

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research background, research questions, research objective, research significance, and clarification of key terms.

1.1 Research Background

Within the Indonesian academic context, according to the national curriculum, students at all education levels are required to engage with various texts for a wider range of social purposes (Emilia, 2011; Emilia et al., 2018). As students advance in their education, they encounter increasingly challenging tasks, including producing more complex text types, such as argumentative essays. Consequently, as tasks become more intricate and challenging, students require supported expansion of their language and literacy resources (Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Christie, 2012; Derewianka, 2020; O'Dowd, 2010; Gibbons, 2015; Rose & Martin, 2012; Rothery, 1996). However, issues such as teachers' insufficient support and scaffolding for students in construing knowledge of the field and knowledge of texts within specific genres are noted in recent studies (see Kartika-ningsih & Gunawan, 2019; Shi & Chen, 2019; Suharyadi et al., 2022).

An argumentative essay, a genre focused on presenting clear and well-structured arguments and evidence, plays a crucial role in enhancing students' ability to articulate ideas effectively in writing. It allows them to convey viewpoints with precision and persuasiveness (Christie, 2005; Derewianka & Jones, 2016; Martin & Rose, 2008; Nippold, Wald-Lonergan, & Fanning, 2005). However, effective writing involves more than just grammatical correctness and coherence. Students need to deal with linguistic demands, the language of abstraction, formulate general principles, and establish sophisticated logical relationships between ideas (Derewianka, 2020; Wingate, 2012). They also require linguistic resources, known as Appraisal, to convey attitudes, evaluations, and engagement on a given topic (Christie, 2012; Derewianka, 2008; Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008), which are often unnoticed by the language learners (Bitchener, 2017; Ferretti & Lewis, 2018; Pessoa et al., 2017).

Understanding how students utilize linguistic resources to convey evaluative elements in argumentative writing is crucial. The selected words and expressions not only shape the emotional tone of the writing but also impact the effectiveness of the message. According to Martin and Rose (2007), a writer's evaluative language can influence the persuasiveness, engagement, and overall impact of the text on the reader, helping achieve the intended purpose of the text. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the linguistic resources specified in Appraisal, seeking to comprehend how students strategically use language to achieve their writing objectives.

In academic discourse, the framework of Appraisal analysis, as introduced by linguists Martin and White (2005) within the field of systemic functional linguistics (hereafter SFL), emerges as a valuable tool to investigate how writers express their Attitudes, Engagement, and Graduation strategies within written texts (Coffin et al., 2003; Hood, 2004, 2006; Humphrey, 2008; Hyland, 2007; Lancaster, 2011; Rothery & Stenglin, 2000). This approach offers a systematic means to explore how writers convey their stance and evaluation, providing a framework for investigating the linguistic resources used to express perspectives and persuasiveness. In academic settings, this understanding is vital as it reveals how students at different levels of academic performance employ the Appraisal system in their writing.

Despite extensive research on Appraisal analysis in various contexts, there is a noticeable gap in understanding how senior high school students employ the Appraisal system, specifically in examining linguistic features of evaluations contributing to the students' genre understanding. The existing literature has mainly focused on university-level (Fauziah et al., 2019; Hutasuhut et al., 2023; Lohman, 2021; Mori, 2017; Shrestha, 2022; Sujatna & Kuswoyo, 2023; Sun & Crosthwaite, 2022; Yuliana & Gandana, 2018), news article (Asad, et al., 2021; Cavasso & Taboada, 2021; Hamdani, 2021; Rantsudu & Bartlett, 2024), or textbook (Bangga, 2020; Magfiroh et al, 2021; Myskow, 2018; Yonata & Prastikawati, 2022). Some studies analyze senior high school students' text in various genres, yet most of which only focus on one specific aspect of Appraisal, such as Engagement or Attitude (Dawson et al., 2021; Djatmika, 2023; Mahdavirad, 2023; Lestari et al., 2023). The lack of research in the

high school context raises concerns about students' evolving ability to effectively convey their Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation informed by the Appraisal system within the educational setting. Furthermore, this knowledge gap suggests potential challenges for students in constructing persuasive arguments and engaging critically with various topics.

Therefore, this study employed the Appraisal system framework (Martin & White, 2005) to examine argumentative writings produced by senior high school students as part of their learning experience informed by the Indonesian national curriculum. The research focused on linguistic features inherent in these writings, particularly the elements of evaluation realized through the Appraisal system. It is expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of senior high school students' argumentative writing abilities.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background discussed, this present study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What Appraisal elements were used by the senior high school students in writing argument texts?
2. how does the use of Appraisal elements contribute to achieving the purpose of the genre?

1.3 Research Objectives

Aligned with the research questions posed, this study aims to examine and describe the specific linguistic features and patterns that constitute the Appraisal realization in senior high school students' argumentative writings across different grades. By identifying and analyzing the appraisal elements employed by these students in their argumentative writing endeavors, the patterns and any emerging complexities in the use of appraisal elements were revealed. Further, it also aims to investigate the impact of these Appraisal elements on the achievement of the genres' purposes within the context of senior high school argumentative writing. By examining the relationship between the use of Appraisal elements and the attainment

of genre objectives, this research pursued to contribute valuable insights to both pedagogy and academic discourse.

1.4 Research Scope

This study concentrates solely on analyzing senior high school students' writings, specifically their argumentative compositions, as a part of their genre learning within the Indonesian national curriculum context. Importantly, it did not investigate the process of students' learning but rather focused on the outcome of their genre learning. It employed the Appraisal system framework (Martin & White, 2005) under the umbrella of Systemic Functional Linguistics theory to examine the linguistic resources utilized by students in their argumentative writings, focusing on the elements of evaluation realized through this framework. The research aims to identify and describe the specific linguistic features and patterns that constitute the Appraisal realization in students' writings, as well as to investigate how the use of these elements contributes to achieving the purpose of the argumentative genre. By examining into these aspects, the study seeks to offer valuable insights into the understanding of students' argumentative writing abilities and their implications for both pedagogy and academic discourse within the Indonesian educational setting.

1.5 Research Significance

The result of this study is expected to offer theoretical, practical, and policy significance, as explained below.

1.5.1 The result of this study is expected to yield theoretical significance by contributing to the existence of literature on how senior high school students use of Appraisal system in their argumentative writings and how the Appraisal use affects the purposes of genre texts. Therefore, this study is expected to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of linguistic features in academic writing.

1.5.2 The identification of variations in the use of the Appraisal system, particularly concerning academic performance levels across different grades and text types, is expected to contribute valuable practical insights, such as informing educators about the specific linguistic challenges that students with varying academic

abilities may encounter. Additionally, the study aims to provide concrete pedagogical implications for teaching and assessing argumentative writing.

1.5.3. The research findings may have policy significance by offering evidence-based recommendations for curriculum development and language education policies at the senior high school level. Policymakers can integrate specific language competencies related to the Appraisal system into these frameworks, setting clear expectations for students' language proficiency as they progress through high school.

1.6 Clarification of Key Terms

Below are the key terms mentioned throughout the paper which hold central importance to this research:

1.6.1 Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL): Systemic Functional Linguistics is a linguistic theory that considers language as a system for making meaning in different social contexts. Developed by Michael Halliday, SFL analyzes the way language functions in communication, emphasizing the interrelation between language and its social context.

1.6.2 Appraisal System: The Appraisal system, within the context of linguistics proposed by Martin and White (2005), refers to a theoretical framework that analyzes how language is used to express attitude, emotions, and evaluations. It explores the linguistic resources employed to convey the writer stance and evaluation, including Appraisal sub-systems like Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation.

1.6.3 Attitude: In linguistics, Attitude, a sub-system of Appraisal system refers to the expression of feelings, opinions, or evaluations by a speaker or writer. Attitude encompasses the emotional and subjective stance conveyed through language, reflecting the speaker's or writer's perspective. It can include expressions of positive or negative sentiment, agreement or disagreement, approval or disapproval, certainty or doubt, etc. Attitude resources in the Appraisal System include linguistic features such as modality, polarity (positive or negative orientation), and intensity markers that convey the speaker's or writer's stance towards the proposition being communicated.

1.6.4 Engagement: Engagement, a sub-system of the Appraisal system, relates to how speaker or writer positions themselves in relation to the content and the audience.

It involves establishing a connection with the audience and indicating the degree of involvement or detachment. Engagement resources in the Appraisal System include elements such as dialogic stance markers (e.g., "I think," "in my opinion"), interjections, inclusive/exclusive pronouns, and other devices that signal the speaker's or writer's engagement with the discourse.

1.6.5 Graduation: Graduation, a sub-system of Appraisal system, refers to the fine-tuning or nuanced expression of attitude and engagement, indicating degrees or levels of intensity, certainty, or commitment. It involves the scaling or modulation of Attitude and Engagement resources to convey shades of meaning or to indicate the strength of the speaker's or writer's stance. Graduation resources in the Appraisal System include qualifiers, hedges, boosters, down toners, intensifiers, mitigators, and other linguistic devices used to modulate the force or impact of the speaker's or writer's evaluations, opinions, or engagement with the discourse.

1.7 Organization of the Paper

This paper is organized as the following:

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of the background of the study, research questions, the objective of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, the organization of the paper and conclusion to chapter one.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a relevant theory and literature review informed in this study. This chapter involves seven sections namely: 1) Systemic Functional Linguistics, 2) Appraisal System: An overview, 3) Attitude in Appraisal system, 4) Engagement in Appraisal System, 5) Graduation in Appraisal System, 6) Genre Theory, and 7) Argumentative Genre: Analytical Exposition and Discussion.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents an explanation of the methodology of the research used in this study. The chapter consists of the research design in the study, participants of the study, data collection and analysis methods.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the research findings and discussion related to the research objectives. It comprises two main sections. Section 4.1 provides insights into the results of Appraisal analysis. It outlines the findings from the Appraisal system analysis in students' argumentative writings, encompassing both Exposition and Discussion texts. Additionally, this section explores how each element of the Appraisal system contributes to achieving the genre's purpose. In Section 4.2, the discussion centers on the role of Engagement, Attitude, and Graduation in articulating the authorial stance, engaging readers, and incorporating values and emotions into the text, all of which are integral to the genre's purpose. The Appendix offers a comprehensive analysis of the Appraisal system, covering Engagement, Attitude, and Graduation, and their application in interpreting students' argumentative writings.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter serves as the culmination of this research, providing a comprehensive synthesis of the findings, reflecting on their broader implications, acknowledging the limitations, and offering recommendations for future work. This chapter aims to summarize the essence of the study, highlighting the key outcomes and their significance. In this way, it provides a complete understanding of the research contributions and suggests directions for future investigations.