**APPRAISAL OF TEACHERS’ COMMENTS ON PRIMARY STUDENTS’ REPORTS: A SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS PERSPECTIVE**

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| ***Article Info*** | **Abstract** |
| ***Article History***  *Received:*  *Revised:*  *Published:* | *This study examines the use of appraisal attitude resources—affect, judgment, and appreciation—in teachers' comments on primary students' reports from a systemic functional linguistics (SFL) perspective. The data, consisting of 30 comments from Mathematics, Language Arts, and Mandarin teachers, were analyzed using a phenomenological case study approach, incorporating unstructured interviews. Findings indicate a predominance of positive judgment resources (69 instances), followed by appreciation (32 instances), with affect being the least utilized (15 instances). This pattern suggests that teachers prioritize evaluative language that focuses on students' competencies and behaviors, with limited emphasis on emotional engagement. The study highlights the importance of understanding the linguistic choices teachers make in feedback and suggests further training.* |
| ***Keywords***  Attitude resources, Teachers’ comments, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), Affect, Judgment, Appreciation*;* |
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**INTRODUCTION**

This study investigates how teachers use language to express their evaluations and feedback through the lens of systemic functional linguistics (SFL), focusing specifically on the appraisal framework. By examining teachers' comments, this research aims to identify the types of attitude resources (affect, judgment, and appreciation) employed, how these resources are realized linguistically, and why they are used in particular ways.

Writing meaningful comments on student reports is a significant challenge for teachers, requiring a blend of linguistic skill, creativity, and sensitivity. New teachers, in particular, may struggle to articulate their feedback effectively, often resorting to mechanical lists of accomplishments or grades. However, comments on reports should go beyond mere evaluation; they are opportunities to narrate a student's learning journey, reflecting both the teacher's insights and the student's progress. Teachers' comments should serve as a comprehensive assessment tool, offering both feedback on performance and encouragement for continued growth

The task of writing a report requires a level of imagination and creativity from the teacher. It is not merely a mechanical and textbook task of listing grades or accomplishments. Rather, it is also an opportunity for the teacher to showcase their ability to capture the essence of students‟ journey. By composing a well-written report, teachers may effectively communicate the story of a student’s progress, and painting a picture of their development throughout the semester. So, this requires the teacher to delve into various stages of the learning process, providing an overview of that encompasses the beginning, middle, and end of the academic term.

Teachers may or may not express their feelings and ideas regarding their students‟ development, emphasizing both their successes and the difficulties they encountered along the road. Teachers are expected to give helpful insights into the students‟ strengths and weaknesses by adding a personal touch to the report card, giving a more comprehensive knowledge of their educational experience. In the end, a report turns into a potent instrument that demonstrates the teacher’s capacity to evaluate, examine, and describe a student’s academic performance growth while encouraging a closer relationship with the students.

Based on responses from 178 elementary school teachers, Cutler and Graham (2008) conclude that teaching writing through "narrative writing" (such as stories, personal narratives, and poetry), "writing to communicate" (such as letters), "completing worksheets," and "responding to material read" are the most effective methods." Much less frequent were expository writing tasks, such as writing to inform or convince Following the concept of narrative text, a teacher should express their personal experiences in written language, notably through the students‟ form of stories. In language, a narrative text is a creative text, a technique for relating a storyline through text.

Moreover, researchers have also delved further into the role of teachers‟ comments and evaluations as a result of Halliday‟s theories being incorporated into pedagogical practices. Students‟ language development and understanding of how to meet the requirements of school-based genres are significantly shaped by teachers‟ feedback. Researchers have become increasingly interested in exploring how teachers utilize appraisals, which involve assessing and evaluating students‟ work, to effectively engage readers. By investigating the linguistic choices and rhetorical strategies employed by teachers in their comments, researchers aim to uncover the ways in which teachers provide constructive feedback that not only assess students‟ performance but also motivates and guides their ongoing learning process.

This thesis finds out the attitude resources; affect, judgment, and appreciation written on the teachers‟ comments on the report in the school, do they have positive or negative statements? Here indicate further the objective or subjective point of the writers‟ views. Moreover, evaluating not only establishes whether each of these features is excellent or bad, positive or negative, approve or disapprove, but also helps to create the total value of a given message, which in turn helps to establish the perspective of the writers behind the message

**RESEARCH METHOD**

**Research Design**

This research uses the method of Discourse analysis for research question number one and two. Discourse analysis studies how language is utilized in spoken and written communication as well as other types of social interaction, focusing on the language is used in a social context. As Rosalind Gill (2000) has stated that when performing discourse analysis, you must question your own beliefs and the ways in which you typically interpret the world. The goal and outcome of a discourse analysis may not always be to provide definite solutions to a problem; rather, by examining a topic, it offers a fresher and broader perspective on the issue and exposes the subtle implications that are concealed behind the words, before letting the readers choose how to react to the analysis and ultimately create their own discourse.

Meanwhile, research question number three is analyzed using a phenomenological case study. A technique known as "bracketing" is used to analyze the data in a phenomenological case study. This entails putting aside the researcher's own beliefs and biases to enable a free and objective evaluation of the participant‟s experiences. When searching for the underlying significance of the phenomenon being investigated, the researchers then look for recurring themes and patterns in the data.

Even Heidegger (1962, p.50) acknowledged that “phenomenology” largely refers to a methodological paradigm. The same statement by Merlau-Ponty (1962) stated that, “phenomenology is accessible only through the phenomenological method” (1962, p. viii). Giorgi (2009, p. 98) is clear on this fundamental tenet of the qualitative research tradition when he emphasizes that “No claim that an analysis is phenomenological can be made without assumptions of the attitude of the phenomenological reduction.” As a result, it appears that Husserlian phenomenological inquiry without the epoche.

**Data and Source of Data**

Primary data of this research is taken from direct interaction through interview with participants or the teachers as the subject. The questions used in the interview are unstructured to maintain flexibility of the subjects to answer the questions. Interviews are recorded with consent and with subjects‟ awareness. Primary data plays a crucial role in research as it involves the collection of data specifically for a particular research problem. Researchers gather primary data through various methods such as surveys, interviews, observations, or experiments. These data provide direct insights into the research topic and are tailored to meet the specific objectives of the study. In some cases, researchers may have the opportunity to add new data during the collection process, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

The secondary data is taken solely from the teachers‟ narrative comments. Secondary data of this research is taken from the report comment of the report cards from one international school located in Medan, North Sumatra. The report card is written twice a year or semestral. There are two main parts of the report card. First is the checklist part where the progress of learning outcomes is checked, and the other one is the teachers comment in which the subject teacher describe narratively the students‟ learning behavior, progress, and motivation statement.

Source of the data of this research are the three subject teachers. They are mathematics, language arts, and mandarin teachers. All the teachers are Indonesian, and the reports are written in English. The first data is taken from teacher one which is Maths teacher who has 4 years of teaching experience in total. Although graduating with a psychology bachelor, she has a passion for teaching and has spent 2 years teaching preschool and continued to her 2-year teaching at the elementary level.

Meanwhile, data two is taken from teacher two, who is a freshly graduated teacher, she has been teaching since 2 years ago. This teacher graduated from a state university with a major in bilingual biology education, while her teaching subject is language arts. Data three, is taken from teacher three which is a mandarin teacher, who has 7 years of teaching experience in teaching mandarin from preschool to elementary level. She can fluently speak in Chinese and English, although these languages are not her mother tongue.

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**Data Analysis**

The researcher assigns numbers or codes to each identified datum. This process of assigning numerical labels serves to categorize the data and establish a structured framework for analysis. These numbers or codes can represent different categories, themes, or concepts that emerge from the content being analysed:

1. Data condensation

Data condensation is used to pick the information that is most relevant to the study's analysis of the language used in the report comment. Here are the processes involved in data compressions. The process of selecting which information to use is a critical step in research and evaluation. Researchers are often faced with vast amounts of raw data, requiring them to make informed decisions about what to include and what to exclude. In some cases, researchers may have access to all the raw data initially, but as the statement suggests, in this particular scenario, the researcher made off with the raw data. This implies that the researcher took possession of the data, potentially limiting the availability of information for further analysis. The act of taking the raw data raises questions about the integrity and transparency of the research process, as it introduces the possibility of bias and selective reporting. A team of educators enters the picture after the researcher has taken the raw data. The data that will be used for evaluation must be chosen by these educators. The act of hand-picking implies a deliberate and arbitrary process where the educators have the power to select particular claims or facts from the data at their disposal. Because they have the authority to decide which components of the feedback section are taken into account in the evaluation, the educators' choices have a significant impact on how the evaluation is conducted. The selection process adds a further layer of subjectivity and potential bias because it is based on the opinions and viewpoints of the participating educators. The raw data is transformed throughout the transformation process. The data was altered drastically by the researcher to reveal new insights. To develop the idea intended by this research is changing the forms of evaluation into nominal, numerical, or factual ones.

2. Data display

The display of data is defined as the orderly presentation of data that enables analysis, evaluation, and decision-making. The analysis would have given a thorough examination and interpretation of the data after the charts. The patterns, trends, or relationships found in the data would have likely been the subject of a more thorough investigation in this analysis. To provide a thorough understanding of the data and its implications, the researcher combined visual displays with in-depth analysis.

3. Drawing a conclusion

Throughout the conclusion-drawing process, it is crucial for researcher to constantly refer back to the data to ensure the validity and reliability of their emerging conclusions. By regularly checking and verifying the data, researchers can mitigate potential biases or errors and enhance the overall credibility of their findings. This verification process acts as a quality control mechanism and reinforces the rigor of the research process.

**RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**Research Findings**

To address each research question related to aspects of attitude in the written teacher’s comments, the data were analyzed using techniques adapted from Miles, Huberman, and Saldana's (2014) approach, which involved data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. In this section, the results of the data analysis were elaborated. First research question and second research questions are using content analysis to deeper analyses the teachers‟ comments. An interactive model is used to answer research question three.

To identify each attitude resource presented in teachers‟ comments, the sign “:” is used to indicate subsumption, with the entity following it being a subcategory of the entity preceding it. Negative and positive attitudes are notated as “-” and “+”, respectively which delineates three resources: Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation from the thirty comments from three different teachers. Words in relation to Affect will be marked as **bold**, words in relation to Judgement will be marked as *italic*, and Appreciation will be marked as underlined.

1. **Attitude Resources Used in the Teachers‟ Comments.**

The very least number of affect resources comes with only fifteen. As we can see from Graph 1 below. We can see how the three teachers dominantly use judgement in the comments rather than inserting affect. While mostly in teachers‟ comments, affect should have been more used in praising students especially when they show positive emotional stances in their learning journey.

Graph 1 - Total of Attitude Resources

80

70

**69**

60

50

40

30

**32**

20

10

**15**

0

**Affect Appreciation Judgement**

Graph 1 - Total of Attitude Resources

Graph 1 suggests that the number of judgements dominating the teachers‟ comments with a total of sixty-nine, followed by appreciation with a number of thirty-two, and lastly, the number of affect which is only fifteen.

Lastly, Mandarin teacher also shows a high use of judgement in the comment, such as **he can follow**, **understands well**, and some negative judgements act as a constructive advice such as **needs to learn**, **needs to review**, etc. The analysis of the teachers' comments revealed a predominance of judgments over effective expressions. This highlights the need for teachers to consciously incorporate affective language in their feedback, particularly when recognizing and praising students' positive emotional stances. By leveraging affective expressions in their comments, teachers can create a more supportive and motivating learning atmosphere for their students

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 1.Distribution of Attitude Resources in Mathematics teacher’s Comments | | | | | |
| **Affect** | Frequency | **Judgement** | Frequency | **Appreciation** | Frequency |
| Dis/Inclination |  | Normality |  | Impact |  |
| Un/Happiness | 2 | Capacity | 24 | Quality | 3 |
| In/Security | 1 | Tenacity | 5 | Balance |  |
| Dis/satisfaction | 3 | Veracity |  |  |  |
|  |  | Propriety | 2 | Complexity |  |
|  |  |  |  | Valuation |  |
| **Total** | **6** | **Total** | **31** | **Total** | **3** |
| Positive | **6** | Positive | **26** | Positive | **3** |
| Negative | **-** | Negative | **5** | Negative |  |

This research found that mathematics teacher uses twenty-one times positive judgement usage of capacity to explain students‟ learning capability. This teacher willingly expresses the students‟ competency and ability through the phrases **„can multiply‟, „can grasp‟, „is competent‟, mastered reading‟**, etc. Most of these expressions are massively found in the introduction of the teacher’s comments to the body of the paragraph. Moreover, to express the **appreciation** for quality resources by the usage of phrases „**excellent understanding‟, „good understanding‟,** which are mostly placed in the third or fourth sentence of the statement to inform the learning progress.

However, there are found three times negative tenacity of judgment. It seems while the teacher needs to highlight further suggestions on students learning, she uses phrases of „**should pay attention‟** and **„needs help‟**. She hopes that the next semester, the student will highlight her recommendation for things to improve in the future. This research found that none of the appreciation resources both composition and valuation in the teacher’s comments, which means that the mathematics teacher did not use the words of simple, transparent, realistic, valuable, powerful, etc in the comments.

Table 2. Distribution of Attitude Resources in Language Art Teacher’s Comments

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Attitude Resources** | | | | | |
| **Affect** | Frequency | **Judgement** | Frequency | **Appreciation** | Frequency |
| Dis/Inclination |  | Normality |  | Impact |  |
| Un/Happiness |  | Capacity | 9 | Quality | 19 |
| In/Security | 1 | Tenacity | 10 | Balance |  |
| Dis/satisfaction | 1 | Veracity |  |  |  |
|  |  | Propriety |  | Complexity |  |
|  |  |  |  | Valuation |  |
| **Total** | **2** | **Total** | **19** | Total | **19** |
| Positive | **2** | Positive | **9** | Positive | **19** |
| Negative | **-** | Negative | **10** | Negative | **-** |

As reported with the data above, the language Art teacher on the other hand, have a similar number between judgement and appreciation. Through 10 paragraphs of her teacher commends, there are 19 times of appreciation resources used in language art teacher’s comments. It is found that this language mostly places numbers of the appreciation resources in the introduction statement of the comments. Mostly with a use of the word **good**, for example, **good understanding**, **good progress**, **good at, strong understanding**, etc.

This research found that through the same number of appreciation, there is a slight similarity number usage of judgment in tenacity and capacity resources, with 9 and 8 times on the teacher’s comments. This teacher uses some phrases of judgement capacity such as „**can coordinate, can write, could identify, ready to learn, and made a good progress‟** in explaining students‟ learning progress in the body of the paragraph. On the other hand, there are 9 times negative judgment of tenacity found in this teacher’s comments, and all them are placed in the last sentence of the paragraphs. She specifically writes the materials or topics needs to practice and relearn to almost all her teacher’s comments, which also means that all the students receive the materials or topics to focus on their future learning. For example, Gl ***should consistently*** apply punctuation and capitalization insights through her writing, or she mentions H ***needs to practice*** writing capitalization in sentences.

Table.3 Distribution of Attitude Resources in Mandarin Teacher’s Comments

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Attitude Resources** | | | | | |
| **Affect** | Frequency | **Judgement** | Frequency | **Appreciation** | Frequency |
| Dis/Inclination |  | Normality | 9 | Impact |  |
| Un/Happiness | 2 | Capacity | 15 | Quality | 10 |
| In/Security | 4 | Tenacity |  | Balance |  |
| Dis/satisfaction | 1 | Veracity |  |  |  |
|  |  | Propriety |  | Complexity |  |
|  |  |  |  | Valuation |  |
| **Total** | **7** | **Total** | **24** | **Total** | **10** |
| Positive | **7** | Positive | **16** | Positive | **10** |
| Negative | **-** | Negative | **8** | Negative | **-** |

Compared to the mathematics and language teacher, the mandarin teacher has a highest number of affect resources, with 7 times of usage. Over her comments, she uses 4 times security resources such as „**confident** or **self- confidence‟** through the comment, 2 happiness resources such as „**cheerful** or **enthusiastic‟** in the opening of the comments, and the is one inclination resource found in the comment. She used a word of **„kind‟** after mentioning the student’s likes helping peers and teachers in the opening of comments.

Still has the higher number of judgment resources compared to the language teacher’s comments, this mandarin teacher comes up with 24 times of judgment usages. The most significant usage in positive capacity comes with 12 times, positive tenacity 4 times, while the negative appear 6 times. All the negatives did not write in negative statements or using a word of not or prefix in, but in positive statements intended to mentions some topics to learn more in the next grade. Different from other two teachers, this mandarin teacher mention once of a word seldom to highlight a student ability to finish a student’s task while learning.

However, the number appreciation resource is found not as much as the language art teacher. This teacher comments appear only 10 times of quality mentioning the students‟ **good understanding** or **great understanding**, or as an **attentive learner**, **active speaker**. All the appreciation resources are placed in the first sentence of comments along with some affect resources.

1. **The Realization of Attitude Resources in the Teachers‟ Comments.**

In addition to this, the three teachers who participated in this study may use different attitude resources in their writing. To analyze in a closer look, the samples of comments were used to make a comparison between the three attitude resources.

1. **Mathematics Teacher**

The mathematics teacher, which next will be addressed as Teacher 1, has judgement with the highest number of appearances in the teacher’s comment (thirty times). Followed by affect that only appears six times in the overall comments and appreciation with the lowest, which is only three times. In a closer look, the samples below are presented to analyze how the judgements are written on data 8 and 10.

Data 8 (Teacher 1 Comment)

Ar is a *patient* (+judgement: tenacity) student in learning math. While there was a group discussion, Arya would wait for his peer's opinions without interrupting. He is now *competent* (+judgement: tenacity) in working with the division board and is *capable* (+judgement: capacity) of explaining its concept. Sometimes, Ar *needs a teacher* (-judgement: tenacity) to encourage him to focus and finish his task. Hopefully, he can accomplish the task independently and on time in year 2. Keep practicing, Ar!

Data 10 (Teacher 1 comment)

S is a quick *learner* (+judgement: capacity) and copes easily with new mathematic problems. She always *gives her best* (+judgement: capacity) when explaining the way, she does her work. S shows progress when working with the multiplication board and *can explain* (+judgement: capacity) the multiplication concept. In grade 2, I hope S *can work carefully* (-judgement: tenacity) on her worksheet. Keep your spirit, S!

1. **Language and Arts Teacher**

The Language and Arts teacher, which next will be addressed as Teacher 2, surprisingly uses appreciation almost as frequently as judgement, with a number of judgements being the highest, which is twenty, and appreciation appears eighteen times. The number of appreciations appears almost as high as judgement as the teacher also includes the word *good* when praising their students. Which then make the praises turn to a positive appreciation rather than just a judgement. Affect, being the lowest comes as a surprise as Teacher 2 does not use it in their comments. There is almost no discussion about students‟ emotional stances in the body of the comments. Below are the two samples that were analyzed on data 16 and 17.

Data 16 (Teacher 2 comment)

H has a good enthusiasm (+appreciation: quality) for learning language arts. *She understands* (+judgement: capacity) to read words by breaking them up into syllables. H also has a good understanding (+appreciation: quality) of identifying the differences between statements, commands, questions, and exclamations. Next semester, H *needs to practice* (-judgement: tenacity) writing capitalization in sentences. Keep improving, H!

Data 17 (Teacher 2 comment)

M showed great interest (+appreciation: quality) in learning metaphors and similes in language art class this semester. He is good at presenting (+appreciation: quality) the difference between metaphors and similes in a sentence. M is also very good at understanding (+appreciation: quality) the six types of punctuation that we have learned. M *will communicate* (-judgement: tenacity) his group work thoughts more confidently in the next grade. Keep progressing, M!

1. **Mandarin Teacher**

The Mandarin teacher, which next will be addressed as Teacher 3, has at least twenty-four judgements expressed in the comments both positive and negative, most of the judgements are in area of capacity and tenacity. This is also similar to the previous two teachers who also comment mostly on capacity and tenacity. Ten appreciations, and only six affects appeared in the overall comments. Below are the two samples on data 24 dan 29.

Data 24 (Teacher 3 comment)

S is a **cheerful learner** (+affect: happiness) who likes to help and always greets her friends and teachers. This semester, she has a good understanding (+appreciation: quality) of speaking in Chinese, For example, asking for help, how to say done, goodbye greeting, morning greeting, etc. S always *tries her best* (+judgement: tenacity) to learn Mandarin and completes the homework and any responsible required, which is well appreciated. Nevertheless, S *needs to practice more* (-judgement: tenacity) in learning Mandarin, from the basic characters, strokes, and phrases. Well done, S!

The comment above also shows a similar pattern to the first comment. Teacher 3 begins the comment with a positive effect, showing the student’s emotional stances through the phrase “S is a cheerful learner.” This indicates how the teacher would like to acknowledge that the student is known to be a happy and cheerful individual. In the next sentence, Teacher 3 highlights the student’s quality through a positive judgement that says “She has a good understanding of speaking in Chinese.”

Data 29 (Teacher 3 comment)

G is an **enthusiastic** (+affect: happiness) student who shows interest in Mandarin. He *can follow* (+judgement: capacity) the teacher's explanations very well and has a good understanding (+appreciation: quality) of Mandarin lessons. *He actively works* (+judgement: tenacity) in-class activities such as answering questions, reading, sharing ideas, and making phrases. G *needs to keep practicing* (-judgement: tenacity) reading and writing. Keep studying hard, G!

Teacher 3 begins their comment with a positive affect showing happiness stated in the phrase “G is an enthusiastic student who shows interest in Mandarin.” Again, teacher 3 highlights how happiness or students‟ mood needs to be highlighted before their skills in classroom setting. Followed by a positive judgement highlighting the student’s capacity, we can see it from the phrase “He can follow the teacher’s explanation very well.” The word *well* would be an indicator or another options of word other than *good.*

In the same comment, we can see “and has a good understanding of Mandarin lessons” act as a positive appreciation in quality. Finally, we can see both positive judgement and negative judgement in the latter part of the comment. “He actively works in-class activities” shows a positive judgement on how the pupil works actively in the class, and what needs to improve, which appear in the phrase “G needs to keep practicing reading and writing.” The word *need* should clearly highlight which area that the teacher would like the student to improve.

As reported above, we can see that among the three attitude resources namely affect, judgement, and appreciation, judgement dominantly occurs in most of the comments from the three cohorts of teachers, followed by positive appreciation, and lastly, positive affect. There are several occurrences of negative judgements in the overall comments by the three teachers, however, they are seen as necessary advice or feedback needed for the improvement of students.

Moreover, differences and similarity are clearly seen when we take a closer analysis on the orders of how these teachers use the attitude resources in their comments.

The mathematics teacher's comments follow a specific order, starting with several instances of positive judgements and concluding with a negative judgement. This suggests that the teacher tends to provide initial positive reinforcement before addressing areas that require improvement.

In contrast, the language arts teacher begins their comments with positive appreciation, demonstrating an emphasis on acknowledging and valuing students' efforts. This is followed by positive judgements, reinforcing the students' achievements. However, similar to the mathematics teacher, the language arts teacher also concludes with a negative judgement, indicating areas for growth or correction.

The Mandarin teacher's approach to feedback exhibits a combination of positive affect, positive judgements, and a final negative judgement. This pattern suggests that the teacher aims to inspire positive emotional engagement in students through affective expressions. However, they also provide constructive criticism at the end of their comments to address areas that require attention.

Additionally, we could then conclude that positive feedback like positive affect, positive appreciation, and positive judgement tend to dominate the early part of the comments, and teachers then use negative judgement at the end of their comments. These negative judgements then serve as a constructive criticism or valuable feedback for the teachers so students and parents would reflect on it. This also correlates to a sandwich method, where someone, upon providing a constructive criticism, should then begin the feedback with some statements of praise, before providing some feedback that serves as a room for improvement.

A sandwich method is a well-known method when writing a report addressed to a group of people who need to be evaluated by their supervisors, Schwarz (2013) cited several justifications, including the notion that "first, they think it is easier for people to hear and accept negative feedback when it is sprinkled with positive feedback; second, they assume the sandwich approach provides balanced feedback; and third, they believe that giving positive feedback with negative feedback reduces worker discomfort and anxiety."

Secondly, the sandwich approach is perceived as a way to provide balanced feedback. By incorporating both positive and negative aspects, evaluators aim to present a comprehensive and fair assessment of an individual's performance. This approach helps avoid an overly critical or negative tone, allowing for a more well-rounded evaluation that recognizes strengths alongside areas for growth.

Thirdly, the sandwich technique is supposed to make the people receiving the feedback feel less uneasy and anxious. Positive comments and helpful criticism are interspersed throughout the evaluation to make it sound more encouraging and supportive overall. As they are reassured that both their positive contributions and areas that may need improvement are acknowledged, this can help ease some of the potential stress and anxiety that people may experience when receiving feedback.

1. **How the Realization of Attitude Resources in the Teachers‟ Comments Appear as They Are.**

This section reveals how the three cohorts of teachers speak about their reports comments. The interview was done on the school premises and was audio- recorded with the teachers‟ consent. The interviews are unstructured. Vagle (2014) claims that unstructured interviews are the most popular interview method when conducting phenomenological study, for it is conversational and open. The interview answers are presented raw without amendments to grammar and sentence structure to reflect their originality.

1. **Bitter Medicine**

Although it is the truth, it is not easy to take advice while someone is pointing out the weakness. Based on the interview results conducted with the correspondents, mentioning the specific feedback as positive judgements is considered crucial. Especially when used to specify whether a person‟s capability needs validation. In the educational context, a positive judgement is healthy for student although it is seen as something unpleasant information given to parents of students. Additionally, the written reports then be discussed during a conference between the parents and teachers to further discuss the students‟ achievements throughout the semester. Usually, parents of the students will be asked to read the comments first and the conversations will be based on the comments. In this case, when teachers are explaining then it should be based and linear to what is written in the beginning and body of the teachers‟ comments as seen in teacher 1 comment;

Data 8 (Teacher 1 comment)

Ar is a *patient* (+judgement: tenacity) student in learning math. While there was a group discussion, Arya would wait for his peer's opinions without interrupting. He is now *competent* (+judgement: tenacity) in working with the division board and is *capable* (+judgement: capacity) of explaining its concept. Sometimes, Ar *needs a teacher* (-judgement: tenacity) to encourage him to focus and finish his task. Hopefully, he can accomplish the task independently and on time in year 2. Keep practicing, Ar!

Compared to the interview with teacher 1 as seen below; Data 31 (Teacher 1 interview answer)

*“Because as a 6-year-old child, being patient is so obvious. It is different from* other *students. When there is a group discussion, while his friends share their opinion he patiently waited the time for him to talk without interrupting. He keeps on trying to control himself waiting his turn to talk, even if his friends often interrupt him, he keeps waiting his turn again.”*

Teacher 1 clearly describes the question of why Teacher 1 describes the pupil with the word “patient.” Teacher 1 shares a solid justification that the word “patient” would be a clear statement of the obvious attitude a pupil has in the class. The intention of the comment is to praise the student’s demeanor and it correlates as well with the teacher’s standard or expectations in the classroom. A positive judgement is used by the teacher to further highlight student’s distinct quality that has to be maintained.

Teacher 2, in her comments, comes as a second highest of judgment usage in her comments as seen in the Graph 3. However, it is a slight different from mathematics teacher who mostly wrote the positive. Language teacher mostly writes the negative judgment to nine over ten students in her comments, and she specifically highlight every material or topic that needs to improve in the future learning. Compared to the interview question of is it necessary when writing teacher's comments? How she manages to make it sound as positive as possible, here is the answer;

Data 37 (Teacher 2 interview answer)

*“Very necessary, so that students feel clear that they have to* improve *their abilities in which part of the lesson. I convey it by avoiding the use of negative words such as don't, can't, or others.*

Data 37 suggests that it is important for Teacher 2 to include negative judgments in the comment. However, the all the comments are not in negative statements. As presented in the teacher’s comment, all of the negative judgements are acting as a feedback for the students to reflect. It can be seen from the comment “Next semester, H *needs to practice* (-judgement: tenacity) writing capitalization in sentences.” The word “need” is there to convey which skills are needed in the next level of study, Teacher 2 does not include words such as “H does not know how to write capitalization” as it would convey more negative emotion.

Teacher 2 follows a sandwich method when writing comments, placing negative judgments within a context of overall constructive feedback. As mentioned by Teacher 2, this approach is considered "very necessary" as it helps students clearly understand which areas of the lesson require improvement. By highlighting specific areas that need attention, Teacher 2 effectively informs both students and parents about areas that may require additional focus in future learning. This approach aims to encourage students to maintain or improve their learning in the next level, fostering a growth mindset and emphasizing the importance of continuous development. This teacher regularly uses the word “good” in all of the comments, her answer is;

Data 36 (Teacher 2 interview answer)

*“Because a 'good' word will clarify the form of a teacher's appreciation of* the *students.”*

Upon talking about why Teacher 2 puts the word „good‟ in all the judgements, Teacher 2 justifies that the word „good‟ itself will be a standard or a form of teacher’s appreciation of the student’s works/progress. Teacher 2 regularly writes positive appreciation with the word „good‟ followed by the learning process/attributes that the teacher thinks should be praised. Phrases like “good understanding in…” or “good at presenting…” This also aligns with the result that Teacher 2 uses appreciation almost as often as they use judgement in the teacher’s comments.

By being consistent in using the word “good” in the judgements, teacher 2 establishes a clear and easily identifiable standard for appreciation. this approach helps students understand the teacher’s evaluation criteria and recognize when their performance meets the expected standards. The word „good‟ is a descriptor to indicate that the teacher perceives the students‟ work or progress as commendable and worthy of recognition.

The frequency of with which teacher 2 incorporate appreciation in the comments aligns with the notion that teacher 2 values and prioritize the importance of positive feedback. This demonstrates a deliberate intention to provide encouragement and reinforcement to students. Teacher 2 seems to have the belief in creating a positive learning environment where students feel acknowledged and motivated to continue their efforts.

Looking at the Graph 4, it can be seen that Teacher 3 has 24 times of using judgment resources in her comments. While the researcher asks the reasons why she highlight "S always tries her best" rather than describing the child as "persevering" or other words in a similar sense, she answers;

Data 41 (Teacher 3 interview answer)

*“Well, for some reason, the diction of persevering did not come up to my mind. She/he wasn’t seen as a persevering person. It’s just because looking at the consistency of learning. In some meetings, yes the students seemed trying to work the worksheet well, but the other days, the student seemed* giving *up.”*

Data 41 reflects on the reason why Teacher 3 uses the term “tries her best” instead of labeling a student as “persevering.” The reason above is stating that Teacher 3 values consistency more and they did not find it in the student. So it is only agreeable when Teacher 3 is praising a student as “always tries her best” which is a positive judgement in tenacity, and not “persevering” which is an affect on security.

Data 40 (Teacher 3 interview answer)

*“No. When I say, “He actively works in-class activities”, it is usually the* student *who works the worksheet and does the teacher’s instruction actively. However, when I say, he/she has good collaboration skills means that the student is good at communicating his/her opinions to peers and teachers during the discussions.”*

Teacher 3 tries to compare when praising students to have collaboration skills with praising how students actively work in-class activities. Data 40 reflects on how Teacher 3 utilizes judgement in capacity more effectively than when Teacher 3 uses appreciation in quality. Therefore, it aligns with the results of Teacher 3 that has more judgement in tenacity and capacity than appreciation in quality.

The emphasis on judgement in capacity aligns with Teacher 3's goal of fostering an environment that promotes active learning and meaningful interactions among students. By acknowledging and praising students' collaboration skills, Teacher 3 encourages open communication, cooperation, and the exchange of ideas. This approach cultivates an inclusive classroom atmosphere that values students' diverse perspectives and encourages them to contribute actively to discussions and group activities.

1. **Appreciation is the Icing**

The response of appreciation evaluation in the teachers‟ comment is different from mathematics teacher and language teachers. While both of the language teachers use appreciation resources more, mathematics teacher considers it is unnecessary. Found only 3 times using appreciation of quality resources like „excellent understanding, good understanding‟ in the body of the paragraph, it is not the main focus in the comment making. Through this question, it can be seen the reason: Would you prefer to describe your students as skillful? As seen by the word “competent” and “quick learner” or would you prefer describing your student as someone who is capable (seen in the phrase “is capable” or “gives her best”), when you write your teacher’s comments? Elaborate why?

Data 32 (Teacher 1 interview answer)

*“in some comments, I do use the word competent to describe a student who finally masters a topic compared to his/her previous progress, and I also used quick learner to describe a student who has the ability to grab the lesson quickly. In the classroom, I always notice who has the ability and who does not. In math lessons, I always make an observation list to describe my students’ abilities, progress, and achievement while they are working on math. According to me, everyone is capable of learning and we as a teacher can encourage it.”*

Data 32 describes the reason Teacher 1 uses the words “competent” and “quick learner” which are judgment in tenacity. We could see that Teacher 1 has an *observation* list and it includes the abilities, progress, and achievement of the students, making it clear that abilities are mostly described by *judgement* of tenacity, progress is described by judgement of capacity while achievements are usually in a form of appreciation in quality. Emotional stances are rarely discussed by Teacher 1 in the body of the comments, as teacher 1 values students‟ approach in learning and their capabilities in grasping knowledge and concepts rather than students‟ personal feelings that might have effects on their study.

It is noteworthy that Teacher 1's focus is primarily on assessing students' capacities *and* progress. The comments reflect a strong belief in the potential of all students to learn and grow. *Teacher* 1's emphasis lies in fostering a positive and encouraging learning environment, where students' capabilities and their ability to comprehend and apply knowledge are valued. This aligns with Teacher 1's preference for highlighting students' academic abilities rather than delving into their personal emotional states.

Overall, Data 31 shows how Teacher 1 utilizes the word “patient”, as one example from a few, to describe a student’s behavior, emphasizing its significance and aligning it with the teacher’s standards, and expectations. The comment is both recognition of the student’s quality and also a mean to encourage the student to maintain the quality he or she possesses. By providing specific and positive feedback, teacher 1 *reinforces* the importance of desirable attitudes, being patient is only one of them.

On the other hand, Teacher 2 thinks differently. Found 19 times of appreciation resources through the comments, this is the highest appreciation usage of all teachers. When being asked whether she agree if appreciation to students‟ approach in learning is necessary when writing teacher’s comment? Here is the answer:

Data 35 (Teacher 2 interview answer)

*“Agree, in* my *opinion giving appreciation will increase the enthusiasm of students in learning. And students will feel more valued.”*

Data 35 shows Teacher 2 agrees that appreciation is more important as it will enhance students‟ participation and enthusiasm in learning. Not only that praise students‟ quality of work, but it also supports students‟ self-*esteem* in knowing that they are doing good in the classroom. Thus, positive judgement and positive appreciation are commonly found in the comments of teacher 2. Before ending it with negative judgements, usually statements of praise will give an overall positive outlook for students to feel, and so it will also give a hopeful feeling before receiving criticism.

Teacher 2 fosters a general optimistic outlook in her students by emphasizing positive evaluations and appreciation. This methodical strategy seeks to create a welcoming and motivating learning environment. Students are more likely to feel valued and motivated to keep up their academic efforts when they receive words of praise and recognition. As students receive recognition for their accomplishments, positive evaluations and praise are effective tools for enhancing their confidence and sense of accomplishment.

1. **Logic Before Emotion**

Acknowledging the students‟ feeling is obviously essential as it will improve their enthusiasm in learning, but it is the priority. Mathematics teacher, in her interview explains that explain the reason why she does not often describe student's emotional state in your comments.

Data 34 (Teacher 1 interview answer)

*“Because according to me when I describe emotionally, it's not necessary* because *their* emotion *can be affected by anything (morning mood, friends, family, lack of sleep, and so on).”*

Data 34 is talking about the reason why Teacher 1 does not include many words that describes a pupil‟s emotional stances in the classroom. This correlates with one of the attitude resources which is Affect (Halliday, 2004). Teacher 1 does not include many Affect in their comment and this reflects to the interview where Teacher 1 says that moods/emotional states would be too unpredictable in the class as students are easily affected by external factors, meaning that Teacher 1 prefers to highlight students‟ ability to grasp concepts and knowledge in the class rather than describing students with the word “happy,” or “cheerful.”

Data 38 (Teacher 2 interview answer)

*“For certain assessments, I will describe students' feelings in teachers'* comments*. For example, if the students' feelings affect the learning process.”*

Teacher 2 explains that assessing students‟ feelings will come last and it will be done when necessary, or when students‟ emotional stances are affecting the lesson. This correlates with the result of Teacher 2 that has Affect with the lowest number. Teacher 2's perspective echoes that of Teacher 1, who also does not prioritize discussing students' emotional stances unless they significantly affect the learning process. This shared viewpoint reflects an understanding that emotions can be unpredictable and are often influenced by external factors such as events at home or physical illness. Therefore, Teacher 2's decision to assess and comment on students' feelings is contingent upon their impact on the educational environment.

Data 39 (Teacher 3 interview answer)

*“It’s because I always do care the mood or behavior of every student in my class. I believe when a child is in a good/happy/enthusiast in learning, they will easily absorb or get the lesson.”*

Teacher 3 explains that the emotional stances of the students are important as it will improve *their* enthusiasm in learning. This also answers that Affect is quite high in Teacher 3 teacher comments, in comparison with the other 2 cohort of teachers. Teacher 3 clearly stated that *I always do care the mood or behaviour of every student in my class*. When students are in a positive state of mind, they are more receptive to new information, actively participate in classroom activities, and are likely to develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter. By taking into account the emotional aspect of students' experiences, Teacher 3 aims to optimize the learning outcomes and create a nurturing atmosphere where students can thrive.

1. **Double-edged Sword**

Giving feedback is a situation or course of action having both positive and negative effects. It might be understandable or can be a critic war. However, these all teachers are wise, because all of them turn the students‟ weakness of material or topics to a statement that the student should practice again or pay attention to their future learning. This research found that the finding on the teachers‟ comments is aligned to the interview. Looking at the first reason of mathematics teacher when being asked the reason why it is necessity of pointing out an area of students‟ learning.

Data 33 (Teacher 1 interview answer)

*“Yes, it is necessary. It is based on the daily observation. From the comment I made when I always point out the area, he/she needs to improve. I hope it will help them on knowing what things/topics/areas* they *need to improve in the next level.”*

Data 33 explains that Teacher 1 always put negative judgment in tenacity in a form of constructive criticism or simply explains which area of the students that need improvement at the end of the comments. It is stated that it is necessary, in the hope that students would reflect on their study and parents will be notified.

This also correlates to a sandwich method, where someone, upon providing a constructive criticism, should then begin the feedback with some statements of praise, before providing some feedback that serves as a room for improvement. As teacher 1 says *I hope it will help them on knowing what things/topics/areas they need to improve in the next level*, means that the entire purpose of the constructive criticism is to evaluate students‟ possible weaknesses, to inform the respective parents and to encourage students to be able to improve their performance in the future.

Data 42 (Teacher 3 interview answer)

*“Indeed, I really mean that. I usually write this kind of comment so that the parents notice that the child needs repetition or extra class of Mandarin* lessons *at home.”*

Data 42, also reflects how Teacher 3 uses judgement more in the comments than in the two resources. Negative judgements such as “A needs to practice spelling more” are often needed in the body of the comments to notify the students and their parents on which part they need to enhance.

This statement provides insights into Teacher 3's approach to providing constructive feedback and guidance to both students and their parents. By incorporating negative judgments in the comments, Teacher 3 aims to create awareness and encourage focused practice in specific areas of learning. The intention is to ensure that parents recognize the areas where their child requires additional attention and reinforcement, particularly in the context of Mandarin language learning.

**Discussion**

The primary highlight of this study is how Systemic Functional Linguistics attitude resources are observed in teachers‟ comments. Those three resources are classified as affect, judgement, and appreciation. In this study, the results of data analysis reveal that one of the three resources is commonly found in the writing. Take one for example, which is Judgement. Martin‟s (2005) concept of Judgement entails admiration and praise and is related to the institutional standards of an individual‟s behavior (whether people are able or not able to perform). The collective of teachers uses judgements to describe the participants‟ (in this case, students) capabilities in the respective lessons, with the use of positive words like “can write fluently,” “able to understand,” “can follow lessons,” etc.

Based on the interview conducted with the correspondents, judgement (positive) is considered crucial in written feedback. Especially when used to specify whether a person‟s capability needs validation. In the educational context, a positive judgement is seen as something necessary when it comes to writing academic feedback given to parents of students. Additionally, the written reports then be discussed during a conference between the parents and teachers to further discuss the students‟ achievements throughout the semester. Usually, parents of the students will be asked to read the comments first and the conversations will be based on the comments. In this case, when teachers are explaining then it should be based and linear to what is written in the body of the teachers‟ comments. This is to ensure that there is no

Positive judgement plays a vital role in validating a person's capabilities. By explicitly stating positive judgements in the feedback, educators aim to acknowledge and affirm the students' achievements and progress. This recognition serves as a source of motivation for students, reinforcing their confidence and encouraging them to continue excelling in their studies. Furthermore, positive judgements also serve as an opportunity for parents to celebrate their children's accomplishments, fostering a supportive and encouraging home environment.

However, it is important to note that negative judgements also have their place in academic feedback. While the primary focus is on providing positive judgements, negative judgements can be utilized to highlight areas for improvement or to address specific challenges that students may be facing. By incorporating both positive and negative judgements, educators provide a more comprehensive and balanced assessment of students' academic performance. This approach not only guides students in their learning journey but also allows parents to gain a holistic understanding of their children's educational progress.

Additionally, the group of teachers unanimously agreed that positive appreciation can positively influence students‟ academic performance. This is also deeply discussed during the interview that; a positive appreciation has a way stronger impression towards students‟ improvement rather than not appreciating their work or giving negative feedback. One teacher commented that negative feedback will be planted for a long time so they do not want that for the students. Instead, the use of positive words will always have positive reinforcement in the progress, and it does not work only for students but also works well for parents. Hopefully, parents then feel secure that their children are doing well in the class.

The results of the interviews highlighted the teachers' unanimity in their belief that appreciation has a positive impact on students' academic performance. It was believed that creating a supportive learning environment and inspiring students to strive for continuous improvement required the use of positive language and sincere appreciation. The teachers emphasized the value of positive reinforcement to foster a positive learning environment because they understood the long-lasting effects of negative feedback. Positive reinforcement also strengthens the relationship between teachers and parents, giving parents assurance that their children are making progress in their studies.

**CONCLUSION**

Based on the data analysis, the conclusions are as follow:

The result shows a number of the three attitude resources appeared in the teacher comments written by a cohort of three different teachers in one of the international schools in Medan, Sumatera Utara. This leads to the conclusion that the three teachers, who may not be familiar with the terminology, have utilized the three resources effectively to offer feedback for students to reflect on their academic performance. The number of judgements dominating the teachers‟ comments with a total of sixty-nine, both positive and negative. Followed by positive appreciation with a number of thirty-two, and lastly, the number of affect which is only fifteen.

The study found that teachers at an international school in Medan, Sumatera Utara, used three main attitude resources—affect, judgment, and appreciation—in their written feedback to students. Although unfamiliar with the specific terminology, the teachers effectively applied these resources to encourage students’ reflection on their academic performance. Judgments were most prevalent, especially regarding students' capacity and tenacity, with comments on ability and perseverance being common. Appreciation was next, focusing on the quality of students’ work, while affect was the least used. Teachers typically began with positive feedback, followed by constructive criticism to motivate improvement.

Interviews revealed that teachers prioritize academic over emotional feedback but recognize the importance of developing social and communication skills, often praising these attributes as strengths. Teachers’ verbal affirmations of students' strengths help build a supportive learning environment, encouraging confidence and skill development. By combining academic, social, and verbal skill feedback, teachers aim to foster well-rounded growth in students, preparing them for future success.

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