

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This section involves subchapters including the background of the study, the problem statement, the objective, the significance of the study, the scope and the limitation, and the definition of key terms.

A. Background of The Study

Communication is the essential basis of human interaction. People always communicate to transfer information, ideas, or meaning from one entity or group to another through a language. Communication can be in the form of verbal, non-verbal, visual and written (Littlejohn & Foss, 2010). Implementing communication through different ways has a different impact on how people interpret the idea. It is possible to exchange ideas, thoughts, emotions, or perspective towards an issue (Walther, 1996). It means communication plays a significant function in daily life to convey an idea.

In academic context, effective communication can be achieved through writing skill, requiring students to express their ideas through various texts, such as description, explanation, exposition, or argumentative. According to Bulqiyah et al (2021), writing skill is the primary objective in education, especially at a tertiary level, where the students are expected to be able to produce well-structured writing. Moreover, the students often encounter unexpected obstacles when they attempt to express complex ideas or arguments. In expressing arguments

requires the ability to connect between the writers and the readers. It is in line with interpersonal meaning by Halliday (1994), he stated that interpersonal meaning can discover how individuals' position and how they use language to evaluate phenomena. Thus, appraisal as an extension of interpersonal meaning can be a tool to explore how students construct their views in writing.

The study of appraisal is still an interesting study because of its role in analysing how language is used to evaluate and manage emotions. Additionally, appraisal enables researchers to examine how an individual's choice of words reflects their ideas. There are various theories related to appraisal which influence the uniqueness of each study. This research uses appraisal theory by Martin and White (2005) because it provides a detailed taxonomy of evaluative language. Furthermore, the present study attempts to reveal the scope of appraisal, particularly the expressions of attitudes in academic context.

Expressing attitudes towards an issue is not only part of human communication, but also a crucial element in writing skill. According to Martin and White (2005), attitude is the main subsystem of appraisal framework that includes affect, judgement, and appreciation. Although the appraisal framework offers a broad taxonomy of evaluative language, this present study explores the main subsystem of appraisal in order to facilitate a more nuanced analysis of how interpersonal meaning in students' argumentative essays, as tertiary students are required to present arguments

clearly in their writing. Without a clear stance, their writing will lose its persuasive power with the intended audience. In order to investigate the expressions of attitude, this study explores students' argumentative essays.

Students' argumentative essays are selected as the source of this study for following considerations. (1) This essay aims to persuade the readers about a topic being discussed that is highly significant rather than merely explain an issue, such as process analysis essay. (2) Argumentative essay serves as a systematic communication tool through a text structure consisting of a thesis, a series of arguments containing opposing opinion and rebuttals, and conclusion so the readers can receive complex information easily. (3) The unique inclusion of opposing opinions and rebuttals distinguishes this genre from others, creating a dialogic structure specifically designed to convince the readers.

Previous studies have applied an appraisal framework to analyse discourses in different contexts, from movie review (Cystalia & Sunardi, 2018), social media (Yuliyanti, 2023). Those studies predominantly focused on media-based discourse which left a notable gap in investigation of appraisal within student's academic writing. Another study conducted by Fitriati et al. (2018) showed that analysing students' writing can enhance students' metalinguistic awareness of how evaluative language works. Additionally, applying strategies in choosing interpersonal language assists the students to gain greater mastery in their writing.

According to the explanation above, appraisal serves as a reliable analytical tool for uncovering the linguistic patterns of students' interpersonal language usage and for developing practical guidelines aimed at improving the students' competence in developing arguments through critical writing. Moreover, analysing in depth expressions of attitude in students' argumentative essays is needed since students are not only practiced to express views but also to communicate through an essay, such as argumentative essays intended to influence the readers. Therefore, this research employs the appraisal theory that focuses on expressing attitude in students' argumentative essays.

B. Research Question

Based on the background stated above, the writer formulated one question of the study to be explored, that is "How do the students convey the expressions of attitude in their argumentative essays?"

C. Objective of the Study

The objective of the study aims to answer the research question. According to the problem, this study is to analyse how the students express attitude in their argumentative essays.

D. Significance of the Study

In this section, the researcher provides the urgency of the study in the education field theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretical Significance

The theoretical benefit of appraisal analysis is to enrich the linguistic model by providing empirical data on the linguistic realization of the argumentative essay in an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) context and provide practical guidelines for EFL writing instructors by highlighting specific areas where students struggle with projecting their attitude or voice, leading to better pedagogical interventions for persuasive writing competence.

2. Practical Significance

a. For the educators

This study is expected to assist educators to provide a quantifiable, systematic framework to diagnose and pinpoint specific areas of bias, subjectivity, or imbalance in students' written evaluations.

b. For the students

Hopefully, this study assists the students to increase the students' awareness of the ideological and attitudinal power of their word choices, recognizing that specific vocabulary, especially appraisal lexis, inherently carries evaluation.

c. For the next researchers

The researcher expects this research may provide a tested and applicable methodology for appraising students' academic writings, especially for evaluating attitude expressions.

E. Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study is based on the appraisal framework developed by Martin and White (2005), specifically focusing on the linguistic realization of attitude, including affect, judgement, and appreciation in argumentative essays written by the fourth semester students at UIN Syekh Wasil Kediri. The expressions of attitude can be in the form of words, phrases, or clauses that have evaluative meaning. Additionally, this study does not examine linguistic elements outside of this evaluative function, such as inter paragraph conjunctions or grammatical cohesion that are not directly related to the expressions of attitude.

This study is limited to analysis the expression of attitudes in ten students' argumentative essays, which means the findings may not be generalized to all English Education students. Additionally, this study does not consider the long-term development of students' evaluative skill, which may change as they progress to higher academic levels. While the interpretation inherently involves a degree of researcher subjectivity, consistency was maintained through data validity.

F. Definition of Key Terms

Appraisal is a tool in linguistic resources which is designed to negotiate interpersonal communication and convey the appraisers' position in texts or discourse.

Expressions of attitude, in linguistics, refer to words or phrases to convey emotion, ethical, and appreciation evaluations about experiences, objects, phenomena, or behaviour.

An argumentative essay is a non-fiction essay primarily intended to persuade or promote a specific point of view on an issue.