

WRITING WITH ATTITUDE: AN INVESTIGATION INTO STUDENTS' WRITINGS IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL IN HA NAM

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Abstract. Drawing on Appraisal Framework (Martin & White, 2005), which is developed from Systemic Functional Linguistics Theory (hereafter SFL), this paper investigates how evaluative language is used in writing for middle school students. The data was collected from students' artifacts and questionnaires. Students needed to write two paragraphs on the same topic before and after they were introduced to attitudinal meaning through several lessons in the class. It is an action research project in which students were taught the English writing section with the focus on using evaluative language. The results revealed that students have gained a better understanding of the Appraisal Framework and know how to use evaluative language effectively in their writings after learning about it since they had considerably improved in vocabulary items through main components of Attitude and Graduation. In addition, the questionnaires showed students' reflection on using attitudinal tools in their writing and it reinforced the paper's outcomes mentioned above.

Keywords: evaluative language, Appraisal framework, writing, Attitude, Graduation.

1. Introduction

Writing not only defines an entity through a rhetorical context that highlights objective detachment and is accomplished through ideas, deliberate grammatical and word choices but also expresses the writer's attitude to the people or things mentioned in the text. One of the most useful tools to show the attitude of the author is evaluative language. The evaluative language that expresses personal feelings, assesses human behavior, and evaluates the quality of things or phenomena, plays a vital role in communication in various situations. Therefore, it has attracted much attention of many researchers worldwide with the trend in investigating the function of attitudinal resources in linguistic education. In China, the pattern of study and application of Appraisal Theory in linguistic studies has achieved the results. One of the significant studies related to this topic conducted by Liu & Thompson (2009) [1] examined attitudes in students' argumentative writing in both Chinese and English. In addition, Liu [2] continued using the Appraisal framework as a tool to analyze Chinese University EFL Students' English Argumentative Writing. This research paper has several similarities to Lee's thesis (2008) [3] since they all compare among high-score and low-score essays of students. Although high-evaluated essays can keep their formality, multiple attitude-invoking decision techniques are employed more regularly and skillfully. Along with this research trend, recently, several studies on the deployment of evaluative language have been conducted by Vietnamese researchers. Thu

Received October 11, 2021. Revised November 4, 2021. Accepted December 5, 2021.

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& Unsworth (2015) [4] evaluated attitudinal resources in English and Vietnamese conversations about daily life within small groups of higher education students in Australia. Another small-scale research carried out by Phuoc (2015) [5] investigated high school student's ability to write English evaluative passages about three given topics. It shows that even though the students did not plan well for evaluative writing paragraphs, they were able to use the words and sentences to organize attitudinal paragraphs. There are various studies carried out by other researchers in the world related to the topic mentioned above. However, they have just looked into several parts of using evaluative resources in some kinds of academic writing and speaking. Moreover, the participants of those research papers are usually university students or high school students.

The use of evaluative language in writing is combined with most of the genres in the new English textbooks in Vietnam such as descriptive, argumentative, persuasive, film review writing, and so on. Therefore, students who have been studying and practicing different kinds of writing in a foreign language, especially at a young age, have a very great need for the ability to apply attitudinal resources in their written text. Nevertheless, in fact, just a few English learners can incorporate evaluation into their writing without any difficulties. It can be seen from the author's own teaching experience for students at a public secondary school in a rural area. Learners can complete tasks as required in writing lessons, but their writing rarely includes evaluative components to express their opinions or feelings or assessment about the objects. As a primer exertion to expand investigation into students' writings and set up a basic standard for the development of the ability to write with attitude for English learners, research is carried out to find out the potential capacity of Vietnamese secondary school students to write evaluative paragraphs and learners' reflection on using attitudinal language in their writing through two research questions:

(1) *To what extent does the application of the Appraisal Framework of Martin & White (2005) [6] help improve students' performance in writing with attitude?*

(2) *What are students' reflections on the application of the Appraisal Framework in learning writing with attitude?*

2. Content

2.1. Theoretical background

2.1.1. The Appraisal Framework

Appraisal framework is a theory developed by Martin and White based on the theoretical model of Systemic Functional Linguistics. This theory's evaluation framework is a functional model with interpersonal significance at the level of discourse semantics. According to Martin & White (2005) [6], evaluative language operates in interpersonal metafunction to express people's viewpoints on human behaviors, phenomena, and things in social life or the natural world and thereby explore or change others' views about these things. The evaluative theory is an approach that describes how language uses emotions or feelings to negotiate interpersonal relationships. It focuses on exploring the speaker's attitude or the writer and how the text is developed with potential audiences or readers.

Three subsystems, namely attitude, engagement, and graduation belong to this framework, and each subsystem comprises its specific subcategories (see Figure 1).

This study takes the Attitude aspect as the theoretical framework to analyze the collected data. There are three components of Attitude, namely Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation in details.

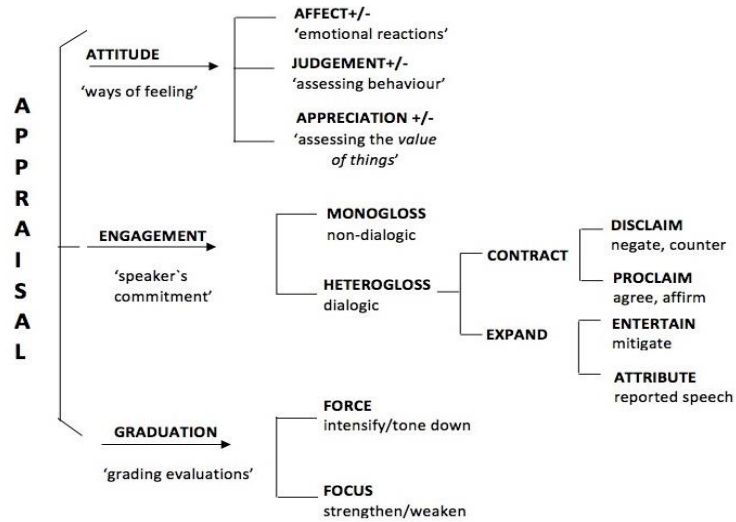


Figure 1. An Overview of Appraisal Resources (Adapted from Martin & White, 2005)

Attitude

Effect is mentioned to express the author or characters' feelings and emotions in positive and negative reactions and dispositions. Affect can be categorized according to the viewpoint of Halliday's functional grammar (1994) [7] as participants and process modification, affective mental and behavioral processes and modal Adjuncts (Martin & White. 2005:46) [6].

Judgment is an assessment of human behavior or characteristics under accepted social norms. It has two types of subsystems are Social Esteem and Social Sanction.

Appreciation is the appraisal of objects through reference to aesthetic standards and different frameworks of social value structures. As an effect, the assessment of phenomena can be either positive or negative and expressed either explicitly or implicitly. Affect will be at the center of judgment and appreciation of the reader. Therefore, as these kinds of attitudinal effect, judgment and appreciation can have considerable effects on the writing of students and improve the ability of students to use evaluative language.

From all theoretical backgrounds mentioned above, for the object, the idea, or the person, the attitude is responsible. Attitudes vary in the sense that they can be understood in different ways due to dispositions or tendencies such as hobbies or habits. Thus, students have motivational qualities, and they can be structured from positive to negative.

Engagement

The sources of attitudes are shown through engagement, as it involves people's commitment. A comparison is made between dialogic (heterogloss) and non-dialogic (monogloss) explanations.

Graduation

The measurement of Attitudinal or Engagement qualities is Graduation. Force and Focus are two main subcategories of graduation. The area of Force is an instrument to evaluate Attitudes in two sub-spaces, namely quantification and intensification. The domain of Focus amplifies evaluative attitudes by "sharpening or softening" (Martin & Rose, 2005:138) [8]. The graduation task is mainly rhetorical since it can increase or decrease the strength of feelings and assessments.

The inscribed attitude and invoked attitude

The inscribed attitude is the kind of attitude that can be directly encoded in vocabulary without

much freedom for the reader's interpretation. In other words, the inscribed attitude depends least on the position of the reader. From the point of view of grammatical realization, the explicit attitude can be recognized in different functions through different forms.

The invoked attitude is opposite the implicit attitude in which the formulas themselves do not have any elements in the current context, bearing a specific positive or negative value. Instead, positive or negative views are expressed through many different mechanisms of accompaniment and discourse. The different implicit meanings are represented at three levels: provoke, flag, and afford.

2.1.2. Evaluative writing

Hunston and Thompson (2000) [9] had a detailed definition of evaluation: an utterance or illustration of the speaker or the writer about opinion and emotions, or perspectives related to the entities. Besides, they also indicated that attitudinal resources are a convincing fight to efficiently collaborate from readers to writers or from speakers to writers.

Evaluative writing is typically proved as a text of academic writing or writing about a particular topic which must be written through descriptive or argumentative essays. The writer can judge people, things, concepts, or an acceptable activity related to a particular standard, which helps them improve or enhance. Learners can search or find out some useful information about standards that are quite suitable for evaluating language. It is concluded that effect, judgment, and appreciation are the three main points of the writing's evaluative paragraph.

In short, in this research, evaluative language in students' writings is shown as a kind of writing when students at secondary schools have some writing problems and want to develop their writing ability. Learners can use some suitable attitude, which will show three aspects of Attitude and Graduation (Martin & White, 2005) [6].

2.1.3. Descriptive writing genre

According to White (2019) [10], descriptive writing can be defined as a genre of writing that gives a detailed and concise description of entities such as people, places, events, etc. The writer uses colorful language to bring the thing to real life. The key purpose of descriptive writing is to provide a clear image in the mind of the reader about a single subject. In most forms of writing, descriptive writing can be used to draw vivid details in the reader's mind. Spencer (2005:5) [11] states that "An author who is writing in a descriptive way climb inside a topic and shows readers what is going on, rather simply telling them."

According to Spencer (2005) [11], there are several noticeable features of good descriptive writing. Firstly, it contains many vivid sensory descriptions that, when necessary, paint a picture and appeal to all the senses of sight, sound, touch, smell and taste of the reader. In order to help draw the real picture in the mind of the reader, good descriptive writing also makes use of some kinds of evaluative language such as words of feeling expression, analogies, similes and metaphors. Thirdly, accurate language is used in this form of writing. In a good descriptive text, general adjectives, nouns, and passive verbs do not have a position. To give a vivid image, the author should use unique adjectives and nouns and strong action verbs. Lastly, descriptive prose is well-structured.

Linguists who research descriptive writing define subject matter by different types, such as positive or negative descriptions. The most prominent linguistic features of this genre can be interpreted with the aid of the Appraisal Framework, which is evaluative language. This research is carried out to examine students' descriptive writing with their attitude.

2.2. Research methodology

Research design

This is an action research project that contains several steps to conduct. According to Susman

(1983) [12], five steps are implemented as followed:

- Diagnosing: An issue about writing with attitude was identified
- Action planning: A plan of action was developed which was suitable for the research context in order to improve students' evaluative writing in a secondary school in the rural area. This research lasted within the first five units of the new textbook of the Ministry of Education.
- Taking action: In this step, the plan was put into practice and the data were collected.
- Evaluating: The collected data were analyzed and evaluated to answer the research questions of the study.
- Specifying learning: Identify general findings. The effects of the action may become the basis for further cycles of research.

Participants

A mixed-level class at a public school of 40 students was chosen as the participants of the research. The students were in grade 6 and they had been studying English for 6 years; however, they are in the rural area so their English level is estimated to be A1.

Data collection procedure

Step 1: Students write a webpage for their school (An introduction about their school)

- Teacher taught the first writing lesson following the traditional lesson plan that she used in the previous school year and asked students to write a webpage for their school (An introduction about their school).
- Teacher made different lesson plans from Unit 2 to Unit 5 in which they briefly demonstrated evaluative language drawing on (Martin & White, 2005) [6] and guided students how to use this means in their writings. Then after Unit 5, students would go back to Unit 1 and write the second school webpage.
- All the written texts were collected for analysis based on components of the Appraisal framework.

Step 2: Students answer the questionnaire

The students did the questionnaire and referred to their writing. The students' feedback to the questionnaire was described in terms of the attitudinal component they used in their writings.

Data analysis methods

Data collected from the questionnaire and students' written texts were synthesized and analyzed as follows.

The data collected from students' artifacts were qualitatively analyzed in terms of several components of attitude along with positive or negative perspectives used in students' writings and clarified quantitatively to know how frequently they occurred in their writings. Attitudinal means were highlighted and coded by 4 different colors for the data analysis. For instance, blue stood for effect, red stood for judgment, green stood for appreciation, and pink stood for graduation. Different instantiations of inscribed Attitude and realizations of invoked Attitude were underlined. The rate of positive and negative forms of Attitude mentioned above in the students' writing before and after they learned about evaluative language was figured out based on statistics generated by manual labor. If various attitudinal means were found out in a single branch of Attitude, the top 5 appraisal words were listed for a closer analysis of the evaluative language commonly used by students. After all work, the author might see differences in students writing before and after lessons with the teacher's guide of evaluative language. The result of the analysis answered the first research question. Only evaluative sources were collected, and errors in different forms were overlooked due to the study's scale mentioned above.

The students' reflections on which attitudinal meaning they used in their writings were described qualitatively and quantitatively. Students' answers for each question were counted and transferred to the percentage to evaluate. The information gathered aimed to find out the answer to the second research question.

2.3. Findings and discussion

2.3.1. Student's artifacts

2.3.1.1. The quantity of Attitude instances

Forty students' writings before and after they are aware of attitudinal means were investigated and classified into three kinds of Attitude: affect, judgment, and appreciation. The study aims to discover the different types of Attitude expressed in students' writings and the most prevalent positive and negative aspects of attitude sources. It is possible to see the analysis of students' written text based on the language they use. According to the statistics produced by manual labor, the result can be seen in the tables below.

Table 1. Affect in Students' writings

	The first writing	The second writing
Numbers of effect	7	24
Positive/Negative	+ - 70	+ - 21 3
Rate	100 % 0 %	87.5% 12.5%

Table 2. Judgment in Students' writings

	The first writing	The second writing
Numbers of judgment	6	47
Positive/Negative	+ - 6 0	+ - 45 2
Rate	100 % 0 %	95.7 % 4.3%

Table 3. Appreciation in Students' writings

	The first writing	The second writing
Numbers of appreciation	16	75
Positive/Negative	+ - 15 1	+ - 70 5
Rate	93.7 % 6.3 %	93 % 7%

The rate of three types of Attitude in the students' writings before and after they learned about evaluative language is synthesized in Tables 4 and Table 5:

Table 4. The Percentage Kinds of Attitude in the first writing

No	Attitude	Percentage (%)
1	Affect	22.2%
2	Judgment	18.5%
3	Appreciation	59.3%
Total		100%

Table 5. The Percentage Kinds of Attitude in the second writing

No	Attitude		Percentage (%)
1	Affect	47	34.1%
2	Judgment	16	11.6%
3	Appreciation	75	54.3%
Total		138	100%

Language usage in students' writings revealed three forms of Attitude sub-systems namely affect, judgment, and appreciation. Appreciation is the most dominant sub-system of Attitude, which is followed by Judgement, and Affect is at third place. Besides, the positive and negative aspects of students' writings showed their attitudes. The positive elements outnumbered the negative ones in both the first and the second writing. It means that students tend to feel, think and evaluate people or things in positive ways rather than negative ones. In addition, after learning about evaluative language, students have understood and know how to apply it more effectively in their writings. Specifically, the number of attitudes increased significantly from the first writing to the second writing. Although the top appraisals are still familiar and straightforward words with sixth graders, different attitudinal words are used diversely and at higher levels in the second writing. As a result, it leads to a better quality of students' writings number 2 than number 1 since the second writing provides more useful and interesting information for the reader about the student's school.

2.3.1.2. The range of different instantiations of inscribed Attitude and realizations of invoked Attitude

The inscribed attitude is opposite to the invoked attitude in which the formulas themselves do not have any elements in the current context, possessing a specific positive or negative value. This is the basis for classifying the different implicit meanings that are shown in three levels of provoking, flag, and afford.

Provoke

The provoke is measured through mainly comparison and metaphor. In 40 first writing, there is just one example of comparison used by two students.

Example 1: I consider it as my second home. (+Affect)

This comparison continues to be repeated in students' second written texts with more frequency (8 times). Although students may change some words, their meaning is still the same as the original one.

Example 2: I consider my new school as my second home/ family. (+Affect)

The sentence below shows the positive affection of students to the school where they are studying. It means they really love their school and that school is familiar to them.

Four more comparisons are appearing in the second writing when students evaluate their teachers and friends at school. However, student sometimes seems to think and write like in Vietnamese as this kind of comparison hardly appears in English. (*For example The school gate looks like a security man.*)

Besides, metaphor is also used by one student after she has learned about evaluative language with the noun phrase “green school” when she describes the school with many tall and green trees. It means her school is very clean, the air there is very fresh and everyone has a sense of environmental protection.

Flag

A flag is an attitudinal tool that is recognized by increasing the scale of graduation.

There are some approaches for flags such as listing, quantifying and repetition, intensification, comparative, superlative, exclamation sentences, and so on. This content will be presented in detail in Section 3 on the graduation of attitude.

Afford

Afford is based on the sense of cultural experience (Martin & White, 2005) [6]. This tool is sometimes used in students' writings. Before being aware of evaluative language, students have some sentences using afford like the example below:

Example 3: Ms. Quynh is so helpful. Ms. Quynh always helps find books and comics.

The sentence in the reinforcement form is once again re-emphasizing the value of the evaluation and explaining to the writer judges Ms. Quynh is helpful.

After learning about evaluative language, there is a considerable increase in using afford in students' second writing. Here are some examples taken from students' second written texts:

Example 4: Our teachers are very affectionate, caring, and kind. They not only teach us through books but they also teach us to obey parents, respect elders, and be a good citizen.

Example 5: We all live in school like a family. We help and support one another in a hard time.

As we can see, most of the sentences using afford of students are to evaluate the teacher's behavior.

To sum up, the number of phrases or sentences for invoked Attitude increased slightly from the first writing to the second writing. The optimistic view is entirely dominant from the negative one. Students mainly judge the teacher and friends through implicit attitudinal tools. This results in a better quality of students' writings after knowing how to use evaluative language.

2.3.1.3. The graduation of Attitude

The evaluative language showing attitude in terms of effect, judgment, and appreciation can be increased or decreased by graduation (Martin & White, 2005) [6]. The tools for graduation appear in a variety of student writings and will be described in detail below.

Intensification

Grading words were used by students both before and after knowing the evaluative language. They are often accompanied by an adjective to emphasize the meaning of this adjective. There is a noticeable increase in the number of intensifiers after learning about evaluative language. While 40 students' first writing just contains 3 intensifiers (really, very, so/very much), this figure rises to 15 in the second one (very, so/very much, a lot, really, incredibly, quite, much, extremely, too, fully, pretty, by far, almost and a little bit). Students expressed emotions, judgment, or appreciation by common words at first, but after five lessons, they were able to use more diverse grading words. They could also apply what they had learned in Unit 2 and Unit 4 to make their writings better.

The vocabulary showing the graduation in students' writing may operate complementary functions for an adjective (eg: *very happy*) and the object for an adverb (eg: *pretty good*). In addition, grading vocabulary can be enhanced (eg; *much noise*), making the level even higher. Another thing to note here is that the vocabulary represents possible graduation or is grammatical, meaning that it belongs to a vocabulary group with a limited number of words and semantics less inexplicable (eg: *too far, so beautiful*) or semantic, it means figuratively.

Exclamation sentence

The exclamation mark was used by 11 students in the second writing while no student used it in the first writing. This kind of mark helps the writers express their strong feelings or show

that they strongly want to do or not want to do something. This is a good way to write with attitude. For instance, one student wrote “Wow! Great!” to express astonishment or admiration of the author to the new school. In short, students have made a clear improvement after learning about evaluative language and have effectively applied the use of punctuation marks in their writings to express emotions, evaluate people’s characteristics and things or phenomena.

Comparisons

Students did not use any forms of comparisons in the first artifacts; however, when they rewrote it after studying about attitudinal means, there have been some types of comparisons used, namely comparative and superlative. These forms were provided according to the New English textbook 6. For grade 6th students, it is very good to apply forms of comparison to show attitudes. Nevertheless, only 5 second written texts consisted of comparisons.

Listing/quantifying

In the first writing, there are 6 qualifying words such as *many*, *a lot of*, *some*, *little*, *over*, and *full*. However, this number rises to 11 in their writings. There are some new words compared to student’s writing number 1 and they contribute to clarifying the quantitative meaning of the evaluative language. Quantitative factors are quite diverse. They include sequences of numbers (one, two, fifty, one hundred, more than, nearly...) and estimated words (few, many, much, little, more, less, full of, a lot of ...). Sometimes in specific contexts, the natural numbers can also carry an evaluation function.

*Example 6: There are **about a hundred** tall trees around my school.*

The number “about a hundred” means that the school is very green because it has many trees.

Repetition

In English, there is a case of repeating grammar and vocabulary to increase the intensity of the assessment.

*Example 7: I’m **very, very excited** about the first day at my school.*

In conclusion, when the teacher guided students to write a webpage about their school traditionally at first, students just used a few attitudinal resources. However, this statistic remarkably went up with several words, phrases, or sentences to express the writer’s feelings, judgment, or appreciation after they had been taught about evaluative language. It proves that students have understood the positive effects of attitudinal meaning as well as known how to use them in writing to make their writings better.

2.3.2. Students’ reflection

The second research question “What is students’ reflection on the application of Appraisal Framework in learning writing with attitude?” is answered by the students’ feedback to the questionnaire.

Question 1: Do you think writing is difficult?

Table 6. Students’ reflections on writing skills

Responses	No of respondents (N=40)	Percentage (%)
A. Not at all	0	0 %
B. A little	6	15%
C. A lot	34	85%

Table 6 shows that 34 out of 40 respondents (85 % of students) believe that writing is “a lot” difficult. The percentage of respondents who choose “a little” is lower by 15 %. The percentage of respondents who choose “not at all” is 0 %. As a result of this finding, it can be deduced that most students think writing is very challenging. Writing requires the writer to

organize his or her thoughts and feelings into a cognitive stream that elicits the same reaction in others as it does in the writer. Understandably, it is not easy for sixth graders to do and necessitates a great deal of practice and procedure.

Question 2: In your opinion, what is writing with attitude?

Table 7. Students' reflections on writing with attitude

Responses	No of respondents (N=40)	Percentage (%)
A. Writing about what a person, place, or thing is like.	2	5%
B. Explaining how or why something happens or has happened.	5	12.5%
C. Expressing your attitude, feelings, making judgments about people, human behavior, ideas, and possible actions.	33	82.5%

Table 7 indicates that “writing with attitude is expressing the writer’s attitude, feelings, making judgments about individuals, human behavior, ideas, and possible actions” was claimed by 33 out of 40 respondents (92,5%). Only a small percentage of students (12.5 %) agreed that an evaluative paragraph is one to explain how or why something occurs or has occurred. Meanwhile, only 2 participants (5%) accepted that writing with attitude means writing about what a person, place, or thing is like. As a consequence of the findings, it can be concluded that the majority of the students had a good understanding of evaluative language and how it relates to previous ideas mentioned in the chapter of the literature review.

Question 3: As a student, is it necessary to write with attitude?

Table 8. Students' reflections on the necessity of writing with attitude

Responses	Number of respondents (N=40)	Percentage (%)
A. Very necessary	11	27.5%
B. Necessary	26	65%
C. Little necessary	2	5%
D. Not necessary	1	2.5%

Table 8 shows that 26 out of 40 respondents, accounting for 65%, believe it is vital to use attitudinal means in writing. The rate of students choosing “very necessary” is more than a half lower (27.5%), while the percentage of respondents who choose “little necessary” and “not necessary” is respectively 5% and 2.5 %. As a result of this finding, it can be deduced that most students believe that presenting evaluations in writing is essential and appropriate as this tool can help improve their writings.

Question 4: What language units did you use more frequently for writing with attitude? (Responders can tick more than once)

Table 9. Students' frequent choices of language units for writing with attitude

Responses	No of respondents (N=40)	Percentage (%)
A. Words	40	100%
B. Phrases	25	62.5%
C. Sentences	9	22.5%

Table 9 demonstrates that among three language components, 100 % of understudies chose words, 62.5% chose phrases and 22.5% chose sentences. The way that students chose a higher number of words than sentences was predictable because it is consistent with the top appraisal analyzed above. Most of the effect, appreciation, and judgment are lexis and some are full of feeling mental and social cycles in setting. The issue is whether or not the forms of lexis and sentences for evaluations were correctly defined.

Question 5: What parts of speech did you use the most frequently for writing with attitude? (Respondents can tick more than once)

Table 10. Students' frequent choices of parts of speech for writing with attitude

Responses	No of respondents (N=40)	Percentage (%)
A. Noun/ Noun Phrase	9	22.5%
B. Adjective	40	100%
C. Verb/ Verb Phrase	40	100%
D. Adverb	30	75%
E. Adverb + Adjective	7	17.5%

It can be clearly shown from Table 10 that all the students use adjectives and verbs/verb phrases to express their attitude (100%). This is completely true because when analyzing evaluative language in students' writings, it can be seen that the top appraisals are usually common adjectives (*eg: big, new, beautiful, happy, ...*) and verbs (*love, like, enjoy, ...*) to indicate feelings or judgments about people or objects. Adverbs come in second place, used by 75% of students and they are often attached with a verb to modify it (*eg: treat us well, teach carefully*). Nine out of 40 respondents, equivalent to 22.5 %, use noun/noun phrases (*eg: a great of patience, full of energy*) and 17.5 % of students use adverb + adjective (*eg: incredibly friendly, pretty good*). This result is understandable since sixth-graders 'vocabulary and grammar are not good enough to use two complicated parts of speech, except for gifted students.

Question 6: Do you write with a positive or negative view? (Respondents can tick more than once)

Table 11. Students' reflection on view in writing

Responses	No of respondents (N=40)	Percentage (%)
A. Positive	40	100%
B. Negative	5	12.5%

Positive and negative attitudes were both used in the students' writings, as shown in Table 11 All the students (100%) tend to write about their school in a positive way. However, they just used some negative words, phrases or sentences to present something they do not like (5%). Therefore, it is concluded that the positive elements predominate compared to the negative ones. This result is completely compatible with the findings when distributing the student's artifacts above.

Question 7: How easy or difficult did you find to write paragraphs with attitude? Why?

Table 12. Students' reflection on easiness or difficulty in writing evaluative paragraphs

Responses	Number of respondents (N=40)	Percentage (%)
A. Very difficult	32	80%
B. Difficult	7	17.5%

C.	Easy	1	2.5%
D.	Very easy	0	0%

The majority of students find writing with attitude difficult or extremely difficult, according to Table 12. The lack of evaluative vocabulary on each subject, no clear ideas of affect, judgment, and appreciation attitudinal sub-domains, no model evaluative writing, no distinction between evaluative words, phrases, and sentences, and not being unaccustomed to writing evaluative paragraphs in Vietnamese are the main and most notable reasons for students' choice. The reasons given by students for their difficulties in writing English evaluative paragraphs are fairly straightforward as they may fall into the same trap even if they write evaluative paragraphs or essays in Vietnamese.

Question 8: How do you find out the role of evaluative language in the improvement of your writing?

Table 13. Students' reflection on the role of evaluative language to the improvement of their writings

	Responses	Number of respondents (N=40)	Percentage
A.	Very important	4	10%
B.	Important	35	87.5%
C.	Not very important	1	2.5%
D.	Not important at all	0	0%

When responding to the last question, most students confirm that evaluative language has great effects on the quality of their writings. It is undeniable that writing with attitude makes the writing improve significantly with the diversity of languages. From the collected data, 35 respondents (87.5%) rated evaluative language as important to their improvement. 10% of students considered evaluative language important. There is 1 student (2.5%) who thinks that attitudinal means are not very important and no one considers this tool is not important to them at all. It is concluded that students all realized how important the evaluative language to the improvement of their writing was after learning about it.

We may equate the findings in Section I - the data analysis about students' artifacts with the student's responses to the 8 questions in the questionnaire. It clearly shows what they did in their writings was expressed in their reflection. Through the action research, students have a basic understanding of evaluative language, they can recognize the importance of writing with attitude, and they also learn a number of effective means for expressing their feelings, evaluating human behavior, judging things, and grading. However, students still have many difficulties in writing passages with attitude. Their difficulties stem from a lack of evaluative vocabulary, a lack of evaluative model paragraphs, and a lack of practice writing this kind of paragraph in Vietnamese. Some of these results resemble those of previous researchers Phuoc (2019) [5] and Liu & Thompson (2009) [1]. It is also noted that this paper studies profoundly the range of different instantiations of inscribed attitude and realizations of invoked attitude as well as the graduation in students' writings, which no researchers have done before.

3. Conclusions

The study investigated attitudinal meaning generated by 40 English language learners of grade sixth based on the Appraisal Framework developed by Martin and White (2005) [6] and their reflections through an 8-item questionnaire. In addition, action research with five main stages, according to Susman (1983) [12] is utilized for this study. The results of this research

paper showed that students were initially aware of using evaluative language to improve their writing skills, they have a basic understanding of evaluative language, they can recognize the importance of writing with attitude, and they also learn a number of effective means for expressing their feelings (affect), evaluating human behavior (judgment), judging things (appreciation) and grading (graduation). However, students still have several difficulties in writing passages with attitude. Their difficulties stem from a lack of evaluative vocabulary. Therefore, teachers are advised to consider explicitly teaching evaluative language in reading or listening lessons, and then students can apply these lexical resources in their writings. Hopefully, further data on the execution of this recommendation may be analyzed in future studies to corroborate the benefits of teaching and learning evaluative language mentioned in this research.

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