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Evaluative stances in persuasive essays by undergraduate students: focusing on APPRECIATION resources

Abstract: This paper compares high-graded essays to low-graded essays written by undergraduate students in Australia. The comparison is made in an attempt to identify the extent to which the use of the evaluative language termed “*appraisal*” contributes to their academic success. The appraisal theory has emerged from a further refinement of interpersonal meaning within a systemic functional linguistics (SFL) framework. The category applied is one of the appraisal systems which is ATTITUDE. A particular focus of the category is on APPRECIATION, a subsystem of ATTITUDE. The APPRECIATION is concerned with evaluating things, entities, a text, products, or processes. Therefore, APPRECIATION is the most dominant ATTITUDE expressed in academic discourse. Its expressions are very field specific. In the process of applying the APPRECIATION categories in academic discourse, some extensions and reworking of the categories were required. One extension is in Valuation categories which is a subsystem of APPRECIATION. This fine-tuning of aspects of the theory has enabled subtle but important differences to emerge in the kinds of evaluations expressed. Theoretical contributions and pedagogical implications for teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course will be discussed.

Keywords: SFL, appraisal theory, ATTITUDE, valuation, persuasive essays (PEs), high-graded essays (HGEs)

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1 Introduction

While evidence of critical thinking has been acknowledged as the most important element in the quality of students’ essays (Moore 2011),

international students in particular find it very difficult to raise their voices critically in arguing a case (Thompson 2001; Stapleton 2002; Woodward-Kron 2002). From a linguistic perspective, the undergraduate students' lack of critical voice and argument may be most closely associated with a lack of skills in the management of evaluative language (Hood 2004, Hood, 2006, Hood, 2010; Wu and Desmond 2003; Wu 2005, Wu, 2008). This is because being critical in writing involves writers "responding in an evaluative, analytical way to texts" (Belcher 1995: 153). Despite the importance of containing critical components in academic argument, few studies have attempted to demystify "being critical" and "the appropriate use of academic register" from the point of view of linguistic evidence. Further, much pedagogical emphasis in academic literacy has been placed on argument structure and grammar, leading to a missing link in the semantic focus of its teaching (Hood 2004, Hood, 2006, Hood, 2010).

The primary aim of this paper is to compare high-graded essays (HGEs) to low-graded essays (LGEs) in terms of undergraduate writers' use of Valuation in expressing values in their arguments (see ensuing Sections 2 and 3). Twelve students from two groups of writers enrolled in the Faculty of Arts were involved in the research: six Australia-born English-speaking students (ABS) and six international students from Eastern Asian countries (EAS). The secondary aim is to complement the contributions of previous work on APPRECIATION to clarify and extend the system as a result of applying the appraisal theory to an academic writing context. In this paper, particularly, arguments rest to some extent on the theoretical understanding of the association of Valuation to field. The expectation therefore is that some modifications in the categories of Valuation may well emerge from the data collected.

The paper will begin by describing the *appraisal* framework within systemic functional linguistics (SFL), followed by an explanation of how Valuation can fit into the system of ATTITUDE and APPRECIATION, delineating Valuation in comparison to Reaction and Composition. Then it will describe the types of Valuation proposed by White (1998) and Coffin (2000) from two different fields. This is followed by an introduction to the design of the study and techniques adopted for the coding of appraisal items. On the basis of these coding techniques, the paper proposes a model that has been revised from previous models and extended following the arguments for academic data used in this paper. The paper will then contrast between successful and unsuccessful undergraduate papers that form the dataset in terms of the use of Valuation. The final section will include a discussion of outcomes as well as methodological and pedagogical implications.

2 Studies applying appraisal theory

The recent development of research on evaluative language termed *appraisal* theory has emerged from a Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework. The theory helps the understanding of how writers' critical voices and academic register can be deconstructed from a linguistic perspective. The theory is a further refinement of Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004) interpersonal metafunction of language within the SFL. The appraisal theory is basically concerned with adopting and managing evaluative language that encompasses subjective and intersubjective positioning in writing both at discourse semantics and lexicogrammatical levels. It comprises three main systems termed ATTITUDE, GRADUATION, and ENGAGEMENT (for details, see Martin 2000; White 1998, White, 2004; Martin and Rose 2007 [2003]; Macken-Horarik and Martin 2003; Martin and White 2007 [2005]). In particular, the category ATTITUDE is the most directly relevant to being critical, as this system enables writers to strengthen their individual voices or personal opinions of an issue in their essays. ATTITUDE consists of three major aspects, namely AFFECT (expressing a writer's emotions and feelings), JUDGMENT (evaluating human behavior), and APPRECIATION (assessing entities, things, and processes) (see Figure 1 in Section 3.1).

APPRECIATION provides resources by which people can evaluate things and entities, not directly judging human behavior. APPRECIATION is comprised of three main subsystems: Reaction, Composition, and Valuation (for details, see Section 3.1). Due to the nature of APPRECIATION, its subcategories in this area are likely to vary from context to context more than those in AFFECT and JUDGMENT (Martin 2000). The focus of this paper is on APPRECIATION and, in particular, its subcategory of Valuation. Valuation is concerned with writers' assessment of the social significance of the text/process (e.g., *crucial*, *profound*, *innovative unique* versus *shallow*, *harmful*, *useless*, *detrimental*). In academic essays, evaluating things related to the issues under investigation is considered to be the most important and common aspect of writing. Since Valuation relates to ideational worth, it is strongly tied to "ideational meaning," which is concerned with subject matter. Accordingly, the meaning it encompasses will be highly variable across texts (Martin and White 2007 [2005]).

While the APPRECIATION system to date has been examined across discourses, few studies seem to have explored how the system is deployed in academic discourse in detail. Further, APPRECIATION itself is not often investigated and seems the least explicated and understood of the appraisal system. For instance, Valuation has been ambiguously and inexhaustively defined. Nevertheless, Valuation has been investigated in some fields within the ATTITUDE system. These

include narrative genres in secondary school and workplace literacy practices (Martin 1997; Rothery and Stenglin 2000; Martin and Rose 2007 [2003]; Macken-Horarik 2003), history (Martin 1995a; Coffin 1997, Coffin, 2000), casual conversation (Eggins 1997), and media (White 1998; Coffin and O'Halloran 2006). Within EAP (English for Academic Purposes) studies, Hyland (2005) has investigated differential deployments of evaluative language which could be considered as corresponding to Valuation in academic writing of the humanities, the biomedical sciences, and the positive sciences. In his study, evaluative language was investigated as part of metadiscourse in exploring interaction in academic writing. Hunston (2000) also explores complexity in evaluation in persuasive texts within Sinclair's (1987) distinction between averral and attribution. However, these two researchers do not explore Valuation fully in academic discourse using appraisal theory. Although Hood (Hood 2004, Hood, 2006, Hood, 2010) examines Valuation resources in her analysis of undergraduate ESL (English as a Second Language) research paper introductions, detailed analysis such as a subcategorization of the Valuation system was not undertaken in her study.

White (1998) and Coffin (2000) acknowledged the field-sensitive aspect of Valuation and attempted to extend Valuation subsystems to media and high-school history discourses, respectively. Despite this, it still remains an open question as to the ability of these systems to be generalized to other registers and discourses (White 1998, White, 2004). Valuations are closely tied to the particular discourses or social settings in which they operate and are institutionally specific (Martin 2000; Martin and Rose 2007 [2003]). Because of this institutional focus and the field sensitivity of Valuation, "the Social Valuation of one field will not be applicable or relevant in another" (White 1998: 56). The focus of this paper is on APPRECIATION, in particular, Valuation, and any plausible variations that might occur in the field of academic discourse. This is addressed in the context of a discussion relating to the possible influence of Eastern and indigenous cultures in addition to Western culture on Australian universities.

3 Theoretical frameworks of Valuation within

APPRECIATION

3.1 APPRECIATION

As seen in Figure 1, the APPRECIATION system is one of the three ATTITUDE systems. JUDGMENT value consists of five subcategories: Capacity, Normality, Tenacity, Veracity, and Propriety (for details, see Martin 2000; Martin and White 2007

[2005]). While Capacity is concerned with how capable the writer is (e.g., *achieved, success, can, learn*), Propriety is concerned with how ethical or how far beyond reproach the writer is (e.g., *responsible, respectful, abuse*). As opposed to JUDGMENT, APPRECIATION can be thought of as the system by which human feelings, either positive or negative, toward products, processes, and entities are institutionalized as a set of evaluations. APPRECIATION typically provides resources by which people can evaluate texts, abstract constructs such as plans and policies, as well as manufactured and natural objects. APPRECIATION is thus the most common and dominant tool used in academic argument, as here the evaluation tends to be abstract and “*depersonalized*” rather than directly expressing the writers’ feelings and or emotions (Iedema 2004).

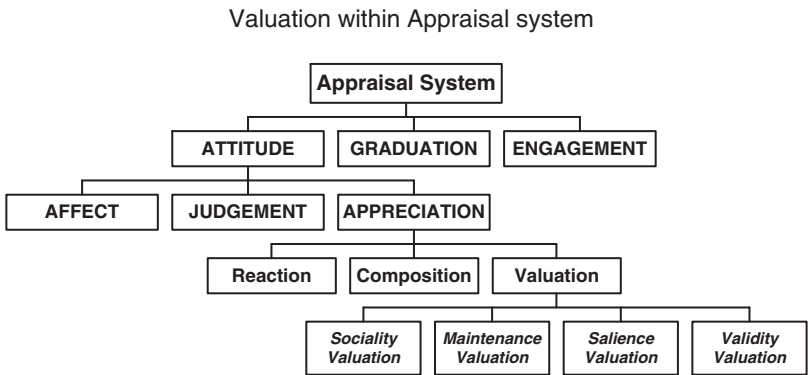


Figure 1: An extension of Valuation system within the existing appraisal system.

With regard to the three subcategories, Reaction is concerned with the degree to which the text/process in question captures a reader’s attention and appeals to emotion (e.g., *interesting, exciting, boring, disgusting*). Composition is concerned with a writer’s perceptions of proportionality and detail in a text/process (e.g., *systemic, precise, detailed, simple, unplanned*). Valuation is generally concerned with a writer’s assessment of the social significance of the text/process (e.g., *significant, crucial, innovative, etc.*) (Martin 2000; Martin and White 2007 [2005]). It strongly involves a writer taking an evaluative stance on both concrete and semiotic/abstract things, and natural phenomena, according to the ways in which they are valued or not valued in a given field.

3.2 Modelling Valuation

There are many ways in which Valuation can be distinguished from the other two subcategories of APPRECIATION: Reaction and Composition. Valuation firstly

contrasts with the other two types in that Valuation is a non-aesthetic subcategory (e.g., *important*, *significant*) as opposed to the aesthetic categories (e.g., *beautiful*, *simple*) (Rothery and Stenglin 2000; White 2004). This is because Valuations are not concerned with the pleasure associated with form and appearance but with the application of various normative principles to products and entities. The Valuations can also be seen to associate the different types of mental processes with the way we look at things (our gaze). While “Reaction is related to affection (emotive), Composition is related to perception (our view of order) and Valuation is related to cognition (our considered opinions)” (Eggs 1997; Martin and White 2007 [2005]: 14). Alternatively, the three categories are also distinguished according to the three metafunctions. Reaction is interpersonally aligned, because it involves being *emotive* (it grabs me) and *desirative* (I like it). Composition is textually tuned, because it relates to the textual organization of *balance* or *complexity*. Valuation is ideationally tuned, because it relates to *ideational worth* (Rothery and Stenglin 2000; Martin and White 2007 [2005]).

3.3 Categories of Valuation

There is considerable variation and scope among scholars as to how Valuation is defined. Valuation is considered at first glance to be concerned with our assessment of salience and the social significance of the text/process such as importance, significance, value, etc. (Lemke 1998; Martin 2000; Martin and Rose 2007 [2003]). It is characterized as being concerned with whether something is believed to be worthwhile (e.g., *crucial*, *significant*, *profound*, *innovative*, *original*, *unique*). Martin (Martin 1997, Martin, 2000) did not propose taxonomies of Valuation subtypes. His concept appears to conflate with Lemke’s (1998) importance/significance category of interpersonal meaning, which, in turn, relates to White’s (1998) Social Salience value (see ensuing section). Choices in this subcategory are used by these scholars in a wide range of contexts and are thus relatively less institutionally biased and disciplinarily sensitive.

White (1998) and Coffin (2000) are the ones who propose taxonomies of Valuation subtypes in their specific field-related work. White’s (1998) classification of Valuation in media contexts primarily relies on Rothery’s work on the Visual Arts and Rothery and Stenglin’s (1997) classification of Social Valuation in secondary school English essays. White (1998) treats Valuation as a superordinate term for two subsystems of APPRECIATION, namely Reaction and Composition. He used the terms Valuation and Social Valuation interchangeably by treating them as if they are at the same level in the taxonomic hierarchy (see Figure 2). As with

Rothery and Stenglin (1997), White treated Social Valuation/Valuation as a non-aesthetic category as opposed to the aesthetic categories of Reaction and Composition. He further subcategorized Social Valuation as Social Salience, Social Authenticity, and Social Harm values. These are labelled as subordinate terms of Social Valuation (see details in White 1998).

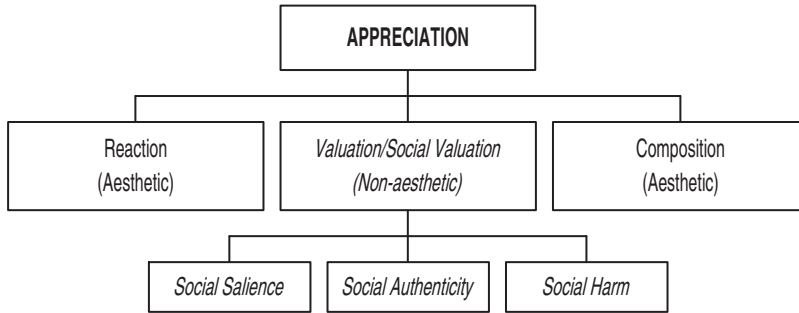


Figure 2: White's (1998) taxonomy of Valuation.

Along with this arrangement, White (1998) does not seem to define these categories explicitly, providing only the following statements:

Under the subcategory of social value, [...] the key values for media texts under consideration were those of social significance or salience and of harm (damaging, dangerous, unhealthy, etc.). (White 1998: Ch. 2: 37)

Within the media, Social Valuations are primarily concerned with either social salience (how important or noticeable the entity is) or with harm/benefit (the degree to which the entity is seen as beneficial to society). (White 1998: Ch. 4: 151)

In addition, there seems to be some ambiguities in White's categories from his data. While examples of Salience Value are clear, boundaries between Social Valuation and Harm Valuation are unclear and duplicated (see details from Lee 2006). For instance, such examples as *better*, *positive*, *advantageous* were coded under both Social Valuation and Social Harm.

Coffin (2000) also acknowledges that within the category of Valuation, products, processes, or phenomena are evaluated according to various social conventions. She suggests that the criteria for valuing a process are institutionally specific. The variables are "not only institutionally tuned to the field of history but specifically related to certain phenomena operating within historical discourse" (Coffin 2000: 277). In her analysis, she ignores Reaction and Composition. Rather, she elaborates Valuation categories in order to account for Valuations organized in school history. Valuation is derived from two main

categories: a general category of Valuation based on Lemke's (1998) importance/significance division and specific categories of Valuation. She sets out three specific categories of Social Valuation under the terms of *impact*, *directness*, and *validity* (see details in Coffin 2000).

Although both define Valuation differently, White and Coffin have made efforts to further elaborate it in accordance with the nature of their fields of interest. Considering the variations and limitations these two scholars highlight, there is a need to further clarify the Valuation system in regard to the specific context within academic discourse. This paper will add to current understandings of disciplinary variation by developing subsystems of Valuation from persuasive essays.

4 Study

4.1 Design

The site for data collection was the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) class in the Modern languages program in a regional university in Australia. Participants consisted of six students from East Asian regions (EAS), namely South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan, as well as six Australian-born native English speakers (ABS) doing the same course under the same lecturer. The course was offered separately for ESL students in the second semester and for local students in the first semester. While the course was open to any student within the faculty, most of them were in the first year of university.

Throughout the semester, the course was scaffolded for working toward writing four assignments. The data for analysis were chosen from the final assignment, in which students were required to construct a persuasive essay of no more than 1,000 words. The title of the essay was: *Universities in Australia need to learn not only from the Western intellectual tradition but also from those of other cultures in order to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. Discuss.*

Although students could challenge the question by disagreeing with the statement or by taking positions of both agreeing and disagreeing with the statement, students were explicitly expected to argue one side of the issue by agreeing with the statement. Therefore, the data belong to *analytical exposition* in SFL terms.¹

¹ In SFL, persuasive essays consist of three main genres in the academic context: analytical exposition, discussion, and challenge (Coffin 1996).

The underlying theoretical basis of the course is derived from SFL perspectives. Therefore, linguistic criteria from the assignment were described in SFL terms. The relevant criteria to this aspect of appraisal include “language features (persuasion and evaluation),” “colouring meanings of words,” “appropriate academic register,” and “the information is relevant and accurate.”

The essays of the participants were divided into two groups by the researcher who was independent of the course: high-graded essays (HGEs) and low-graded essays (LGEs). HGEs or successful writings refer to essays that received a Distinction (D) or higher or scored 75%, while LGEs or unsuccessful writings are defined as those that received below Credit (65%), including Pass (over 50%) and Fail (below 50%).

4.2 Coding of APPRECIATION system

As with all evaluative language, instances of ATTITUDE encode an explicit (inscribed/bold) versus implicit (token [t] or evoked) value and a positive (+) versus negative (−) value. Taking JUDGMENT negative values as an example, there is a distinction between explicit (e.g., People in Australia *abuse* the environment severely) and implicit JUDGMENT (e.g., *People in Australia leave rubbish everywhere*).

In coding, this paper applies a “multiple coding” technique that consists of the two aspects in coding values: “double coding” and “multi-layering” (for details, see Lee 2006, Lee 2007, Lee 2008b). The sequence of coding and the process of multiple coding will be demonstrated by taking the extract below from a student essay.

Firstly, “double coding” refers to evaluative items being simultaneously coded by an analyst as two values. For instance, the following clause 1 can be taken as a typical example of showing a fine line between APPRECIATION (hereafter APP) and JUDGMENT (hereafter JUD). This is because the objects of appraisal are things such as “Western intellectual tradition” and “this *individualism*”. However, these values refer to judging the negative aspects of human behavior implicitly.

(1) (EAS 1–7)²

In Western intellectual tradition, individualism is a character, and this *individualism* [t, −JUD/Propriety] can cause social *problems* [−APP/Valuation] [t, −JUD Propriety].

The example of double coding is demonstrated in Table 1.

2 1 refers to a particular student essay. 7 is the line number.

Table 1: An example of double coding.

Expression	Object of being appraised	Double coding		
		AFFECT	APPRECIATION	JUDGMENT
Individualism	Western intellectual tradition		–Inscribed Valuation	–Evoked Propriety
Social problems	This individualism		–Inscribed Valuation	–Evoked Propriety

If the sentence is rephrased, then it requires single coding as demonstrated in example (2) below.

(2) Western people are *selfish* and they cause social problems [–JUD Propriety].

This is because the clause involves judging human behavior directly. This means that the target being judged is “human beings” rather than an abstract thing. Therefore, it is singly coded as an explicit JUDGMENT (see Table 2).

Table 2: An example of single coding.

Expression	Object of being appraised	Single coding		
		AFFECT	APPRECIATION	JUDGMENT
Selfish	Western people			–Inscribed Propriety
Social problems	Western people			–Inscribed Propriety

As seen, the double coding occurs horizontally, as two values are coded in parallel by the same text elements according to different appraisal categories (see details in Lee 2007). Another simple example can be seen in the following sentence: *economy is getting strong* (APPRECIATION and JUDGMENT capacity). This example also illustrates the “borders” between JUDGMENT and APPRECIATION, which typically display a “grammatically incongruent form” (Martin and White 2007 [2005]: 68). The adjective *strong* implies JUDGMENT capacity but the target of evaluation is “economy”, which is a semiotic thing (thus APPRECIATION). The sentence is contrasted with the following sentence: *he is getting strong* as this is a “grammatically congruent form” (JUDGMENT capacity) (Martin and White 2007 [2005]: 68). Academic argument tends to contain many occurrences of nominalization and agentless clauses due to its distant nature of audience (Lee 2006). Therefore, “grammatically incongruent formulations” of ATTITUDE are commonly used.

The second aspect of multiple coding is termed “multi-layering.” This occurs vertically, which means it occurs at the levels of whole clause, group, and lexical rank. Multi-layering occurs because the appraisal items of the primary value (mostly inscribed/explicit lexical items) may in turn evoke another classification at a secondary level. Multiple coding thus occurs in the clause complexes where there is more than one attitudinal value contributing to the attitudinal position being advanced.

Multilayered coding can be carried out in two forms: “from above, i.e. top-down, or from below, i.e. from the bottom up perspective function” (Macken-Horarik 2003: 299). For current purposes, I prefer the top-down approach. This means “the analyst can start with the textual environment and explore patterns of choices from the point of view of higher order semantic function” (Macken-Horarik 2003: 299). The example of multi-layering is demonstrated in Table 3.

Table 3: An example of multi-layering.

Expression		Object of being appraised	AFFECT	APPRECIATION	JUDGMENT
Multi-layering	(a) In Western intellectual tradition, individualism is a character, and this <i>individualism</i> can cause social problems (T: Token/Implicit)	Western intellectual tradition		– Inscribed Appreciation (Valuation)	– Propriety
	(b) This individualism can cause social problems (T)	This individualism		– Inscribed Appreciation (Valuation)	– Propriety
	(c) individualism	Western intellectual tradition		– Inscribed Appreciation (Valuation)	– Propriety
	(d) problems	Western society			– Propriety

On the basis of the two concepts of coding, the procedure of coding is as follows. The sentence has two clauses. Firstly, all incidences of ATTITUDE items such as *individualism* and *problems* are identified and marked. At the whole clause complex or sentence level (a, b), the sentence is doubly coded as inscribed APPRECIATION (Valuation) and evoked negative JUDGMENT. This is because the subject *individualism* is an abstract thing (thus APPRECIATION), while the whole clause implicitly condemns Western culture’s selfishness (thus JUDGMENT Propriety). At

the clause level (c), the first clause of “individualism is a character” carries neither positive nor negative values. It depends on co-text. However, the second clause connotes negative *JUDGMENT*. This is because evoking *JUDGMENT*, in turn, construes a stronger argumentative stance characterized by the double coding (Lee 2007).

A main justification for advocating multiple coding in this paper is that this research deals with persuasive essays written in an academic context and the essays require a high degree of nominalization and agentless clauses in the written mode (Graham 2002). Therefore, the academic essays tend to contain many incidences where the target of the appraisal is inanimate and depersonalized entities. A depersonalized entity generates the issue of evoked versus inscribed appraisal in an actual application of *ATTITUDE* analysis. Because of that reason, successful writing exhibits multiple coding, while unsuccessful writing includes much single coding (Lee 2007).

4.3 Modified model of *APPRECIATION*

As the result of applying the existing model of *APPRECIATION* to academic discourse, the subcategories of *APPRECIATION* have been modified. The major modification occurs in the Valuation system. The model proposed here basically adopts White’s (1998) subcategories of Valuation/Social Valuation. However, here I am proposing a different arrangement under which Social Valuation is a subtype of Valuation. That is, Valuation in this study adopts four subtypes of categories: Sociality, Maintenance, Validity, and Salience Valuation (Lee 2007) (see Table 4 and Figure 1). Following Coffin, Valuation is divided into two broad categories: general and specific. While the general category is Sociality Valuation, the other three are specific. Therefore, Sociality Valuation is clearly separate from the other three valuations. The specific category covers Maintenance, Validity, and Salience Valuation.

Strictly speaking, all four categories are thus not on a par although they are listed as if they are at the same hierarchical level in Figure 1. With regard to the issue of terminology, the term “Social Valuation” is replaced with “Sociality Valuation.” This is because the noun form of *sociality* rather than the adjective *social* is congruent with the rest of the three Valuations that have noun forms (Lee 2007). White’s terminology of Harm Valuation is replaced with Maintenance Valuation because the term *harm* encodes a negative value and it does not match other Valuations which encode positive connotations. In addition, Coffin’s (2000) term *validity* is preferred to White’s *authenticity*. Table 4 displays the four subcategories of Valuation adopted in this paper and definitions

associated with each category (see also italicized part in Figure 1). More detailed justifications for each categorization will be provided below.

As described in the earlier section on the types of Valuation, of particular concern is the ambiguity of White’s boundaries between Harm Valuation (hereafter Maintenance Valuation) and Social Valuation (hereafter Sociality Valuation). In order to avoid unnecessary confusion, a specific definition and boundary are added so as to distinguish Sociality Valuation from Maintenance Valuation (see Table 4). Three main criteria are applied to distinguish Sociality Valuation from Maintenance Valuation.

Table 4: Examples of subcategories of Valuation.

Categories	Definition	Positive	Negative
Sociality Valuation	Broadly social community-related desirability vs. undesirability	<i>new, diverse, stable, modern, current, diversify, unusual, special, typical, younger, alternative, objective, instilled, informed, sound, enrich, improve, progress, informed, civilization, assist, visible, active, value...</i>	<i>old, outdate, traditional, meaningless, ancient, single, subjective, contentious, controversial, difficult, challenge, paradoxical, barrier...</i>
Salience Valuation	Significance vs. insignificance	<i>crucial, significant, center, at its core, base, important, relevant, backbone, prime, profound, deep, historical, key, major, main, determinant, indispensable, unique, valuable...</i>	<i>insignificant, irrelevant...</i>
Validity Valuation	Reliable vs. unreliable	<i>valid, evidence, reliable, tested...</i>	<i>unreliable, untested, untried, invalid...</i>
Maintenance Valuation	Specifically material-related (e.g., technology, environment, learning, etc.) sustainability vs. disruptiveness	<i>positive, good, advantage, benefit,, better, effective, affective, helpful, useful, correct, friendly, appropriate, healthy, safe...</i>	<i>negative, bad, problem, degradation, harmful, dangerous, ruined, destructive, detrimental, hazard, toxic, undrinkable, pollution, damage...</i>

Source: Data taken from the research (Lee 2006).

The first criterion can be *field general* versus *specific* value. The appraisal in Sociality Valuation is defined as some social or cultural phenomenon that reflects the generic and wider community values. Sociality Valuation in this study is to do with being socially desirable/undesirable or satisfying/unsatisfying. By contrast, in Maintenance Valuation, the appraisal of Valuation is defined as a *material/specific* phenomenon, which is usually environmentally or technologically related such as *beneficial/harmful*, *healthy/unhealthy*, *safe/unsafe*, etc. It relates socially to *sustainable/disruptive*, which can correspond to the “order/disorder” category proposed by Martin and Rose (2007 [2003]: 41).

The second criterion is in terms of JUDGMENT value. Most examples of Sociality Valuation are isolated individual evaluations without the possibility of JUDGMENT being evoked because there is no suggestion of regarding the target as entailing the presence of individuals, even implicitly, while with Maintenance Valuation, JUDGMENT is attached or evoked. In other words, Sociality Valuation is single-coded, while Maintenance Valuation is double-coded.

The third criterion depends on the degree of explicitness (see examples in Table 5). With Sociality Valuation, the appraisal item’s coding as positive or negative depends to some extent on the “reading position” (Martin and White 2007 [2005]; Martin 1995a), where each reader interprets implicit and explicit appraisal values according to their social/cultural/ideological reader positioning. Therefore, Sociality Valuation contributes to both positive and negative evaluations in such a way that the final appraisal depends on the reading position as well. However, Maintenance Valuation appears to be less ambiguous in terms of the reading position. For instance, *new* and *old* generations tend to carry different social values of desirability and impact, compared with *beneficial* and *detrimental* technology. Sociality Valuation does not involve direct evaluation of desirability, but Maintenance Valuation more explicitly carries desirable value. The rationale for providing a criterion for distinguishing one subtype from another and the reason for proposing the three dichotomies such as general/specific, single code/double code, and implicit/explicit are strongly associated with differentiating good essays from poor essays. Poor essays are characterized by general, single code and implicit valuations while successful essays are specific, double-coded, and explicitly value-laden (Lee 2007).

On the basis of the criteria set, the extracts in Table 5 provide examples of Sociality and Maintenance Valuations. Valuations, such as *challenges* in example (i), and *diversity* and *modern* in example (ii), can be classified as Sociality Valuations because they alone do not explicitly contribute either to the benefit or to the disruption of society. In contrast, Valuations such as *friendly* in example (iii), *benefit*, *harm* in example (iv), and *problems*, *degradation*, *erosion* in example (v) explicitly encode ordering or disordering of society. Therefore,

Table 5: Examples of coding of four Valuation categories.

Examples	Expressions	Valuation	Subtypes
(i)	(ABS 7–1) The dawning of the twenty-first century has brought with it many <i>challenges</i> for the people and government of Australia.	<i>challenges</i>	[–sociality val]
(ii)	(ABS 11–5) Another area in which Australia universities must learn from other academic traditions involves the cultural <i>diversity</i> of the <i>modern</i> university population.	<i>diversity</i> <i>modern</i>	[+sociality val] [+sociality val]
(iii)	(EAS 1-37-1) Advocating respects for nature would shape the social structures and create society that utilizes environmentally <i>friendly</i> technology (t, +propriety/+main val).	<i>friendly</i>	[+main val]
(iv)	(EAS 1-10-2) <i>Unplanned</i> technologies that may <i>benefit</i> some capitalists but can <i>harm</i> society can be brought (t, –propriety/–main val).	<i>Unplanned</i> <i>benefit</i> <i>harm</i>	[–composition] [+main val] [–main val]
(v)	(ABS 7–26) Other <i>problems</i> related to salination are land <i>degradation</i> and soil <i>erosion</i> [t, –propriety/–main val].	<i>problem</i> <i>degradation</i> <i>erosion</i>	[–main val] [–main val] [–main val]
(vi)	(EAS 2–23) Environmental and economic may affect human welfare either <i>positively</i> or <i>negatively</i> (t, + –propriety).	<i>positively</i> <i>negatively</i>	[+main val] [–main val]
(vii)	(EAS 5–28) This is one of <i>negative</i> points that Japanese intellectual tradition has to reconsider	<i>negative</i>	[–sociality val]
(viii)	(EAS 5–20) Though it might be <i>good</i> aspect to give students less assignment and much time as aforesaid, student may not inversely study harder because of too much time to some students [–tenacity].	<i>good</i>	[+sociality val]

those Maintenance Valuations contribute to creating the JUDGMENT im/propriety at the whole clause complex.

However, not all direct forms of value such as *negative*, *positive*, *bad*, *good* can be automatically coded as Maintenance Valuation. They can be either

Sociality Valuation or Maintenance Valuation, depending on whether the values are used in relation to specific issues and thus JUDGMENT (Propriety, Capacity) is attached. If not, it is coded as Sociality Valuation. For instance, Valuations *positively* and *negatively* in example (vi) are coded as Maintenance Valuation, because they provoke JUDGMENT Propriety. In contrast, *negative* in example (vii) and *good* in example (viii) are both coded as Sociality Valuations, because they fail to raise ethical concerns at the whole clause complex. They are single-coded.

Salience Valuation refers to social worth as seen in example (3), *significant*, and in example (4), *importance*. Validity Valuation has to do with reliability or unreliability attached to the entities and proposition. In example (4), “students’ realisation” (semiotic thing) is negatively judged implicitly because of the fact that their senses are only justified within their own community. It is thus double-coded as a negative token of Propriety and (Sociality) Valuation.

- (3) (EAS 1–25)
Learning from the indigenous intellectual tradition can have a *significant* role [+sali val].
- (4) (EAS 1-35-1)
The *importance* [+sali val] of this recognition is because of students’ realisation that their value sense may be merely *valid* [+vali val] in their culture (t, –propriety/–soci val).

5 Comparison of APPRECIATION subsystems

5.1 Quantitative overviews

Overall, 12 undergraduate students utilize JUDGMENT (872) and APPRECIATION (801) a lot more than AFFECT (74) in their writing (see Table 6). As predicted, among the three APPRECIATION categories, Valuation is the most dominantly employed value (738) compared to Composition (37) and Reaction (26). Significant differences in the choices of the three subtypes of APPRECIATION can be seen between the top four high-graded essays (HGEs) and four low-graded essays (LGEs). HGEs tend to use Valuation (310 HGEs versus 191 LGEs) along with Composition (22 HGEs versus 1 LGE) to encode APPRECIATION. However, in the LGE texts, Reaction is taken up relatively more often than in the HGEs (2 HGEs versus 24 LGEs) (Lee 2008c).

According to quantitative analyses, a marked difference in the use of the four subtypes of Valuation can be noticed between the top four high-graded essays (HGEs) and the four low-graded essays (LGEs) (see Table 7). HGEs contain

Table 6: A total use of APPRECIATION and its subcategories.

Affect (74)	Appreciation (801)						Judgment (872)
	Valuation (738)		Composition (37)		Reaction (26)		
	HGEs	LGEs	HGEs	LGEs	HGEs	LGEs	
	310	91	22	1	2	24	

many more Maintenance valuations (112 HGEs versus 15 LGEs) and Salience valuations (37 HGEs versus 14 LGEs). Not much difference can be found in Sociality Valuation between the two groups (159 HGEs versus 149 LGEs).

Table 7: A total use of Valuation and its subcategories.

Maintenance V		Salience V		Sociality V		Validity V	
HGEs	LGEs	HGEs	LGEs	HGEs	LGEs	HGEs	LGEs
112	15	37	14	159	149	4	13

5.2 Results of analysis

Only four successful writers from the EAS and ABS cohorts will be selected for comparison with four unsuccessful writers, as they are considered to be most representative of the data as a whole. In addition, as Valuation is identified as the most dominant type of APPRECIATION, the comparison is made on the use of Valuation only.

5.2.1 High-graded essays

As seen in Tables 8 and 9, successful essays, such as EAS Essays 1 and 2, and ABS 7 and 8, exploit APPRECIATION of Maintenance Valuation and Salience Valuation a lot more frequently than poor writers.

The extracts (13) and (14) from Essay 1 below clearly demonstrate that the essay uses many incidences of Maintenance Valuations (e.g., *problems, harmful, friendly*, etc.), and Salience Valuation (*important*) along with Sociality Valuations (*close, utilizes*). All of these positive and negative Valuations evoke the positive or negative JUDGMENT proprieties in the whole clause complex. That is, they display what is called an “APPRECIATION-invoking JUDGMENT pattern” in order to evoke ethical concerns implicitly in the whole clause complex (Lee 2006, Lee, 2008b, Lee, 2008c). The essay attempts to convey a main “value orientation” or

Table 8: An extract from HGE EAS 1’s essay: Valuation system (bold italics).

	Para 4
16	A further reason for the need to learn from intellectual traditions of other cultures is to create solution for environmental <i>problems</i> .
17-1	In solving environmental <i>problems</i> ,
17-2	although developments of technology and resource management would be <i>important</i> issues,
17-3	the consideration of some assumptions and structures is also required.
18	This is because social assumption and structures shape the form of technology that society <i>utilizes</i> .
19	However, the ideas in the Western intellectual tradition often do not focus on social assumptions and structures.
20	In the Western intellectual tradition, nature tends to be regard as “thing”, resources or material.
21	Due to this idea, ATTITUDES and assumptions toward nature can be <i>harmful</i> on creatures, plants and lands.
22	Without respects for nature, environmental <i>problems</i> would be hardly solved.
23	This is because environmental <i>problems</i> have <i>close</i> relation with the functions of nature.
24-1	Advocating respects for nature would shape the social structures.
24-2	and create society that <i>utilizes</i> environmentally <i>friendly</i> technologies.

“axiology” (Lemke 1998) in that currently Western culture is not doing the right thing because of social assumptions focusing on the excessive development of technology (e.g., clauses 20, 21, 22). Therefore, if Australian universities learn from indigenous culture in solving environmental problems, then they are doing the right thing (e.g., clauses 16, 17, 18, 23, 24). This pattern is also exemplified in examples (5) and (6) whereby APPRECIATION Maintenance Valuations (*problem*, *benefit*, *harm*) and Composition (*unplanned*) are embedded within evoked JUDGMENT Propriety and Capacity. The negative Maintenance value *problem* is embedded within the positive Propriety. In other words, instances of these APPRECIATIONS at one level contribute to the representation of JUDGMENT at another.

- (5) (EAS 1–6)
To avoid further incidences of social *problems* [–main val], learning [+capacity] from the Chinese intellectual tradition can be *effective* [+capacity/+main val] [t: token, +propriety].
- (6) (EAS 1–10)
As a result of applying this idea, *unplanned* [–composition] technologies that may *benefit* [+main val] some capitalists, but can *harm* [–main val] society can be brought in [t, –propriety/–main val].

Example (6) also shows a typical way of using the *APPRECIATION-invoking JUDGMENT* pattern. The clause consists of three main inscribed *APPRECIATIONS* (*unplanned, benefit, harm*). It can be understood as an answer to the question, *What was it like?* If the technology is *unplanned* and *harmful* then the society becomes disruptive, while if the technology is *beneficial* then the society is sustained or maintained well. More importantly, these choices of *APPRECIATION* contribute to making further inferences by taking the appraisal to be an indirect comment on the writer's ethical concern about right or wrong. It is paraphrased roughly as "the technology is *unplanned* and *harmful* to society. Therefore, the behavior of creating such technology is ethically unacceptable." In this way, the appraisal might also be seen at a secondary level as belonging to the category of *JUDGMENT Propriety*. All those negative values relate to the problems that universities in Australia face currently, while positive values relate to the solution by learning from other traditions. It is clearly evident that the successful essay is constructed as a problem–solution structure.

Salience Valuation is also commonly drawn on by successful writers in this study. Learning behaviors from indigenous tradition are evaluated as positive because of this positive value of being *significant* and *crucial* in examples (7) and (8).

(7) (EAS 1–25)

In expanding the respect [+propriety] for nature to solve environmental *problems* [–main val], learning [+capacity] from the Indigenous intellectual tradition can have a *significant* [+salient val] role [t, +propriety/+main val].

(8) (EAS 2–21)

Environment is *crucial* [+Sali] for humans in order to *improve* [+main Val] living conditions and quality of life [t, +propriety/+main val].

The ABS HGEs' choices of Valuation are very similar to those of EAS HGEs in that successful ABS examples also demonstrate a "Maintenance and Salience-driven Valuation-invoking *JUDGMENT*" pattern (see examples [9], [10], and [11] below). In example (9), the *undrinkable* and *unusable* can be negative Maintenance value, because they encode that the land is poisonous and unhealthy, which brings about disruption. Again, those choices invoke ethical evaluation. In many cases, Maintenance Valuation appears in a nominalized form such as *degradation, pollution, erosion, problem*. The text is thus more formal. The Salience Valuation *invaluable* is highly graded to value other intellectual traditions.

(9) (ABS 7–27)

The same edition of “Four Corners” also declared that within the next one hundred years water in the Murray-Darling basin will become *undrinkable* [–main val], and the land *unusable* [–main val] for crop growth due to the high concentration of salt [t, –propriety/–main val].

(10) (ABS’ 7–26)

Other *problems* [–main val] related to salination are land *degradation* [–main val] and soil *erosion* [–main val] (t, –propriety/main val).

(11) (ABS 8–5)

Despite arguments to the contrary, Australian Universities stand only to gain [+capacity] from *invaluable* [+Sali val] aspects of other intellectual traditions [t, –capacity].

As seen in the extract from Essay 8 in Table 9, negative and positive Maintenance Valuation (e.g., *benefit*, *pollution*, *toxic*, *damage*, *disastrous*, *detrimental*) and Salience Valuation (*of importance*) dominate in the land management issue along with Composition (*balance*). More importantly, ABS writers show a stronger tendency to amplify Valuation items than EAS writers (Lee 2010b). That is, as typically exemplified in clause 23, a stronger evaluation of Maintenance Valuation *detrimental* tends to occur within the attributed voice (see Lee 2006, Lee, 2008c, Lee, 2010a). ABS student essays are characterized by the use of these strong grading values alongside the use of some explicit JUDGMENT proprieties such as *mindless*, *abuse*, *destroyed*, *exploited* (Lee 2008c, Lee, 2010b). This makes the essay much more critical as these explicit evaluations enable the writers to raise a strong subjective voice.

5.2.2 Low-graded essays

LGEs use a relatively higher proportion of Sociality Valuation alongside Reaction (see Lee 2006, Lee, 2008b, Lee, 2008c). As seen in the extract of EAS 5 (Table 10) and examples (12) and (13), the main type of Valuation is Sociality Valuation (e.g., *positive*, *negative*, *special*, *good*). Few instances of Maintenance and Salience are used.

None of those Sociality Valuations is relevant to any particular field, such as technology, environment, and economy. This means that evaluation does not occur to negotiate topic-relevant arguments. It represents very much the commonsensical world. Again, it is not constructed within evoked JUDGMENT. The

Table 9: An extract from HGE ABS 8’s essay.

	Para 4
18	A second reason for which Australia needs to learn from other intellectual traditions is for the <i>benefit</i> of the environment.
19	The mindless <i>pollution</i> of waterways, the logging of rainforests and the emission of <i>toxic</i> gasses into the atmosphere are but a few of the factors which cause irreversible <i>damage</i> to the environment.
20	In the indigenous world view, the land and nature are <i>sacred</i> and are respected by man, and are not to be exploited.
21	It is <i>of</i> fundamental <i>importance</i> that there be a <i>balance</i> between man and nature.
22-1	if not preserved and respected,
22-2	Future generations will be faced with the potentially <i>disastrous</i> consequences of the current abuse of the environment.
23	It has been estimated, in fact, that if such <i>detrimental</i> practices continue at the present rate, half the world’s plant and animal species will be destroyed by the end of twenty first century.

Table 10: An extract from EAS 5’s essay.

	Para 2
11	Every culture’s intellectual tradition has both <i>positive</i> and <i>negative</i> points.
12	The case of Japan and Australia will be taken up as an example of comparison with <i>positive</i> and <i>negative</i> points.
13	Firstly the basic purpose of university in Japan is to provide students with wide knowledge and to research in <i>special</i> academic disciplines.
14	When it is compared with universities in Australia, universities in Japan give students less assignments and much time to do what they want to do such as researching their own field.
15	This is a <i>good</i> aspect to students.
16-1	This is because that students can take time to think and research their field on own pace, and students does not need to be busy with their work when compared with universities in Australia.
16-2	
17	It means that students can make higher and stronger quality content in their work.

essay is not based on problem–solution, which means that Valuations fail to evoke JUDGMENT.

- (12) (EAS 5–6)
The Western thought has two *paradoxical* [–soci val] features: An individual critical and analytical stance is high *value* [+soci val].

(13) (EAS 6–25)

The *diverse* [+soci val] array of thought patterns within traditions is *enthralling* [+reaction].

As with EAS essays 5 and 6, Sociality Valuation is predominantly used for the construction of ABS essays 11 and 12. Less successful writers choose Valuations that are ambiguous between Sociality Valuation and Reaction. As displayed in example (14), some negative Sociality Valuations (e.g., *foreign*, *unfamiliar*, *bad*, *unusual*, *difficult*, *hard*) can be classified as “Reaction” value as well. ABS writer 11 uses the highest proportion of Validity Valuation (13 times), as seen in example (15).

(14) (ABS 11–14)

With the mass *diversity* [+soci val] of cultures present at *modern* [+soci val] day Australian universities, it is almost impossible for universities not to learn [+capacity] about and from *foreign* [–reaction: impact] and *unfamiliar* [–reaction: impact] academic traditions.

(15) (ABS 11–37)

Without adopting a more *skeptical* [+soci val] approach to *new* [+soci val] information, especially that which is electronically distributed, universities risk accepting *untried* [–validity] and *untested* [–validity] theories [t, –propriety].

A similar preference can be found in Essay 12 in terms of Valuations. Sociality Valuation outnumbers Salience and Maintenance Valuations. These values are not frequently embedded within JUDGMENT. Again, Reaction (e.g., *ritualistic*) is commonly used.

(16) (ABS 12–20)

Artwork, including cave paintings, which use symbols to communicate meaning through what the uninitiated would dismiss as *meaningless* [–soci val] art, and the *ritualistic* [+reaction: impact] painting of their bodies to celebrate many occasions.

(17) (ABS 12–27)

Learning from *older* [–soci val] Western traditions, as well as the *current* [+soci val] and *newer* [+soci val] styles being created, and converging with other Eastern traditions [+propriety] will *diversify* [+soci val] the Australian learning experience and prepare it for the *challenges* [–soci val] of the *new* [+soci val] century.

In example (17), even though *older* and *newer* values were classified as Sociality Valuation, the values can be Reaction to quality. For instance, *old in your clothes look old* certainly reflects the appraiser’s Reaction that he/she does not like it. As seen, LGEs use a high proportion of Reaction (see Lee 2010b).

6 Discussion and conclusion

One interesting difference that emerges in applying the *appraisal* analysis in academic argument written in the Social Science discipline is the degree and type of dominance of subtypes of Valuation within APPRECIATION. Successful writers show a strong preference for Maintenance Valuation and Salience Valuation. In the successful texts, “a Maintenance- and Salience Valuation-driven invoking JUDGMENT pattern” plays a significant role in creating a critical voice with a formal tone in their essays. Table 11 demonstrates that the successful writers, for example, HGE EAS 1, construe Maintenance Valuation-led positive and negative evaluation prosodically under a sharp contrast between *order* and *disorder* (Martin and Rose 2007 [2003]).³ In contrast, unsuccessful writers favor Reaction and Sociality Valuation in constructing their voices (Lee 2008c). Unsuccessful or less successful writers also fail to display the prosodic pattern of the Valuation.

Table 11: Maintenance Valuations-led prosodic realization in an HGE.

Order (socially sustainable)	Disorder (socially disruptive)
EAS 1 <i>appropriate, happiness, friendly, beneficial, understanding, respectful, respect, order, peace and balance, admiration, social contribution, consideration, objective, acknowledge, accepting different values, etc.</i>	<i>unplanned, problem, cancer, risk, hazard, strong, conflict, individualism, disasters, dispute, war, harmful, harm, biases, subjective, narrow, etc.</i>

The focus of this paper is also on presenting some changes in APPRECIATION categories by extending the Valuation system. The *appraisal* theory is still at

³ In SFL, text–context systemic relations can occur not only in systems but also discourse structure (Martin 1995b). That is, the interpersonal function is organized by prosodic structure whose meaning is reinforced continuously and repetitively as a text unfolds.

fledging stage (White 2004; Martin and White 2007 [2005]). As it has been developed mostly in spoken and short texts, it is a bit difficult to apply in longer stretches of written texts (Graham 2002). Four definitive and exhaustive categories of Valuation are proposed, namely Sociality, Maintenance, Validity, and Salience Valuation. The paper has demonstrated how an analyst principally goes about coding the four sub-Valuation systems in relation to *evoked JUDGMENT*. In particular, three main criteria are adopted to differentiate between Sociality Valuation and Maintenance Valuation. While the potential of meanings to evoke attitudinal values is extremely variable, this paper attempts to define the categories based on such criteria as clearly as possible. The taxonomies can be thus analytically worthwhile to provide useful insights into similarities and differences between the essays.

The findings have wide educational implications. Successful writers' predominant use of Salience Valuation and Maintenance Valuation with a nominalized form effectively reflects the topic-relevant construction of their essays. The difference between HGEs and LGEs is simply that the better students have mastered the appropriate register and have made use of a richer vocabulary, including valuation adjectives and nouns. They also show topic-specific vocabulary. Those resources, in particular, construct field and construe the world categorically. At the same time, successful essays are value-ridden, contributing to the creation of a critical voice. Successful essays thus employ a "context sensitive" approach (Connor 2004: 291), as they respond appropriately to the register and genre required.

From a pedagogical perspective, it can be interpreted that successful writers raise their critical voices by preferably choosing particular APPRECIATION Valuation subtypes. Despite the emphasis placed on critical evaluations, addressing the issue could be called descriptive rather than prescriptive based on rigorous linguistic evidence. According to Moore (2011: 65), while the task of being "critical" is most frequently used by academic staff, the definitions are vague, and students tend to rely on their intuition to respond. Being critical involves, among other things, looking at the issue from a multiple perspective that is reflected in the appropriate use of evaluative languages (Ballard and Clanchy 1997; Belcher 1995) such as taking positive, negative, and neutral stances. Furthermore, there is an inherent tension in academic argument termed "academic tensions" or "conflicting demands" in that writers need to deploy evaluative language at the same time as maintaining a formal tone (Lee 2006, Lee, 2008a, Lee, 2008b). Given the close relationship between raising a critical voice and the use of evaluative language, appraisal resources such as Valuation are vitally important in addressing the issues of a lack of

critical voice and identity alongside formality in ESL students' essays through linguistic evidence.

Teaching the appraisal system embraces teaching an “interpersonal first-approach” (Painter 1999: 323) or a “user-bound notion” focus as opposed to a “text-bound notion” focus. This also involves implementing a “discourse semantic-driven pedagogy” that bridges the gap between genre structure and a grammar-focused pedagogy (Hood 2006, Hood, 2010). On the basis of personal experience of teaching an EAP course, I believe that genre-based approaches are useful in addressing problems with structure (Lee 2013). Further, appraisal exercises can significantly help ESL students improve their language system, such as critical/coherent aspects of their writing including referencing. This involves understanding how critical voice is generated linguistically and how to use evaluative language to negotiate information successfully. Most importantly, EAP students' exposure to the appraisal system helps them to acquire the relevant English language skills including grammar and vocabulary most effectively in a context-appropriate manner (Lee 2010b). This perceived usefulness mainly stems from the fact that, in general, they are from “communication-reticent cultures” and have learned English based on a traditional grammar approach detached from its meaning or functions, even if some of the EAS students were still successful (Lee 2006, Lee, 2008a, Lee, 2008b).

In conclusion, the study has attempted to demystify “being critical” from a linguistic perspective, focusing on the APPRECIATION category. This results in extending its subcategories especially on Valuation. As the study focuses on the qualitative nature of the analysis, further research would be needed to make more generalizations beyond the specific findings of this study.

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