	4	391	969	94,21687	64,68625
14	4	395	1.025	95,18072	68,42457
15	2	397	1.055	95,66265	70,42724
16	3	400	1.103	96,38554	73,63151
17	2	402	1.137	96,86747	75,90120
19	1	403	1.156	97,10843	77,16956
21	1	404	1.177	97,34940	78,57143
22	1	405	1.199	97,59036	80,04005
23	1	406	1.222	97,83133	81,57543
24	2	408	1.270	98,31325	84,77971
25	2	410	1.320	98,79518	88,11749
27	1	411	1.347	99,03614	89,91989
31	1	412	1.378	99,27711	91,98932
33	1	413	1.411	99,51807	94,19226
37	1	414	1.448	99,75904	96,66222
50	1	415	1.498	100,00	100,00

Suspect Investigation Report

SCP analysis found 463 types of total vocabulary for the profile of suspect investigation report; through the word count project found 1805 tokens. Thus, it is around 0,2565098 types/tokens out of 10,8978892 types/sqrt. Therefore, the word frequency based on Yule's token type is 97,99%.

Table 1.2 Suspect Investigation Report

Word Frequency	Number of Words (Types)	Cumulative Vocabulary	Cumulative Word Count (Tokens)	Vocabulary Percentage (%)	Word Count Percentage (%)
1	237	237	237	51,1879	13,13019
2	84	321	405	69,33045	22,43767
3	39	360	522	77,75378	28,91967
4	18	378	594	81,64147	32,90859
5	16	394	674	85,09719	37,34072
6	13	407	752	87,90497	41,66205
7	7	414	801	89,41685	44,37673
8	2	416	817	89,84881	45,26316
9	5	421	862	90,92873	47,75623
10	6	427	922	92,22462	51,08033
11	5	432	977	93,30454	54,12742
12	1	433	989	93,52052	54,79224
13	2	435	1.015	93,95248	56,23269
14	2	437	1.043	94,38445	57,78393
15	2	439	1.073	94,81641	59,44598
16	2	441	1.105	95,24838	61,21884
17	1	442	1.122	95,46436	62,16066
18	1	443	1.140	95,68035	63,15789
19	1	444	1.159	95,89633	64,21053
20	3	447	1.219	96,54428	67,53463
21	2	449	1.261	96,97624	69,86150
23	1	450	1.284	97,19222	71,13573
24	1	451	1.308	97,40821	72,46537
25	1	452	1.333	97,62419	73,85042
27	2	454	1.387	98,05616	76,84211
31	2	456	1.449	98,48812	80,27701
37	1	457	1.486	98,70410	82,32687
38	1	458	1.524	98,92009	84,43213
39	1	459	1.563	99,13607	86,59280
40	1	460	1.603	99,35205	88,80886
64	1	461	1.667	99,56803	92,35457
66	1	462	1.733	99,78402	96,01108
72	1	463	1.805	100,00	100,00

Detention Investigation Report

SCP analysis found 151 types of total vocabulary for the profile of detention investigation report; through the word count project found 228 tokens. Thus, it is around 0,6622808 types/tokens out of 10,0002193 types/sqrt. Therefore, the word frequency based on Yule's token type is 55,01% (Isnaini, Setyono, & Ariyanto, 2019).

Table 1.3 Detention Investigation Report

Word Frequency	Number of Words (Types)	Cumulative Vocabulary	Cumulative Word Count (Tokens)	Vocabulary Percentage (%)	Word Count Percentage (%)
1	106	106	106	70,19868	46,49123
2	30	136	166	90,06623	72,80702
3	7	143	187	94,70199	82,01754
4	4	147	203	97,35099	89,03509
5	1	148	208	98,01325	91,22807
6	2	150	220	99,33775	96,49123
8	1	151	228	100,00	100,00

Arresting Investigation Report

SCP analysis found 166 types of total vocabulary for the profile of arresting investigation report; through the word count project found 262 tokens. Thus, it is around 0,63358779 types/tokens out of 10,25551425 types/sqrt. Therefore, the word frequency based on Yule's token type is 55,64%.

Table 1.4 Arresting Investigation Report

Word Frequency	Number of Words (Types)	Cumulative Vocabulary	Cumulative Word Count (Tokens)	Vocabulary Percentage (%)	Word Count Percentage (%)
1	114	114	114	68,6747	43,51145
2	33	147	180	88,55422	68,70229
3	9	156	207	93,9759	79,00763
4	3	159	219	95,78313	83,58779
5	1	160	224	96,38554	85,49618
6	5	165	254	99,39759	96,94656
8	1	166	262	100,00	100,00

Crime Scene Investigation Report

SCP analysis found 148 types of total vocabulary for the profile of crime scene investigation report; through the word count project found 237 tokens. Thus, it is around 0,62447258 types/tokens out of 9,61363308 types/sqrt. Therefore, the word frequency based on Yule's token type is 55,19%.

Table 1.5 Crime Scene Investigation Report

Word Frequency	Number of Words (Types)	Cumulative Vocabulary	Cumulative Word Count (Tokens)	Vocabulary Percentage (%)	Word Count Percentage (%)
1	99	99	99	66,89	41,77
2	27	126	153	85,14	64,56
3	9	135	180	91,22	75,95
4	10	145	220	97,97	92,83
5	2	147	230	99,32	97,05
7	1	148	237	100,00	100,00

Confiscation Investigation report

SCP analysis found 169 types of total vocabulary for the profile of confiscation investigation report; through the word count project found 298 tokens. Thus, it is around 0,56711409 types/tokens out of 9,78990714 types/sqrt. Therefore, the word frequency based on Yule's token type is 63,73%.

Table 1.6 Confiscation Investigation report

Word Frequency	Number of Words (Types)	Cumulative Vocabulary	Cumulative Word Count (Tokens)	Vocabulary Percentage (%)	Word Count Percentage (%)
1	111	111	111	65.68	37.25
2	24	135	159	79.88	53.36
3	17	152	210	89.94	70.47
4	10	162	250	95.86	83.89
5	2	164	260	97.04	87.25
6	1	165	266	97.63	89.26
7	1	166	273	98.22	91.61
8	2	168	289	99.41	96.98
9	1	169	298	100.00	100.00

Legal Advisor Investigation Report

SCP analysis found 135 types of total vocabulary for the profile of legal advisor investigation report; through the word count project found 200 tokens. Thus, it is around 0,675 types/tokens out of 9,54594155 types/sqrt. Therefore, the word frequency based on Yule's token type is 54%.

1.7 Legal Advisor Investigation Report

Word Frequency	Number of Words (Types)	Cumulative Vocabulary	Cumulative Word Count (Tokens)	Vocabulary Percentage (%)	Word Count Percentage (%)
1	98	98	98	72.59	49.00
2	20	118	138	87.41	69.00
3	9	127	165	94.07	82.50
4	6	133	189	98.52	94.50
5	1	134	194	99.26	97.00
6	1	135	200	100.00	100.00

Missing Person Investigation Report

SCP analysis found 144 types of total vocabulary for the profile of missing person investigation report; through the word count project found 222 tokens. Thus, it is around 0,64864865 types/tokens out of 9,6646472 types/sqrt. Therefore, the word frequency based on Yule's token type is 52,75%.

1.8 Missing Person Investigation Report

Word Frequency	Number of Words (Types)	Cumulative Vocabulary	Cumulative Word Count (Tokens)	Vocabulary Percentage (%)	Word Count Percentage (%)
1	98	98	98	68.06	44.14
2	27	125	152	86.81	68.47
3	12	137	188	95.14	84.68
4	2	139	196	96.53	88.29
5	4	143	216	99.31	97.30

6	1	144	222	100.00	100.00
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Discussion

The analysis of data in this study focused on two subsystems namely attitude and positioning. While the analysis of evaluative language of appraisal was done by using SCP.

Tabel 2.1 Findings of Attitude and Positioning Appraisal

No.	Investigation Report Text	Appraisal (%)	Attitude (%)	Positioning (%)
1	Witness	74.00	16.8	20.7
2	Suspect	97.99	35.7	22.9
3	Detention	55.01	15.2	21.6
4	Arresting	55.64	22.3	11.8
5	Crime Scene	55.19	21.1	22.8
6	Confiscation	63.73	20.8	24.2
7	Legal Advisor	54.00	17.1	18.4
8	Missing Person	52.75	16.9	15.6

Statistical data indicates that negative Attitude, specifically within the sub-categories of Affect and Judgment, dominates the Suspect Investigation Reports (BAPS), accounting for 35.7% of the identified appraisal tokens. This suggests that the narrative constructed in these reports is heavily focused on culpability and emotional distress.

To illustrate this, consider the following anonymized excerpt:

"Tersangka mengakui bahwa ia terpaksa melakukan tindakan tersebut karena tekanan ekonomi."

(The suspect admitted that he was forced to commit the act due to economic pressure).

In this instance, the lexical choice *"mengakui"* (admitted) functions as a positioning tool that frames the statement as a definitive confession rather than a mere statement. Meanwhile, *"terpaksa"* (forced) evokes a negative Affect of insecurity. By embedding these evaluative terms, the report moves beyond a verbatim transcript and begins to construct a specific legal "character" for the suspect.

The high frequency of these evaluative profiles suggests that the linguistic "neutrality" often expected in legal documents is, in practice, frequently compromised. This finding aligns with Shuy's (2005) observation on language crimes, where the subtle manipulation of reported speech can lead to significant shifts in legal meaning. While this study focuses on linguistic patterns, the prevalence of evaluative framing raises concerns regarding "interpretative bias." When a report is saturated with negative appraisal, it creates a "pre-packaged" narrative for prosecutors and judges. Although this study does not empirically track judicial outcomes, the presence of such robust evaluative profiles suggests that the documents may inadvertently guide the reader toward a specific interpretation of guilt or character. The table also shows that the appraisal is used dominantly in suspect investigation report with 97,99%. Witness report is on the second place with 74,001%. In the third place is confiscation report with 63,73% (Jeffres et al., 2009). While the less dominant appraisal is on missing person investigation report with 52,75% (Syafryadin et al., 2020). This result shows that the writer of investigation report used many evaluative lexical language in conveying the message. Therefore, the writer of the report has the high subjectivity toward the message that conveying through the investigation report text as the result of investigation (Sutrisno, 2020).

Conclusions

This conclusion is based on the analysis toward the 8 kind of investigation as mention before. Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that the tendency of the usage pattern of appraisal lexis of negative attitude is showed in the dominant level of 35,7% by the investigator. The tendency of the usage pattern of appraisal

lexis of negative positioning by the investigator is done by telling about the negative case or the abasement the case dominantly with 24,2% in the confiscation investigation result. While the appraisal in suspect investigation report is 97,99%. The Analysis of data in this study focused on two subsystems, namely Attitude and Positioning. From the analysis and discussion, it was found that (1) the tendency of usage patterns of Appraisal lexis of negative Attitude was shown in Affective elements, elements of assessment, and negative elements of Appreciation by the investigator. (2) a declining usage patterns Appraisal lexis of negative Positioning by investigators by means of the story about negative events or denial to the news informed to the examinee. This conclusion is based on an assessment of the interrogation of witnesses, interrogation of suspects, the investigation report of detention, interrogation arrest, interrogation Points Genesis Case, the investigation report of seizure, interrogation mentoring legal counsel, and the people searching reports. Based on the findings and the purpose of this study, an interpretation of the statutory language and the linguistic study on the process of preparing the reports can be well made as accurate as possible. Each element in the language is not only meaningful, but also truthful, either positive or negative. These findings are also expected to contribute to the development of linguistic theory in general and particularly in the evaluative study of the language. It is expected to show the physical and material truth in an investigation in order to avoid the errors of interpretation and transcription of such reports. This study examines Appraisal in the text of the dossier by the investigator. From the results of the study, it is necessary to suggest some further researches. First, it is suggested that the researchers continue using the written language data from other data sources. In addition, the spoken language data is also assumed Appraisal research which is assumed as a research that is rich in novelty findings. Second, it is suggested that research Appraisal be further developed by using a larger linguistic corpus so that it can obtain a better picture about the use of evaluative language in various texts. The findings suggest that the use of evaluative language in Investigation Reports tends to reflect the investigator's stance, which may influence the representation of events. This study concludes that the dominance of negative attitude and positioning in BAPs reflects a non-neutral linguistic framing by investigators. The statistical evidence from the corpus suggests that these documents are evaluatively charged. This is critical because such linguistic patterns can potentially lead to 'errors of interpretation' during the judicial phase. If a report is heavily framed with negative appraisal, it may inadvertently influence the prosecutor's or judge's perception of the case. Thus, greater linguistic objectivity in drafting BAPs is essential to uphold the integrity of legal proceedings. Therefore, greater attention to linguistic neutrality is recommended to improve the clarity and objectivity of legal documentation.

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