

Teaching L2 Students' Critical Review Writing Skill through Appraisal

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Abstract: *This study attempts to reveal the implementation and the use of attitude appraisal to enhance students' critical review writings skill. The students were asked to write a critical review towards a journal they read, however, before they engage to write the text, they were introduced and trained on how to use attitude appraisal items including affect, judgment and appreciation. The data of this study were thirty-nine students' critical review writings which were analyzed using appraisal theory suggested by Martin and White (2005). The result of this study reveals that most students were able to give their critical review towards the journal they have read. Judgment is the type of appraisal mostly used by students. It deals with behaviour which students admire or criticize, praise or condemn. In addition, it is seen that students' perception towards the journal are varied based on the use of affect, judgment and appreciation.*

Keywords: *appraisal, attitude, critical review, L2 students, writing skill*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mencoba mengungkap implementasi dan penggunaan penilaian sikap untuk meningkatkan keterampilan menulis tinjauan kritis mahasiswa. Mahasiswa diminta untuk menulis tinjauan kritis terhadap jurnal yang mereka baca, namun, sebelum mereka menulis teks, mereka diperkenalkan dan dilatih tentang bagaimana menggunakan item penilaian sikap (attitude) termasuk afek (affect), penilaian (judgment) dan apresiasi (appreciation). Data dalam penelitian ini diambil dari tiga puluh sembilan tulisan tinjauan kritis yang dihasilkan oleh mahasiswa yang kemudian dianalisis dengan menggunakan teori appraisal yang dikemukakan oleh Martin dan White (2005). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar mahasiswa mampu memberikan tinjauan kritis terhadap jurnal yang mereka baca. Penilaian (judgment) adalah jenis appraisal sikap yang paling banyak digunakan oleh mahasiswa. Hal ini berkaitan dengan perilaku yang dikagumi atau dikritik, dipuji atau dikutuk oleh mahasiswa. Selain itu, terlihat bahwa persepsi mahasiswa terhadap jurnal bervariasi berdasarkan penggunaan afek, penilaian (judgment) dan apresiasi.

Kata kunci: appraisal, ketrampilan menulis, mahasiswa, sikap, tinjauan kritis

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, appraisal has also been used in educational field especially as an approach in writing. Writing, for some of L2 students, is a subject which is difficult to be studied. It is because they have to understand about grammar, spelling, and the use of the correct tenses and language (Fauziah, Warsono, dan Widhiyanto: 2018; Cahyono and Setyaningsih, 2018). Moreover, to write a review text, students tend to think that it is not an easy way to do because they have to give their comments and evaluation towards the events or art works they read or watch such as novel, journal, film, video game or others. Review text is a kind of text which provides criticisms, evaluation, or review intellectual works. In line with appraisal, theory of systemic functional linguistics is employed in this study.

Systemic functional linguistics is a language theory established by Halliday. In SFL, there are three meanings of language functions: ideational meaning, interpersonal meaning, and textual meaning. Appraisal is an interpersonal metafunctions system and it is in the realm of discourse semantics. It is a system in interpersonal meaning which is applied to evaluate social relation by showing the readers or listeners about the valuation of something or someone

(Martin and Rose, 2007). Appraisal is considered as a system which has three subsystems which are related to one another simultaneously (Martin & White, 2005; Martin & Rose, 2007). Based on its functions, appraisal is divided into three kinds: attitude, engagement, and graduation. In this research, the researcher only focused on one kind of appraisal which is attitude. Attitude appraisal is divided into three kinds comprises affect, judgment, and appreciation. This following figure is the illustration of attitude appraisal.

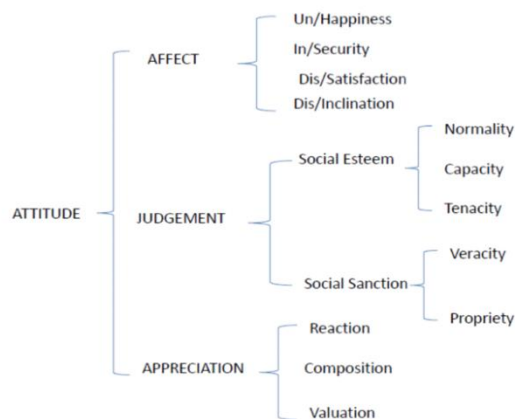


Fig. 1 Appraisal of attitude (Martin & White, 2005)

Based on the figure above, it can be seen that affect is an appraisal (White, 2005). Affect consists of irrealis and realis. Irrealis affect always refers to the outside influence or trigger (Martin & White, 2005; Martin & Rose, 2007). Secondly, judgment refers to the appraisal towards someone's attitude and how they behave or their character (Martin and White, 2005). Last but not least is appreciation. Appreciation refers to appraisal towards things or artifact, occurrences including natural phenomena (White, 2015).

In relation to the use of appraisal, there are some previous researchers conducted on this, among of them are Liu (2013). In her research, she focused on one kind of appraisal namely attitude which was applied on Chinese University EFL students' English argumentative writing. She analyzed types of attitudes applied in students' argumentative writings and classified them into effect, judgment and appreciation. Meanwhile, Fauziah, Warsono, and Widhianto (2019) also analyzed the use of appraisal to compare the students' argumentative essays with different proficiency levels (high and low proficiency levels). They segmented the undergraduate students' writings into three appraisal items such as attitude, engagement and graduation. The findings showed that both groups applied all subsystem of appraisal items. Furthermore, Ngogo (2016) also used the appraisal approach to analyze the undergraduate students' theses. She applied all kinds of appraisal in her analysis. The findings of her research were that all three appraisals: attitude, engagement and graduation were found in the students' theses. Based on the findings, engagement was the highest number found compared to others. The same thing was done by Refnaldi (2018). He also employed appraisal as the approach to analyze the students' hortatory writings. He focused on three kinds of appraisal and classified the negative and positive affects in the students' writings. In addition, Cahyono and Setyaningsih (2018) also conducted a research on the use of appraisal. They observed the lecturer's comments/review in appraising students' assignments. According to the result, it attempts to describe the lecturer's attitude in evaluating his students' writings. In so doing, the study on appraisal by analyzing students' journal critical review writing and its implementation have not been done and it becomes the gap of this study.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs descriptive qualitative research. The data of this study were taken from thirty-nine English department students at Faculty of Humanities in one of private universities in Semarang. They were in the sixth semester when the data were obtained. Before the students engaged to write, they were introduced to appraisal theory within two meetings by using the learning cycle proposed by Hammond (1992) as adapted from Callaghan and Rothery (1988). There were four steps in implementing this stage. The first is building knowledge of field, the second is modelling of the text, the third is joint construction and the last is independent construction. At the end of this cycle, students are encouraged to write a critical review writing individually by referring to the journal given by their lecturer. After getting the data, then they were analyzed by using appraisal theory proposed by Martin and White (2005). This study focused only on one item of appraisal namely attitude which comprises affect, appreciation and judgment.

3. DISCUSSION

In this part, the researcher explains the implementation of appraisal theory and its category in students' critical review writings. As mentioned in the methodology, in implementation of the theory of appraisal, students are engaged into four learning cycles within two meetings. Each meeting is presented by two cycles. Here is the presentation of learning cycle implementation.

3.1. *Implementation of attitude appraisal in students' critical writing*

Cycle 1: Building knowledge of field

In this cycle, the lecturer gives his students knowledge about appraisal theory and its usage in writing genre text. The lecturer only focuses on one type of appraisal namely attitude to be introduced to the students. Besides that, the lecturer also explains how to write critical review writing including the schematic structure and linguistic features. Furthermore, detail types of attitude appraisal including affect, judgment and appreciation are introduced in this cycle.

Cycle 2: Modelling of text

After students are introduced to the theory of attitude appraisal in the first meeting, then, in the second meeting, the lecturer introduces the students on how to write critical review text well organized. In so doing, the lecturer gives model or example of journal critical review writing to his students and analyze it together. The lecturer shows his students attitude appraisal items used by the writer in writing the text and highlight each attitude appraisal words or phrases comprising affect, judgment and appreciation with different color.

Cycle 3: Joint construction

At this stage, students are encouraged to write the critical review text in pairs. Together with their partner, students create a critical writing over the journal they read. They elaborate by using their own words when they give evaluation to the journal they read by following attitude appraisal theory.

Cycle 4: Independent construction

At this part of learning cycle, students are asked to write a critical review text individually. The lecturer gives them a journal about 'Reading to Learn program' and then they write a critical review by following the appraisal of attitude items including affect, judgment and appreciation. After they finished their writings, then they submit their works.

Outcome of students' critical review writings

In this part, the researcher presents the result of students' 'critical review writings' by presenting the result in the table 1 below:

Table 1. Attitude Appraisal Classification

Types of Attitudes	Sub-categories	+	-	Σ	%
Affect	Un/Happiness	28	13	41	38.68
	In/Security	4	1	5	4.72
	Dis/Satisfaction	4	4	8	7.55
	Dis/Inclination	5	1	6	5.66
Judgment	Normality	5	2	7	6.6
	Capacity	2	2	4	3.77
	Tenacity	1	-	1	0.94
	Veracity	1	-	1	0.94
	Propriety	2	-	2	1.89
Appreciation	Reaction	15	3	18	16.98
	Composition	3	1	4	3.77
	Valuation	6	-	6	5.66
Total				106	100

It can be seen in the table above that affect is the most dominant type of attitude used by the students in giving evaluation toward the journal they have read. The descriptions of each type are provided in the examples below.

3.1.1. Affect

In terms of Halliday 1994 term, these realizations comprise modification of participants and processes, affective mental and behavioral processes, and modal adjuncts. Below is the example of affect found in the students' critical writings.

Excerpt 1

The journal "Designing Literacy Inservising: Learning to Read: Reading to Learning" by David Rose and Claire Acevedo that published in 2006 is quite insightful and informative for some people who is interested in this course

The above example shows affect of attitude produced by the students in his writing. The underlined word illustrates positive affect of satisfaction. In giving evaluation, the student employs positive affect to show his feelings towards the journal he has already read. He thinks that by reading the journal he gains knowledge and obtains information. Besides that, he also recommends to other people who are interested in this theory to read the journal.

Another example of positive affect can be seen in the following excerpt below. Here, the student evaluates the journal by giving positive comment.

Excerpt 2

I suggest you read this journal before. So, you will earn an insight after reading this journal.

It can be seen in the excerpt 2 above that the existence of the word 'suggest' is classified as positive affect of inclination: desire. Here, the student wants to give a recommendation to other people that the journal he has already read is a good journal to read. In addition, he also tells the readers that the journal will give them valuable information after reading it.

Below is another excerpt showing positive affect produced by the students in his writing.

Excerpt 3

Besides, I like the way David Rose writes his journal due to the simplicity of its words or sentences.

Based on the example provided in the excerpt 3 above, it shows that the underlined word 'like' describes positive affect of happiness. The student gives us information that he like the

way how the author of the journal presenting his work. The student loves the journal because it is presented in a simple way so he can learn and understand the journal easily.

In the other hands, the excerpt below is an example of negative affect made by the student in her writing. Here, the student feels confused with the journal she has read because there are many terms that she does not know.

Excerpt 4

I think this journal is a little bit too long and if you are not familiar with this kind of journal, you might feel uneasy.

The example in the excerpt 4 above describes negative affect found in the student's critical review writing. It shows that the student feels anxious when she reads the journal. It is because she thinks that the journal is too long to read since she also does not know everything mentioned in the journal especially some new items or words. The existence of the word 'uneasy' here is classified as affect insecurity.

Another example is presented in the excerpt below where negative affect of dissatisfaction found in the data of the students' critical writings.

Excerpt 5

Sometimes I feel bored when read this journal because it is too long but the messages in this journal was very informative,

Based on the example described in the excerpt 5 above, it can be seen that the students made negative affect of dissatisfaction in his writing to show his disappointment. The existence of the word 'bored' shows us that the student feels tired of reading the journal because the journal is too long and he has to read the journal several times. However, he also says that even the journal consists of many pages, it still gives good information for him.

3.1.2. Judgment

In this part, the researcher discusses the use of judgment appraisal found in the students' critical writings. There are some judgments made by the students towards the journal they have read. Here are the examples.

Excerpt 6

I think the way how that it worked out is really good because the authors said it that it worked really well.

It can be seen in the excerpt 6 above that the student makes positive judgment of propriety in his writing. In evaluating the journal, the student creates his opinion towards the journal he reads. He thinks that the journal gives a clear information to him and other people who read the journal. Furthermore, the student also tells that the journal describes a methodology of reading to learn program works well which is indicated by the existence word "well".

Furthermore, the example below also describes another judgment found in the students' critical writing.

Excerpt 7

Unfortunately, this journal does not provide that structure and makes the reader faces difficulties in finding some section.

The above example illustrates the negative judgment of normality. It indicates that the student feels disappointed to the journal he read. He thinks that the journal does not provide some evidences that the student needs to know so that he faces some difficulties in understanding the journal.

A similar example of judgment also can be found in the excerpt 8 below. Here, the student produces positive judgment towards the journal he has already read.

Excerpt 8

This journal is strongly recommended for those who want to make a new analysis of this topic (reading to learn) and also some other related analysis.

The example which is existed in the excerpt 8 above is classified as positive judgment of capacity. It indicates that the student is really agree to recommend the journal he reads to others. He is happy to share his evaluation because he feels that the journal is really valuable to those who are interested in reading to learn material.

3.1.3. Appreciation

Appreciation looks at resources for construing the value of things, including natural phenomena and semiosis (as either product or process) (Martin and White, 2005: 36). The excerpts below are the examples of appreciation found in the data.

Excerpt 9

Then, this journal is worth to read by all students in the university, especially a language student.

The excerpt 9 above illustrates the positive appreciation of valuation found in the student's critical writing. This word indicates that the student gives his positive feeling of appreciation towards the journal he has already read. He thinks that the journal is really worth to read especially for university students specialized in language education or linguistics.

Similar example of appreciation is also presented in the excerpt 10 below. Here, the student produces positive appreciation in his writing.

Excerpt 10

After that, his writing product in a PDF file is not really good as for it is not quite tidy.

As described in the excerpt above, it can be seen that the existence of the words 'good' and 'tidy' are segmented into appreciation of reaction. Those indicate that there are negative comments made by the student. In this case, the student tells other readers that the journal in form of PDF is not in a good condition and also it is untidy.

4. CONCLUSION

According to the result of the analysis, it can be sum up that the type of attitude appraisal mostly found in the students' critical review writings is affect. Affect is the most dominant resources found because the students mostly give their positive and negative feelings towards the journal they already have read. It also deals with resources for construing emotional reactions. In addition, the implementation of appraisal theory in students' writing give valuable knowledge to students themselves because they gain new knowledge on how to write well especially on how to give evaluation or criticism.

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