

## Đánh giá cảm quan về ống hút nhựa thông qua các bản tin báo chí tiếng Anh và tiếng Việt

Nguyễn Thị Thu Hiền<sup>1,\*</sup>, Tống Mỹ Linh<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Khoa Ngoại ngữ, Trường Đại học Quy Nhơn, Việt Nam

<sup>2</sup>Học viên lớp cao học Ngôn ngữ Anh, khóa 21, Trường Đại học Quy Nhơn, Việt Nam

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### TÓM TẮT

Thuyết Đánh giá của Martin và White (2005) ngày càng khẳng định vai trò quan trọng trong phân tích ý kiến, sự đánh giá, hành vi và cảm xúc của người nói người viết đối với một chủ thể, cá nhân, sự vật, sự kiện, đề tài và hành vi nào đó. Nghiên cứu này áp dụng lý thuyết Đánh giá vào việc nghiên cứu sự giống nhau và khác nhau trong đánh giá cảm quan về ống hút nhựa dựa trên các bản tin báo chí tiếng Anh và tiếng Việt. Cụ thể, nghiên cứu xoay quanh việc tìm hiểu những loại đánh giá cảm quan được sử dụng trong các bản tin và chỉ ra điểm tương đồng cũng như sự khác biệt trong cách áp dụng nguồn đánh giá cảm quan thông qua ngôn từ của hai nhóm tác giả. Kết quả nghiên cứu ghi nhận sự xuất hiện của tất cả các nguồn đánh giá cảm quan ở các bản tin báo chí của hai ngôn ngữ. Bên cạnh đó, việc sử dụng các nguồn đánh giá cảm quan này thể hiện nhiều sự tương đồng ở tần suất xuất hiện, sự nhận diện và thái cực biểu đạt. Nghiên cứu hi vọng sẽ trở thành một nguồn tham khảo hữu ích giúp người học tiếng Anh cũng như tiếng Việt nâng cao kỹ năng nói cũng như đưa ra đánh giá nhận xét của cá nhân.

**Từ khóa:** Thuyết Đánh giá, thái độ, cảm quan, bản tin, ống hút nhựa.

\*Tác giả liên hệ chính.

Email: nguyenthithuhien@qnu.edu.vn

# Appreciation in English and Vietnamese News Reports towards Plastic Straws

Nguyen Thi Thu Hien<sup>1,\*</sup>, Tong My Linh<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Department of Foreign Languages, Quy Nhon University, Vietnam*

<sup>2</sup>*M.A. student in English Linguistics, course 21, Quy Nhon University, Vietnam*

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## ABSTRACT

Appraisal Theory by Martin and White (2005) has increasingly claimed its potential in analyzing people's opinions, appraisals, attitudes, and emotions toward entities, individuals, issues, events, topics, and their attributes. This study attempts to adopt Appraisal Theory to investigate the similarities and discrepancies regarding the Appreciation resources in English plastic straws news reports (EPSNRs) and Vietnamese plastic straws news reports (VPSNRs). Specifically, the research addresses itself to discovering which Appreciation resources are used in the news reports and indicating the resemblances and discrepancies in applying those resources in the news reports by the two groups of writers. The findings reveal that all of the sub-types of Appreciation were found in the two data sets. Besides, the Appreciation resources in the two languages share a variety of similarities in terms of their frequency, realization strategies, and polarities. The research outcomes are expected to be of valuable reference for learners of English and Vietnamese in enhancing their speaking and assessment skills.

**Keywords:** *Appraisal Theory, Attitude, Appreciation, news reports, plastic straws.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

It is indisputable that the utilization of plastic straws has become a hot issue lately. The small and seemingly harmless utensil that goes generally unnoticed in our everyday life has made it onto 2018's most-wanted list. If it is surprising to hear that plastic straws are receiving backlash, it may be even more astonishing to figure out about ninety one percent of the plastic we use is not recycled and instead ends up in landfills or the ocean. It is estimated that an average person uses 1.6 straws per day, which means around 8.5 billion plastic straws are thrown away each year, potentially contributing to over 150 million tons of plastic in the world's oceans. Because of the aforementioned statistics, some municipalities and corporations are starting to make efforts to fight pollution and control the utilization of

plastic straws. Additionally, numerous talks, videos, news reports and documentaries have been carried out to partially contribute to eliminating plastic straws and increasing public awareness of the issue.

The framework of Appraisal Theory, which was conducted by a group of scholars led by two linguists, namely James Martin and Peter White in the 1980s and 1990s, is considered the theory in psychology that emotions are extracted from our evaluations (appraisals or estimates) of events that cause specific reactions in different people. This theory describes the types of language used in communicating emotions and opinions, so it seems to be able to function as a special linguistic framework to investigate attitudes shown in news reports. Numerous studies have been carried out, applying the

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\*Corresponding author.

Email: [nguyenthithuhien@qnu.edu.vn](mailto:nguyenthithuhien@qnu.edu.vn)

Appraisal Theory as a theoretical framework to investigate a wide range of discourse types, ranging from English advertising slogans,<sup>1</sup> judges' comments,<sup>2</sup> English advertisements of product<sup>3</sup> to film reviews.<sup>4</sup>

Besides, Appraisal Theory was applied as a theoretical framework in a research of structural and ideological properties of English and Vietnamese business news reporting,<sup>5</sup> attitudinal resources in the novel *Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald,<sup>6</sup> the social attitudes in news reports towards President Obama's visit to Vietnam<sup>5</sup> or English song discourses.<sup>7</sup>

There is no doubt that Appraisal Theory is of great interest to researchers. However, a research of Appreciation resources in English and Vietnamese news reports towards plastic straws remains untouched. As a result, this paper applies Appraisal framework, focusing on the system of Appreciation, to gain a deep insight into the use of Appreciation resources in English and Vietnamese news reports towards plastic straws. Specifically, the study addresses itself to answering the questions of (1) which Appreciation resources are used and how often they are used in EPSNRs and VPSNRs and (2) what the similarities and differences of the Appreciation resources in EPSNRs and VPSNRs are.

This paper aims at analyzing different aspects of Appreciation to a social event on the basis of the language used. To reach the aim, 10 English and 10 Vietnamese news reports about plastic straws have been collected from online national newspapers such as Thanhnien, Tuoitre, Vietnamnet, and Vnexpress as well as online international newspapers like nationalgeographic, theguardian, globalnews, and reuters. Then, the languages of the data are analyzed to identify three sub-types of Appreciation resources, namely **Valuation, Composition** and **Reaction**.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Appraisal Theory, derived from Systemic Functional Linguistics, was put forward by a group

of researchers led by Professor James Martin of the Linguistics Department in the University of Sydney in the 1900s. Martin & Rose<sup>8</sup> indicate that Appraisal is a system of interpersonal meanings, and we use the resources of Appraisal for negotiating our social relationships, by telling our listeners or readers how we feel about things and people (in a word, what our attitudes are). Besides, Martin & White<sup>4</sup> state that Appraisal Theory, the evaluative use of language, offers a framework for assessment of people, things, happenings, places or processes. Its main function is to help "writers/speakers positively or negatively evaluate the entities, happenings and states-of-affairs with which their texts are concerned".<sup>9</sup> Evaluative Language is divided into three groups of evaluation resources, namely **Attitude, Engagement** and **Gradation**.

**Attitude** is itself classified into three territories of feeling, namely **Affect, Judgment** and **Appreciation** to examine different Attitudinal resources.

**Affect** deals with positive and negative feelings for reacting to behavior, processes, or phenomena. They are realized as qualities (adjectives - *un/happy*), as processes (*this pleases me*), as comment adjuncts (*un/happily*) or as nominalization (*un/happiness*). Therefore, analyzing Affect will help understand the writer's/ speaker's feeling towards the surroundings.

**Judgment** deals with attitudes towards behavior, which we admire or criticize, praise or condemn. It also involves the appraiser evaluating an intelligent object concerning ethical norms of society or social norms. Judgment may hold a variety of realizations such as Adverbials (*honestly, fairly, cleverly, stupidly, ...*); Attributes and epithets (he is a *skillful* dancer, he is *shy*, she is *confident*, don't be *rude*,...); Nominals (*a genius, a criminal, a liar, ...*) and Verbs (*lie, cheat, trust, deceive, ...*).

**Appreciation** is defined as the assessment of artifacts, entities, happenings, and states of affairs by reference to aesthetics and other

systems of social valuation. It is related to the evaluation of non-intelligent objects. These resources are popularly employed in political news reports since events and policies are two major objects of appraisal in political news.

Martin & White<sup>10</sup> affirms Appreciation

is composed of three sub-types: **Reaction** (emotional impact of something on the reader or listener), **Composition** (the texture of something) and **Valuation** (social value of something). Table 1 gives a deep insight into the categories of Appreciation along with examples.

**Table 1.** Types of Appreciation<sup>10</sup>

Types of Appreciation		Positive	Negative
REACTION	IMPACT	- arresting, captivating, engaging,... - fascinating, exciting, moving,... - lively, dramatic, intense,...	- dull, boring, tedious,... - dry, ascetic, uninviting,... - flat, predictable, monotonous,...
	QUALITY	- lovely, beautiful, splendid,... - fine, good,... - attractive, appealing, welcome,...	- bad, nasty, ugly,... - plain, grotesque,... - repulsive, revolting,...
COMPOSITION	BALANCE	- balanced, harmonious, unified,... - symmetrical, proportional,... - consistent, considered, logical,...	- unbalanced, discordant, irregular,... - uneven, flawed,... - contradictory, disorganized,...
	COMPLEXITY	- simple, pure, elegant,... - lucid, clear, precise,... - rich, detailed,...	- extravagant, byzantine,... - arcane, unclear,... - plain, monolithic, simplistic,...
VALUATION	SIGNIFICANCE	- significant, deep, lasting, essential, unique, innovative,...	- fake, conservative, forgettable, unmemorable, bogus,...
	BENEFIT/HARM	- valuable, beneficial, useful, helpful,...	- worthless, useless, helpless, ineffective,...

**3. APPRECIATION RESOURCES IN EPSNRS AND VPSNRS**

After sorted out, the appraisal groups are analyzed to find out the sub-types of Appreciation resources - **Valuation, Composition, Reaction** on the positive - negative polarity scale of

feelings with both Explicit and Implicit values which would help reveal the evaluation the appraisers have towards this issue.

The following table shows a sample analysis of Appreciation resources.

**Table 2.** Sample analysis of Appreciation resources

<i>Appraisal group</i>	<i>Reaction</i>	<i>Composition</i>	<i>Valuation</i>	<i>Implicit/Explicit</i>	<i>Positive (+)/ Negative (-)</i>
<i>At first glance, bans on plastic straws might seem like a <u>simple</u>.</i>		X		Exp	+
<i>“<u>The beauty of glass</u> is that it’s <u>nontoxic and nonreactive</u>,” Cohen said.</i>			X	Imp	+
<i>Lý do chính được trích dẫn để loại bỏ ống hút nhựa là tác động <u>tiêu cực</u> của chúng đối với đại dương và động vật hoang dã sống ở môi trường biển của chúng ta.</i>			X	Exp	-
<i>Một thực tế <u>không vui</u> là hiện nay túi nylon không chỉ được dùng để đựng các loại đồ gia dụng hay thực phẩm tươi sống mà kể cả thức ăn nấu chín như cháo, cơm, bún, nước đậu, canh nóng... cũng được các chủ hàng sử dụng thường xuyên.</i>	X			Exp	-

**4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**4.1. The distribution of Appreciation types in EPSNRs and VPSNRs**

Martin & White<sup>10</sup> state that Appreciation is the third type of Attitude system and seems to be

an effective tool to evaluate objects, events and natural phenomenon. Appreciation is divided into three subtypes, namely **Reaction**, **Composition** and **Valuation**. Table 2 gives the distribution of Appreciation types in EPSNRs and VPSNRs.

**Table 3.** The distribution of Appreciation types in EPSNRs and VPSNRs

<b>Types of Appreciation</b>	<b>EPSNRs</b>		<b>VPSNRs</b>	
	<b>Instances</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Instances</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Reaction</b>	27	19.7%	12	6.6%
<b>Composition</b>	22	16.1%	6	3.3%
<b>Valuation</b>	88	64.2%	165	90.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>100%</b>

As indicated in Table 3, three types of Appreciation are employed in both EPSNRs and VPSNRs. Specifically, Valuation takes a dominant proportion in the two languages with 64.2% in EPSNRs and 90.1% in VPSNRr. Reaction ranks second in both EPSNRs and VPSNRs with 19.7% and 6.6% respectively. Composition is the

least common Appreciation value with 16.1% in EPSNRs and 3.3% in VPSNRs.

**Reaction**

*[E2] Straw bans alone - which have been criticized for not truly reducing waste - will barely dent the flood of plastic spewing into the environment each year.*

[E79] “I do think we have bigger problems than plastic straws,” Trump responded. “You know, it’s **interesting** about plastic straws: so, you have a little straw, but what about the plates, the wrappers, and everything else that are much bigger and they’re made of the same material?”

[V41] Ước tính có khoảng 5 triệu chiếc ống hút nhựa bị vứt bỏ mỗi ngày tại Mỹ. Con số trở nên **khủng khiếp** hơn khi nhân với số quốc gia sử dụng ống hút nhựa trên toàn cầu.

[V244] Tiêu dùng xanh được xem là xu hướng tiêu dùng hiện đại khi môi trường trở thành **mối quan tâm lớn** của nhiều quốc gia trên thế giới.

[V373] Một thực tế **không vui** là hiện nay túi nylon không chỉ được dùng để đựng các loại đồ gia dụng hay thực phẩm tươi sống mà kể cả thức ăn nấu chín như cháo, cơm, bún, nước đậu, canh nóng... cũng được các chủ hàng sử dụng thường xuyên.

From the aforementioned examples, it is clear that the writers in the two languages are prone to show different reactions to the plastic straws issue. The words and phrases “**không vui**”, “**mối quan tâm lớn**”, “**khủng khiếp**” are employed to express a negative response from the public about using plastic straws. They feel worried about the situation of utilizing the harmful products in daily life. Millions of plastic straws are thrown away everyday; moreover, plastic straws can be used as a container for not only fresh food but also the cooked one. However, the word “**criticized**” is applied to show the lack of belief in straw bans since straw bans alone are not the final solution to reduce waste, and it just helps to control the number of plastic straws hurled into the environment. It is worth the attention that by applying the word interesting, the writer exposes a new dimension to plastic straws. According to the current President of the United States, straws are “**interesting**” since we have other plastic products such as plates, wrappers, and those that are much bigger and made of the same material.

## Composition

[E42] At first glance, bans on plastic straws might seem to be **simple**.

[E109] It’s **hard** to ignore the fact that even people who have eschewed straws entirely are still using plastic water bottles, shopping bags, coffee cup lids and cutlery in abundance.

[V112] Replacing them was **difficult** from a business standpoint.

[V328] Lúc đầu **rất khó** vì mình toàn ‘lỡ’ dùng ống hút. Thoắt cái đã ném vào thùng rác ống hút, nắp nhựa, túi nilon.

[V377] Tuy nhiên, nếu chỉ tuyên truyền nâng cao nhận thức mà thiếu các hành động thiết thực **khó** có thể làm thay đổi những thói quen đã khá phổ biến trong đại đa số người dân.

[V371] Từ hàng rau, hàng thịt, cá, tới các cửa hàng quần áo thời trang, túi xách, giày dép... **không khó** để bắt gặp những chiếc túi nhiều màu được sử dụng cho từng mục đích khác nhau.

It is apparent that the following words and phrases “**simple**”, “**hard**”, “**difficult**”, “**khó**”, “**rất khó**”, “**không khó**” are employed to show the complexity of banning plastic straws in our life. The writers in the two languages share the similar inclination in using Composition Judgement values. Restricting plastic straws is hard to carry out since it causes some inconvenience to the disabled and destructions to the businesses. Furthermore, consumers find it difficult to give their habit of using plastic products.

## Valuation

[E200] Even for those consumers who recycle plastic items, a straw is so **small** it can be difficult to sort.

[E201] It’s really **thin**.

[E202] It’s really **small**.

[E203] It’s really **light**.

[E256] The impact on sea life has been

*immense*, said John Calvelli, the leader of Give a Sip campaign.

[V180] Tiếp đó, ống hút nhựa là sản phẩm **tiện dụng** được dùng hàng triệu lần mỗi ngày.

[V205] Những chiếc ống hút nhựa được tạo ra với chi phí **siêu thấp**, giúp người tiêu dùng có thể sở hữu được chúng với giá thành **siêu rẻ**.

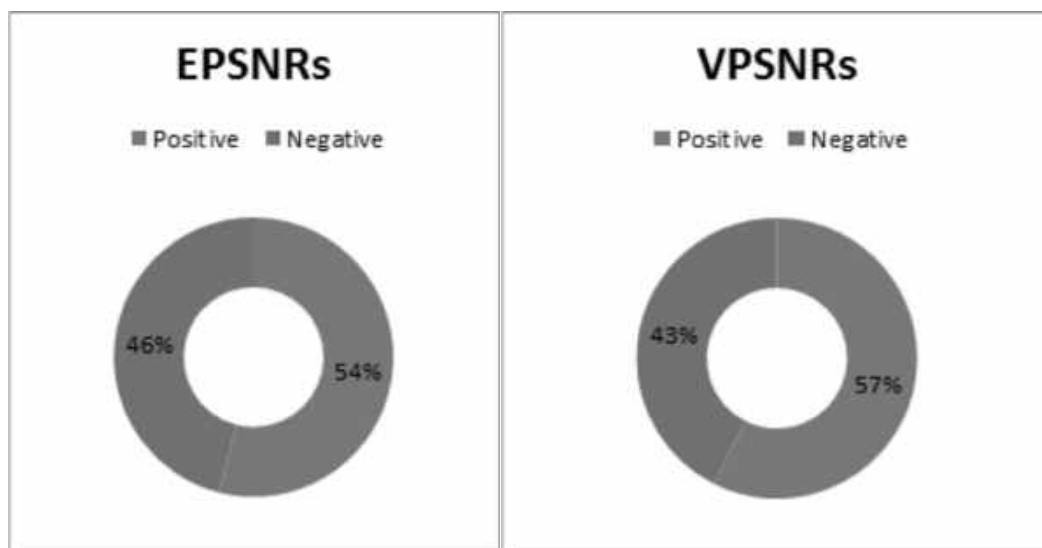
[V211] Chúng không chỉ **nhỏ gọn** mà còn **giúp ích** rất nhiều cho chúng ta trong việc ăn uống.

It is apparent that the Vietnamese writers as well as native ones intend to provide the appreciation about characteristics of plastic straws and their alternatives. The words and phrases “*giúp ích*”, “*nhỏ gọn*”, “*tiện dụng*”, “*siêu rẻ*” and “*siêu thấp*” to explain the reason

why plastic straws have been used popularly for such a long time. However, they bear some disadvantages which are expressed by “*small*”, “*light*” and “*immense*”; therefore, some alternatives are being introduced to solve the downsides of the products. Whether those straws are actually good for the environment and convenient for consumers is the question which is raised by the public as well as the authorities.

**4.2. Positive and Negative Appreciation in EPSNRs and VPSNRs**

Appreciation can be either positive or negative. In other words, the writers in two languages can evaluate objects positively or negatively. Figure 1 gives the distribution of Positive and Negative Appreciation in EPSNRs and VPSNRs.



**Figure 1.** The distribution of Positive and Negative Appreciation in EPSNRs and VPSNRs

As presented in Figure 1, both Vietnamese writers and native ones share the same linguistics features. They are inclined to apply more positive Appreciation than negative one in their reports. In detail, the proportion of positive values in VPSNRs is higher than that in EPSNRs with 57.4% and 54% respectively. However, EPSNRs possess a larger number of negative Appreciation resources with 46% than EPSNRs making up 43%. The following examples show the use of negative and positive Appreciation in EPSNRs and VPSNRs.

[E79] “You know, it’s **interesting** about plastic straws: so, you have a little straw, but what about the plates, the wrappers, and everything else that are much bigger and they’re made of the same material?”

[E112] Replacing them was **difficult** from a business standpoint.

[V143] Dù trước đây nhiều khách hàng ủng hộ thay đổi, tuy nhiên trong lúc thay đổi thì mình nhận lại không ít phản hồi **trái chiều**.

[V152] Không ít cửa hàng cũng muốn thay

đổi nhưng vì nhiều vấn đề mà quá trình nói không với đồ nhựa dùng một lần trở nên **khó khăn**.

[V306] *Lối sống không dùng ống hút nhựa tuy xưa nhưng quả thật rất **văn minh** vì không làm ô nhiễm môi trường mới thực sự là sống **xanh**.*

It is obvious that “**interesting**”, “**văn minh**”, “**xanh**” are applied positively by the writers of the two languages to show the standards which plastic straw replacements should meet. It is worth the attention that the current president of the United States claims that plastic straws are interesting. This is one of rare cases in which a positive view is shown towards plastic straws. Interestingly, “**xưa**” is utilized positively to indicate an “old” but “modern” lifestyle since people refuse to use plastic straws in their daily

life. In contrast, “**difficult**”, “**trái chiều**”, “**khó khăn**” are employed by Vietnamese writers and native ones to express the negative aspects of applying alternative straws. Both businesses and consumers find it hard to stop using plastic straws. While employers are worried about the financial problems, consumers are concerned about the hygiene of the reusable products.

### 4.3. Explicit and Implicit Appreciation in EPSNRs and VPSNRs

Evaluating inanimate things can be explicit or implicit. In terms of Appreciation, both Explicit and Implicit values can be found in EPSNRs and VPSNRs. The following table shows the distribution of Explicit and Implicit Appreciation in both languages.

**Table 4.** The distribution of Positive and Negative Appreciation in EPSNRs and VPSNRs

Types of Appreciation	EPSNRs		VPSNRs	
	Instances	Percentage	Instances	Percentage
<b>Explicit</b>	120	87.6%	167	91.3%
<b>Implicit</b>	17	12.4%	16	8.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>100%</b>

As presented in the aforementioned Table, both English and Vietnamese writers are prone to apply Explicit values than Implicit ones in their reports. Particularly, in EPSNRs 120 instances of Explicit resources found make up 87.6%, whereas there are only 17 instances of Negative values with 12.4%. Similarly, in VPSNRs, the writers are inclined towards express their evaluation explicitly with 167 instances, accounting for 91.3% while only 16 Implicit Appreciation values can be found with 8.7%. The following examples serve to illustrate the findings.

[E27] *Environmental organizations note that recycling is **not a panacea** [Implicit].*

[E111] *He said representatives from Oceanic Global and the Lonely Whale Foundation, both ecology nonprofits, live in the neighborhood and stopped by one day to lecture him on the **evils** [Implicit] of plastic straws.*

[E212] *The world is heating up **dangerously** [Explicit] and the oceans may be dying. In this context, the UK's proposed plan to ban plastic straws feels a little like spitting in the wind [Implicit].*

[E233] *The humble plastic drinking straw has become the **villain** [Implicit] of the moment for environmental crusaders.*

[V31] *Trước "**cái chết**" [Implicit] của ống hút nhựa, phong trào sử dụng ống hút giấy **bùng nổ** [Explicit] và **nhANH chóng lan rộng** [Explicit] ra toàn cầu.*

[V178] *Tại sao nhựa mà rõ hơn ở đây là ống hút nhựa lại bị đem lên "**đoạn đầu dài**" [Implicit]?*

[V179] *Nhựa, trước tiên là một loại vật liệu **cực kỳ khó phân hủy** [Explicit].*

[V180] *Tiếp đó, ống hút nhựa là sản phẩm*



*tiện dụng* [Explicit] được dùng hàng triệu lần mỗi ngày.

[V190] Liên Hiệp Quốc cũng thực hiện một cuộc điều tra trên quy mô lớn [Explicit] và công bố **những con số rùng mình** [Implicit]: 500 tỷ túi nhựa được sử dụng mỗi năm trên toàn thế giới, 33 tỷ tấn nhựa mới sản xuất sẽ xuất hiện trên hành tinh này trong 30 năm tiếp theo.

[V293] Ông hút nhựa, **kẻ giết người thầm lặng** [Implicit].

It is noticeable that both Vietnamese writers and English writers apply explicit and implicit values to express the issues involved in plastic straws. The authors utilize the words and phrases “*cực kỳ khó phân hủy*” and “*dangerously*” to indicate the characteristics of plastic straws explicitly, whereas “*những con số rùng mình*”, “*kẻ giết người thầm lặng*”, “*evils*”, “*villain*” are employed implicitly and impressively to express the downside of plastic straws and provoke an urgent situation in which plastic straws should be banned. In response to the appeal, some governments are Besides, the writer applies the phrases “*cái chết*” and “*đoạn đầu đời*” to imply plastic straws are gradually vanishing and the expansion of plastic straws replacements is expressed effectively through the following expressions that are “*bùng nổ*” and “*nhanh chóng lan rộng*”. It is worth the attention that the statement “*the beauty of glass is that it's nontoxic and nonreactive*” is applied implicitly the highlight the advantages of glass straws. However, “*feels a little like spitting in the wind*” and “*not a panacea*” are considered to convey an implicit meaning when they are employed cleverly by the writers of the two languages.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The research has investigated the similarities and differences in the use of Appreciation in English and Vietnamese news reports towards plastic straws by examining the language of evaluation in 20 news reports collected from reliable websites in the light of Appraisal Theory.

This has enabled us to identify the assessment made by English and Vietnamese writers on the issue. The findings indicate that three types of Appreciation are employed in both EPSNRs and VPSNRs. Specifically, Valuation takes a dominant proportion in the two languages, which shows the social value of plastic straws. The authors as well as individuals tend to express their opinions on the phenomenon rather than its emotional impacts. In terms of Positive and Negative values, both Vietnamese and English writers are inclined to apply more positive Appreciation than negative one in their reports since plastic straws possess undeniably certain advantages. Besides, alternatives for such straws can be seen to be feasible. Moreover, the writers are prone to get the issue across to readers in a clear way rather than implicitly.

It is expected that the study can contribute to the research, performance, and interpretation of attitudinal values of Appreciation from the theoretical and practical perspective.

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