REALIZATION OF APPRAISAL IN EDITORIALS

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Abstract:

This paper is devoted to presenting and analyzing how linguistic resources work to realize appraisal with the overall theoretical and analytical framework expounded by Halliday and Matthiesen (2004), Martin and Rose (2007) and Foley (2011), which has shown to be useful in discourse analysis. It presents the three types of attitudes (affect, judgment and appreciation,) followed by the explanation of force and focus as two dimensions of the system of graduation and how engagement is achieved with projections, modality and concession. The extracts embedded are collected from editorials concerning education of China Daily to help illustrate how appraisal is construed in authentic language context.

Key words: appraisal; attitudes; graduation; engagement; editorials

ความเป็นไปได้และการกำหนดรู้ในการประเมินบทบรรณาธิการ

บทคัดย่อ:

บทความนี้จะนำเสนอและวิเคราะห์ว่าภาษาในภาษาศาสตร์มีผลอย่างไรต่อการประเมินที่มีกรอบทฤษฎีและการวิเคราะห์โดยรวม ในทฤษฎีของ Halliday และ Matthiesen (2004), Martin และ Rose (2007) และ Foley (2011), ซึ่งมีประโยชน์ในการ วิเคราะห์วาทกรรม โดยนำเสนอทัศนคติที่มีผลต่อการตัดสินใจสามประเภท การเห็นค่า ตามด้วยคำอธิบายที่มุ่งมั่นและเน้น ซึ่งเป็นสองมิติของระบบการทำงานของการสำเร็จการศึกษาและวิธีการที่นำมาซึ่งความสำเร็จในโครงการต่างๆ รูปแบบกิริยาและข้อยกเว้น ผู้วิจัยได้คัดเลือกส่วนของบทความจากบทบรรณาธิการเรื่องการศึกษาใน *China Daily* เพื่อแสดงให้เห็นว่ามีการสร้างการประเมินอย่างไรในบริบทภาษาที่แท้จริง

คำสำคัญ :การประเมิน ทัศนคติ จบการศึกษา การมีส่วนร่วม บทบรรณาธิการ

Introduction

As a typical genre of media discourses, editorials belong to the category of persuasive writing with the expression and persuasive communication of opinions about recent news events. To find out how language resources can be adopted in editorials to form opinions, appraisal analysis is needed for interpreting discourse. In recent years, many scholars (White, 2000; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004; Martin and Rose, 2007; Foley, 2011) have paid much attention to evaluation analysis and have established a comprehensive model to find out how various feelings, attitudes, and stances can be expressed. Appraisal theory is developed in the framework of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) with the aim to describe and explain how people evaluate others and things. Specifically, it incorporates the multidimensions of interpersonal meanings: the negotiation of attitude, the manipulation of graduation and the management of engagement.

All the extracts are selected from editorials concerning education in *China Daily*, which is regarded as one of the country's most authoritative English media outlets and an important source of information on Chinese politics, economy, society and culture. Besides, education is the theme that editorials of *China Daily* pay much attention to since the Chinese government prioritizes education as a fundamental and guiding cause with an overall significance to social and economic development.

Appraisal framework

The research of interpersonal metafunctions of language moves from strictly grammatical issue analysis of mood to less structural issues such as modality, interpersonal metaphor and then to evaluation realized mainly by lexical choices. Thompson (2004: 75) argues that appraisal is a central part of the meaning of any text and that any analysis of interpersonal meanings of a text must take it into account.

Appraisal theory mainly explores three types of language phenomena: attitude, graduation and engagement. More specifically, appraisal is concerned with evaluation – the kinds of attitudes negotiated in a text, the strength of the feelings involved and the ways in which values are sourced and readers aligned (Martin and Rose, 2007: 25). Therefore, it aims to

explore, describe and explain how appraisal is achieved through various linguistic resources chosen (White, 2000). Scholars adopt different terms to describe similar language phenomena. Although these phenomena covered by these terms are not exactly the same, they overlap with each other to some extent.

With almost two decades of exploration, this appraisal framework has been developed and established by a group of researchers led by James Martin of the University of Sydney concerning interpersonal meanings. The inspiration of appraisal theory comes from the need to extend and develop the SFL research on the interpersonal aspect of language.

According to Martin and Rose (2007:26), this appraisal is a system of interpersonal meanings. The system stresses three aspects of evaluation. The first is concerned with negotiating attitudes, which begins with affect, then judgment and finally appreciation. To amplify and hedge attitudes, graduation is needed, which is made up of the two complementary dimensions: force and focus. Lastly, the engagement system can be used to introduce various voices into a text as sources of attitudes. The following figure shows the overview of appraisal framework.

Figure I

Martin and Rose 2007:26
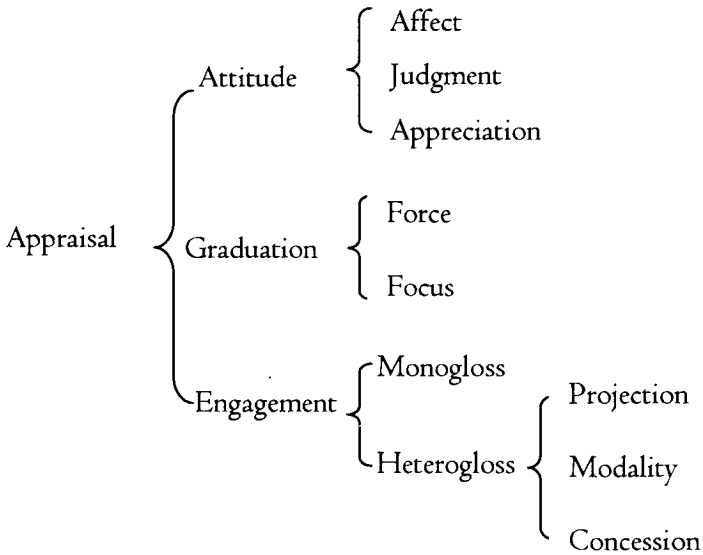
Attitude

Appraisal theory foregrounds negotiating attitudes because of the interactive nature of discourse, whether spoken or written (Martin and Rose, 2007). Foley (2011: 123) states that attitude refers to the language resources we use to make either a positive or negative evaluation of something or someone. In other words, attitudes have to so with evaluating things, judgment of people's character and their feelings (Martin and Rose, 2007: 26). Three subcategories of attitudes can be identified: affect, judgment and appreciation.

Affect

Affect refers to the emotional attitude of the speaker or writer towards the content of their message (Foley, 2011: 123). That is to say, affect is concerned with human emotional reactions expressed in discourse. Martin and Rose (2007) classify affect by drawing on the following two factors. Firstly, affect can be positive or negative because people's feelings can either be good or bad. Secondly, affect can be expressed directly or implied. People don't always state their feeling directly. Feelings can be expressed directly either by using words that name specific emotions or by describing physical behavior that also expresses emotion. They can also be indicated through the description of extraordinary behavior or metaphor.

Extract I:

As long as <u>angry</u>, <u>desperate</u> killers resort to such wanton violence to give vent to their <u>frustrations</u>, it will be difficult to stop these random acts of carnage.

. . .

In Wednesday's stabbing spree in Nanzheng county, Shaanxi province, the villager who <u>hacked to death</u> seven kids and two adults <u>simply walked home</u> and <u>committed suicide</u>.

(Neutralize Child Killers, *China Daily,* May 14, 2010)

As can be seen from the extract, the feelings of the killer are so negative that normal people cannot imagine them. The modifiers *angry*, *desperate* and the complement *frustrations* tell us explicitly the emotional state of the killer. His unbelievably cruel behavior of *hacking to death seven kids and two adults* implies his determination to put an end to his life too. He did not run away immediately after the carnage, but *just walked home*, which is extremely unusual criminal behavior. He was not worried about being caught by policemen because he had already made up his mind to *commit suicide*. People will not have the courage to kill themselves unless they do feel trapped in life. The residue *resort to such wanton violence to give vent to their frustrations* also shows how helpless the killers feel. Through the brief vivid description, the editorial writer impresses the readers with the killer's extremely negative affect and arouses their sympathy for the desperate killers rather than hatred.

Judgment

Judgment is concerned with how the speaker or writer evaluates people and their behavior (Foley, 2011: 125). Namely, judgment is targeted at human beings, their character and behavior. According to Martin and Rose (2007: 32), as with affect, judgments of people's character can be positive or negative, and they may be judged explicitly or implicitly. Nevertheless, they also stress that unlike affect, judgments differ between personal judgments of admiration or criticism and moral judgments of praise and condemnation.

Extract 2:

> More than 5,000 young migrant workers in nine cities sat college entrance examinations on Sunday because a dozen institutions of higher learning, including the prestigious Peking University, plan to encourage <u>ambitious</u> farmers-turned-workers to go to college.
>
> This year Guangdong province handpicked 100 <u>outstanding</u> migrant workers and gave them subsidies to finish distance programs Peking University offers.
>
> Today's migrants are, if anything, <u>less content</u> than their parent's generation because<u> their expectations are much greater</u>.
>
> (Send Migrants to College, *China Daily*, September 27, 2011)

The explicit and personal judgments of migrant workers *ambitious, outstanding, less content, and their expectations are much greater* show us how the writer judges the workers and how he tries to evoke the readers' positive judgment too. It must be pointed out that the complement *less content* has positive meaning in this context and reinforces the positive evaluation. It is the **prosody** or pattern of choices that run through the text, much the same as in music where the sound swells and diminishes (Martin & Rose 2007:59).

> Along with four other experts, Yang Boda, former deputy curator of the Palace Museum in Beijing, determined that two items of jade clothing sewn with gold threads were authentic antiques and slapped a price tag of 2.4 billion yuan ($376 million) on them. The two items were later found to be fakes.
>
> Were these experts inadequate in talent and learning? Or were they blinded by their lust for money?
>
> The response from some of these experts was unbelievable. They defended their appraisal of the fake antiques as a form of academic freedom.
>
> In fact these experts did not touch the jade clothes when determining their authenticity. They appraised them while walking around glass-box exhibits, instead of making a close-up check.
>
> . . .
>
> Trading their expertise for money, these experts serve as a cat's paw for those who produce fake antiques. Clearly the malfeasance of the five experts in cultural relics has tainted those who are assigned to take care of the nation's cultural and historical relics. These people were supposed to be of good moral standing and undisputed reputation.
>
> (Jade's Worrying Truth, *China Daily*, September 13, 2011)

As with admiration in the previous extract, moral judgment is also made directly in this extract. The writer morally condemns the so-called experts through the complements *blinded by their lust for money, unbelievable,* and

the subject *malfeasance* and predicate *taint.* The metaphor *a cat's paw* also plays the role in creating a negative image of the experts.

Nevertheless, every drop of ink counts in effective editorials. It is not surprising to find that the condemnation of the experts starts from the very beginning of the extract and extends over it without explicit encoding of judgment. The former position of one of the experts gives us the illusion that he as the authoritarian should be trustworthy. Unfortunately, he along with four other experts just *slapped* a price tag. The action indicates they were not cautious with the price they determined. Their ridiculous defense for themselves *defended their appraisal of the fake antiques as a form of academic freedom* and their careless appraisal attitude *appraised them while walking around glass-box exhibits* accumulate the negative moral judgment. Therefore, the prosody is realized continuously across the discourse and keeps on leaving a negative image of the experts.

Appreciation

Affect and judgment look at people's feelings and reactions towards other people and their behavior. Appreciation looks at resources for construing our evaluations of things. As with affect and judgment, things can be appreciated positively or negatively (Martin and Rose, 2007: 37). Nevertheless, the appreciation targets can be concrete or abstract. The concrete can range from movies, to laptops, to furniture, to the earth, and to the four seasons; the abstract targets include relationships, qualities of life, how well a problem is solved etc.

Extract 4:

Writing Chinese characters with a brush has been <u>an important part of life</u> for people of letters for thousands of years. In addition, such writing can be appreciated for <u>the beauty of the strokes and forms</u> and in the hands of a master it is elevated to <u>an art form</u>.

Good calligraphy with a brush requires a peaceful mind and a calm temperament. So practicing calligraphy would actually be a way for students to get a respite from the pressures of their academic studies. But even if some students or their parents realize how <u>valuable</u>

calligraphy can be for the cultivation of personality, they will not want to lag behind other students who concentrate on examination subjects.

So the calligraphy class risks being sidelined as something of little or no importance by schools and teachers, who place examination scores before anything else.

In such circumstances, whether calligraphy, as a compulsory course, can benefit students will depend on the MOE's efforts to reduce the total workload of students.

(Don't brush off writing, *China Daily*, August 29, 2011)

The first two paragraphs of the extract are full of explicit positive appreciation of Chinese calligraphy. The list of the benefits that students can obtain from practicing calligraphy *get a respite from the pressures of their academic studies* and *cultivation of personality* also enhances the positive prosody. Therefore the first two paragraphs help persuade the readers into agreeing with the writer's argument that calligraphy should be set up as a course and the MOD (Ministry of Education) needs to make efforts to reduce the total workload of students.

Graduation

Graduation is concerned with the distinctive gradable feature of attitudes. Gradability indicates the up-scaled or down-scaled property of attitudinal meanings. Martin and Rose (2007) identify two kinds of resources for amplification: force and focus. Force is for using words that intensify meanings and vocabulary items that include degrees of intensity. Force can be amplified by intensifiers, attitudinal lexis, metaphors and swearing can amplify the force of attitudes. Focus is "about resources for making something that is inherently non-gradable gradable", i.e. sharper or softer (Martin & Rose, 2007: 46).

Extract 5:

The education system places <u>too</u> much emphasis on academic grades. It fails to teach our young people how to be a person of integrity and moral character.

(Teaching More Than Grades, *China Daily*, April 12, 2011)

The intensifier *too* functions as grading attitude and amplifies force of the emphasis.

Extract 6:

An investigation by the Chinese Association of Scientists has revealed that only about 40 percent of the funds allocated for scientific research is used on the projects they are meant for. The rest is usually spent on things that have nothing to do with research. Some research project leaders use the money to buy furniture, home appliances and, hold your breath, even apartments.

(Honesty Research Needed, *China Daily*, September 17, 2011)

Judging from the context, the underlined resources in the above extract sharpen apparently categorical distinctions. To emphasize how serious dishonest research is, the writer sharpens the focus of the number 40% with *only about*. The clause *that has nothing to do with research* sharpens the category *things*. The fund is definitely wasted on other unrelated things rather than research.

Engagement

All discourse, whether written or spoken, is dialogic in that to speak or to write is always influenced by the words said or written before, and the responses of actual, potential or imagined interactants (Fairlough, 2003; Martin & Rose, 2007). Engagement is concerned with the dialogic nature of discourse and the linguistic resources which provide the source of attitudes. It is a crucial element of most types of argument that writers are careful to handle to persuade readers. The term heterogloss refers to different voices other than the writer, and monogloss refers to the single voice of the author (Martin & Rose, 2007). A wide range of lexically and grammatically diverse locutions have been recognized as resources of heterogloss: projecting sources, modality and concession (Martin & Rose, 2007).

Projecting sources

There are four ways to attribute sources: projections, naming speech acts, projecting within clauses and scare quotes. The language phenomenon called projection by Halliday and Mattiessen (2004) is to quote or report what people say or think. Projections can be direct speech, namely the quote of the exact words spoken by someone presented in quotation marks. They can also be an indirect speech written by paraphrasing the words, quotation marks are not used. Apart from what someone said, projections are possible to quote or report someone's thoughts or feelings. Naming speech acts is also another kind of projection managed "between sentences" and is "often associated with the beginning and end of texts" (Martin & Rose, 2007: 51). Scare quotes refer to cases "where punctuation is used to signal that someone else's words are being used" (Martin & Rose, 2007: 52). The two ways are often used to attribute sources and thus make the writing believable.

Extract 7:

Earlier last week Dong Pan, director of the Real Estate Research Center of Beijing Normal University, gave his students a timetable for making big money. In his micro blog on Sina.com, a popular Chinese website, Dong warned them "not to visit him again or mention him as their mentor" if they were not worth 40 million yuan ($28 million) by the age of 40.

Professor Dong was straightforward when spurring on his students to materialistic excess.

His words lay bare the fact that money is worshipped even in China's ivory towers.

(In a Material World, *China Daily*, April 11, 2011)

The underlined words *not to visit him again or mention him as their mentor* are enclosed in quotation marks to imply the words are from the professor although they are not the exact word he used since the writer has changed the persons. The writer therefore evokes the judgment of the professor from readers themselves through attributing the evaluation to the professor's words in his blog.

The subject of the last sentence takes the form of naming speech acts. It projects the beginning of the extract and assigns responsibility for opinions to an external sources.

Projections within clauses explicitly assign responsibility for opinions to sources (Martin & Rose, 2007: 51).

Extract 8:

A young Chinese man studying in Japan did not give his mother a hug but an emergency trip to the hospital on landing at Pudong International Airport in Shanghai on April 1. He stabbed his mother nine times and left her in coma. His mother was rushed to intensive care and is fortunate to be alive.
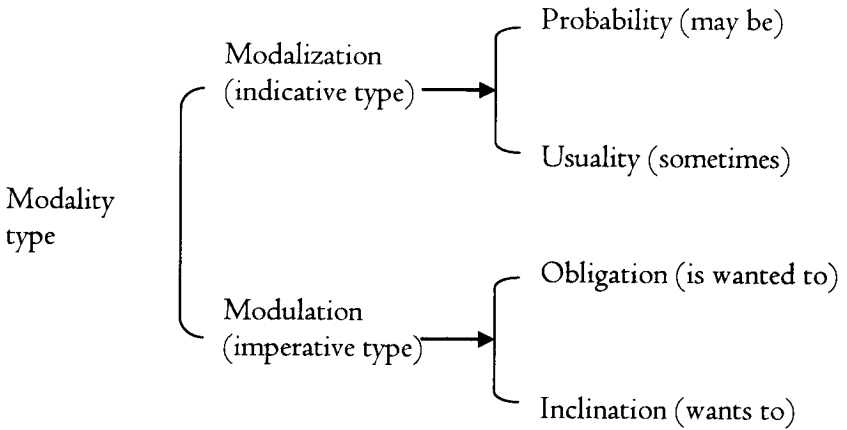
The man was said to be angry with his mother because she failed to put 300,000-400,000 yuan ($45,880 to 61,170), his tuition fee, in his Japanese account in time.

(Teaching More than Grades, *China Daily*, April 12, 2011)

The projection within clause is symbolized with *saying claim to be*, attributing the proposition to an external source.

Modality

Appraisal and modality are related because they are both related to the speaker's attitude (Thompson, 2004). Modality is not only related with graduation, but also engagement. They can help negotiating services or information (Martin & Rose, 2007). Choices of modality can indicate and grade positive or negative polarity while introducing additional voices into a text. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 618) explain that modality refers to the area of meaning that lies between yes and no – the intermediate ground between positive and negative polarity. They also theorize the system of modality with the following figure:

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                                                    ┌─ Probability (may be)
                        Modalization                │
              ┌──────── (indicative type) ─────────►│
              │                                      │
              │                                      └─ Usuality (sometimes)
  Modality    │
  type        │
              │                                      ┌─ Obligation (is wanted to)
              │         Modulation                   │
              └──────── (imperative type)───────────►│
                                                     │
                                                     └─ Inclination (wants to)
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Halliday and Matthiessen (2004:618)

Thompson (2004:73) summarizes that in newspaper articles which express the newspaper's view on a current event, readers often find that "modalization occurring as the writer ponders various aspects of the event and the possible implications, followed by a move to modulation as the writer explains what should be done". The following extract is a typical example.

Extract 9:

> The money collected till now <u>can</u> provide free lunch for nearly 20,000 children a year. This single event has sent the message that there is a great potential that <u>can</u> be tapped to help poor children with their education.
>
> <u>It is obviously unrealistic</u> to expect that conditions <u>will be</u> improved overnight. But <u>hopefully</u>, both the central and local governments <u>can</u> learn something from the free lunch campaign and realize that there are many more ways to raise the efficiency of aid.
>
> (Education Equality, *China Daily*, June 1, 2011)

The modal auxiliary verb *can* emerges twice in the first paragraph of the extract to indicate the high probability of giving a hand to poor children. The 'it' structure clause evaluates negatively the possibility to improve

conditions in rural areas quickly with the complement *unrealistic* and the modal adjunct *obviously* in the 'it' structure. However, the emergence of the concessive conjunction *but* and the modal adjunct *hopefully* then apparently shifts the negative appreciation. The high grading of the probability of both central and local governments' learning lessons is realized by the modal auxiliary verb *can.*

Concession

The resources for adjusting expectations regarding heteroglossia include some conjunctions, adjuncts indicating counterexpectancy and continuatives. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) state that concessive conjunctions mark the enhancement relations between clauses or sentences and they indicate that the earlier span of text belongs to the conditions of the next span of text.

Concessive conjunctions like *however, but, nevertheless* signal concession and introduce counterexpectancy. Monitoring expectancy is in fact a persuasive feature of conjunctions realized as time, contrast and causes (Martin & Rose, 2007: 56). Some adjuncts can also indicate counterexpectancy like concessive conjunctions. Some continuatives such as *still, even and only* also counter expectations but they occur inside the clause rather than at the beginning.

Extract 10:

> Exempting rural children from tuition and other fees since 2007 has relieved many poor families of the burden of paying for the basic education of their children. <u>But despite</u> all the benefits for rural parents, the relief has been far from enough to ensure their children get the education they are entitled to.

> (Education Equality, *China Daily*, June 1, 2011)

The inclusion of the two concessive conjunctions *but* and *despite* creates the counter-expectancy and clarifies the shift in the writer's attitude. They function to reinforce a positive interpretation of the benefits that rural parents and children get but also indicate the negative appreciation of the relief.

Prosody of appraisal resources

Prosody of appraisal resources refers to the pattern of choices of appraisal resources in a text which "resonate with one another from one moment to another as a text unfolds" (Martin & Rose, 2007: 59). It is realized continuously with explicit evaluation resources and implicit ones to keep the coherence of prosody and discourse. According to Thompson (2004: 77), appraisal can be "inscribed" explicitly, which is fairly easy to recognize, but it can also be "evoked". In other words, some words that writers or speakers use are not directly evaluative but build up the grounds for message receivers to make evaluation.

Extract I I:

Many personally drive their children to these exam halls or book hotels close to the exam venues beforehand.

Drivers along the roads close to the exam venues are reminded not to honk; construction sites are shut; flight paths of commercial aircraft are altered lest they disturb the test takers.

The nation literally holds its breath during the test days.

(Testing Times, *China Daily*, June 10, 2010)

The above extract is about ·how much Chinese people care about annual national college entrance exam in China. The description has no overtly evaluative language, but the details it includes are clearly meant to make readers evaluate the exam as the central part of Chinese life since the whole country is anxious during the exam days. In a word, the details are the grounds to evoke appraisal.

Confusion in analyzing appraisal

The confusion in analyzing appraisal is inherent partially due to the way in which appraisal is expressed. Much of appraisal is expressed by lexical choices and there are few grammatical structures that can be seen as having evolved with a primarily evaluative function (Thompson, 2004: 75). In this sense, analyzing appraisal is concerned with interpreting discourse by focusing on semantic resources which accumulate appraisal as text unfolds.

Another factor that can cause fuzziness in judging appraisal is that the subcategories of attitude are distinguished mainly based on the nature of the language resources and targets of evaluation. There are instances of attitude where the borderlines of the subcategories are not clear-cut. Therefore, Martin and Rose (2007: 40) stress that the context sensitivity of these borderline items underlines the importance of analyzing appraisal in prosodic terms. So it is important to take co-text into account, rather than analyzing simply item by item.

With reference to 'Editorials', these exist to make comments and give certain views to the readers. What we have attempted to show in this article is how editorial writers employ rhetorical strategies to construct and evaluative stance through the framework of Appraisal theory. What such an analysis does is to foreground how the linguistic resources interplay in order to co-articulate the view(s) of the editorial writer.

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