

ATTITUDINAL POSITIONING IN MEDIA DISCOURSE: A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF JOURNALISTIC COMMENTARY

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a study that investigates the expression of evaluative language in newspaper comment articles. The main focus of this study is to explore differences in the use of evaluations in two British national newspapers, the quality *The Guardian* and the popular *The Sun*. The expressions of evaluative language are analysed with reference to attitude. Attitude is one of three main components of the Appraisal System in language, which is concerned with the use of evaluative language. Appraisal theory has been developed within the broader theoretical framework of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and focuses on the interpersonal metafunction of language. In this context, the findings of the study intend to show the role that evaluative meanings play in the dissemination of ideology, in the constitution of textual styles and authorial identities, and in the negotiation of writer/reader relationships.

KEY WORDS: Appraisal Theory, evaluation, attitude, affect, judgement, appreciation, journalistic commentary.

RESUMEN

Este artículo investiga la expresión del lenguaje evaluativo en artículos de opinión en prensa escrita. El objetivo principal del estudio es explorar las diferencias en el uso de la evaluación en dos periódicos nacionales británicos, el diario de calidad *The Guardian* y el periódico popular *The Sun*. Las expresiones del lenguaje evaluativo se analizan con referencia a la actitud. La actitud es uno de los tres principales componentes del Sistema de la Evaluación en el lenguaje, que tiene que ver con el uso del lenguaje evaluativo. La Teoría de la Valoración se desarrolla en el marco teórico de la lingüística sistémico-funcional, centrándose en la metafunción interpersonal del lenguaje. En este contexto, los hallazgos del estudio pretenden mostrar el papel de los significados evaluativos en la diseminación de la ideología, en la constitución de estilos textuales e identidades del autor, y en la negociación de las relaciones escritor/lector.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Teoría de la Valoración, evaluación, actitud, afecto, juicio, apreciación, artículo de opinión.



1. INTRODUCTION

The Appraisal framework is a theory developed over the past decade within the tradition of Systemic Functional Linguistics for analyzing the language of evaluation, the linguistic realization of attitudes, judgements and emotion and the ways in which these evaluations are negotiated interpersonally. This rich and evolving framework has been applied to a wide variety of text and discourse analysis issues including classroom interaction, academic writing, literary stylistics, language of the law and of health professionals, political rhetoric, casual conversation and media discourse, and is demonstrated throughout by sample text analyses drawn from a range of registers, genres and fields. It is, therefore, a theory especially well suited to an analysis aimed at multiple readerships as linguists, critical discourse analysts or leadership rhetoric scholars.

Drawing on the Systemic Functional Linguistic theory (Halliday, *Introduction*), the present study explores the appraisal system of attitude which includes the evaluative sub-systems of *affect*, *judgement* and *appreciation* (see Martin, "Beyond"; Martin and Rose; White, "Beyond"; Hood; Hood and Martin, "Invocación"; Martin and White). From the analysis of a set of opinion articles from two British national newspapers, *The Guardian* and *The Sun* this paper takes a contrastive approach to investigate the use of appraisal resources among the attitudinal values expressing emotions (*affect*), resources that have to do with feelings that have been institutionalized, for instance, as "norms about how products, performances, and naturally occurring phenomena are valued" (*appreciation*) or "norms about how people should or shouldn't behave" (*judgement*) (Martin, "Beyond" 155-159). In this line, results are expected to throw further light on the writing practices in opinion articles outlining a rather comprehensive framework for evaluative language in attitudinal positioning within this type of discourse.

The perspective from which we have analysed the corpus is included in the line of studies advocated by Iedema et al.; Bolívar; Martin; Christie and Martin; Coffin; White; Rothery and Stenglin; Scott and Thompson; Kaplan and Solá; Macken-Horarik; Martin and Rose; Hood; Kaplan; Miller; Martin and White; Lee; Mei, "Use"; González Rodríguez, "Expresión." This perspective is multidisciplinary and combines an analysis of the linguistic, cognitive, social and/or cultural aspects of the texts in context. In this approach, we adopt a dynamic perspective in which language is a tool for social interaction to argue for systematic correlations between the evaluative resources available in language itself and specific contextual features, and to explore how meanings are realized through the positioning and coarticulation of interpersonal resources across phases of text (Hood 25). A study such as this, we hope, will provide a discourse-semantic approach to the study of interpersonal meaning in different socio-cultural settings and offer a typology of evaluative resources available in opinion writing.

2. THE MATERIAL OF THE STUDY

National newspapers in Britain are often thought of as either *quality* or *popular* papers on the basis of differences in style and content. Quality newspapers, which are broadsheet in format, are directed at readers who want full information on a wide range of public matters and current affairs and are prepared to spend a considerable amount of time reading it. Popular or tabloid newspapers appeal to people who want news of a more entertaining character, presented in a more concise form and with ample illustrations. The more popular tabloid papers tend to appeal to those readers who want issues with more human interest, and they generally contain a larger number of photographs. Drawing on the distinction that Systemic-Functional Grammar (Eggins 93) makes between spoken and written language, and between informal and formal language, it may be claimed that broadsheets have many features in common with formal and written language, whereas tabloids present a highly spoken and informal style.

All the press news is basically divided into two categories: *stories* (*hard news* and *soft news*) and *comments* (Itule and Anderson; Bell; Vilarnovo and Sánchez). Whereas the publication of news becomes the publication of “truth,” the purpose of opinion discourse, by contrast, is to emphatically *reaffirm* this “truth” for the intended reader. Thus, in comments, the mixing of fact and evaluation is to be expected, due to the rhetorical and argumentative nature of giving opinions and attitudes. Many comments are published by newspapers without credit to the author. In this way, the entire news organization is represented, presenting opinion as an *institution*. As far as our own examples are concerned, news organizations express comment on a variety of subjects and in a number of formats. There are editorials or leading articles, columns, reviews, and commentaries. For newspapers, opinions are used to influence an audience towards some end, and they are found throughout the newspaper — on the editorial page and the *op-ed*, or opposite editorial, letters to the editor, complaint letters, commentaries by experts, and so on. This type of articles contributes to the formulation of certain viewpoints about the world, offering readers a distinctive and sometimes authoritative voice that speaks to the public directly about matters of public importance (Verstergaard 155).

In general, opinion writing has received less theoretical and empirical attention by scholars than hard news stories (see, for instance, van Dijk; Bell; Fowler; Scollon and Scollon; White, *Telling*; González Rodríguez, “Análisis,” “Estructura”; Ungerer). However, since opinion articles are important parts of the dailies they have, obviously, been at the centre of interest in mass communications, text and discourse linguistics (see van Dijk, *Ideology*; Vestergaard, ed.; White, *Telling*; Martin and White; González Rodríguez, “Interpretation”), in so-called Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough; van Dijk, “Critical”), and more recently corpus linguistics or historical analysis (Westin).

Our description is illustrated throughout with the study of a sample of opinion articles from the British national newspapers *The Guardian* and *The Sun* in relation to the same event, The Libyan civil war, an armed conflict in the North African state of Libya, fought between forces loyal to Colonel Muammar Gaddafi



and those seeking to oust his government. Justification for the choice of these two newspapers is formulated in terms of the basic communicative purpose of each publication. To this respect, the quality daily *The Guardian* and the popular *The Sun* belong to different cultural idiosyncrasies, they are directed at different readers and, on the basis of differences in style and content, both newspapers provide different interests and levels of education. In general terms, this research falls within the line of a previous work (González Rodríguez, “Expresión”) to deepen the analysis of aspects covered there. The study is mainly of a qualitative type, since our main interest is to discuss the nature of the categories to be analysed and to illustrate them with instances of real discourse from the press. For this purpose, the material of the study consists of ten pieces of opinion writing in each newspaper (ten editorials from *The Guardian* and ten comment articles from *The Sun*) covering the period from January to July 2011, a very violent time in which the media coverage was extremely intense. The comment pieces were taken from the respective websites of the two newspapers (<<http://www.guardian.co.uk>> and <http://www.thesun.co.uk>>). All references in the analysis section below will be to these web-based archives.

3. THE SYSTEM OF ATTITUDE WITHIN THE APPRAISAL THEORY FRAMEWORK

This section presents a general overview of the System of Attitude as described in Martin and White and points to some problems derived from the semantic scope assigned to some of the categories. The discussion will provide the basis to illustrate our analytical approach which will be fully developed in Section 4, by considering the corpus of the study in detail, relating patterns of appraisal to context and concentrating on how evaluation is used to negotiate social relations.

As noted above, Appraisal Theory (Martin, “Beyond”; Martin and Rose; Martin and White), developed within the Systemic Functional Linguistics, is the framework aiming to describe the various ways of linguistic realization of interpersonal meanings in language use. This theory was developed with the main purpose of analyzing the resources of intersubjective stance and to trace “a comprehensive map of appraisal resources that we could deploy systematically in discourse analysis, both with a view to understanding the rhetorical effect of evaluative lexis as texts unfold, and to better understanding the interplay of interpersonal meaning and social relations in the model of language and the social we were developing, especially in the area of solidarity” (Martin, “Beyond” 148).

The theory of Appraisal proposes a taxonomy which includes the systems of *attitude*, *engagement* and *graduation* (see White, *Telling*; Macken-Horarik, “Appraisal”; Martin and Rose; Hood and Martin; Martin and White). Attitude is concerned with “our feelings, including emotional reactions, judgements of behaviour and evaluation of things” (Martin and White 35). Engagement accounts for those linguistic resources whereby the authorial voice positions itself with respect to other textual voices and alternative positions at stake in a given communicative context (Martin and White 94). The system of graduation encompasses those resources

which strengthen or weaken attitude, resources for “adjusting the volume” of items (Martin and Rose 41). Attitude, engagement and graduation reveal the significance of context, the interpersonal character of evaluation and its communicative importance. As Hunston and Thompson (143) point out: “it is a vital part of the meaning negotiation that is at the heart of all communication.”

Attitude is the major subsystem in appraisal framework and is the superordinate term for evaluative language in attitudinal positioning in text. The other two systems, engagement and graduation, are considered attendant systems which contribute to the core one and may function simultaneously. As mentioned previously, it is beyond the scope of this article to survey all these resources (see, for example, Martin, “Beyond”; and White, “Appraisal,” for detailed study). In this sense, our main interest here relates to the system of attitude, since it is an aspect of vital importance for the genre under study—opinion articles.

Attitude is itself divided into three regions of feeling: *affect*, *judgement* and *appreciation*. Affect deals with resources for construing emotional reactions; judgement is concerned with resources for assessing behaviour according to various normative principles; and appreciation looks at resources for construing the value of things, including natural phenomena and semiosis, as either product or process (Martin and Rose 24). This interaction among the three attitudinal categories is illustrated in Figure 3.1, below.

Attitudinal meanings are seen as carried by utterances, by complete propositions rather than by individual words; however, there are instances in which it is possible to point to individual lexical items as carrying attitudinal assessment. On the face of it, the unit of analysis is the proposition or proposal, or a sequence of interconnected propositions or proposals, analysed in the context of the larger text in which they operate.

One important distinction that is made in appraisal theory is between implicit and explicit appraisal (affect, judgement, appreciation). Explicit appraisal concerns instances where the evaluation is overtly “inscribed” in the text through the vocabulary choice, as in lexical expressions such as *skilful*, *corruptly*, *lazily* or *aberrant*. With implicit appraisal, the appraisal values are triggered by “tokens” of appraisal, that is, superficially neutral, ideational meanings which nevertheless have the capacity in the culture to evoke judgemental responses (depending upon the reader’s social/cultural/ideological reader position). In relation to implicit judgements, the dilemma is how much of the ideational meaning in a text is read as evoking judgements, in the sense that any text can be read judgementally (Martin, “Reading” 33). As White (*Language*) himself acknowledges, the distinction between judgement and appreciation is a fine one and there are also connections between affect and appreciation. In any case, the crucial issue seems to be here whether the writer approval or disapproval is expressed, whether via affect, judgement or appreciation.



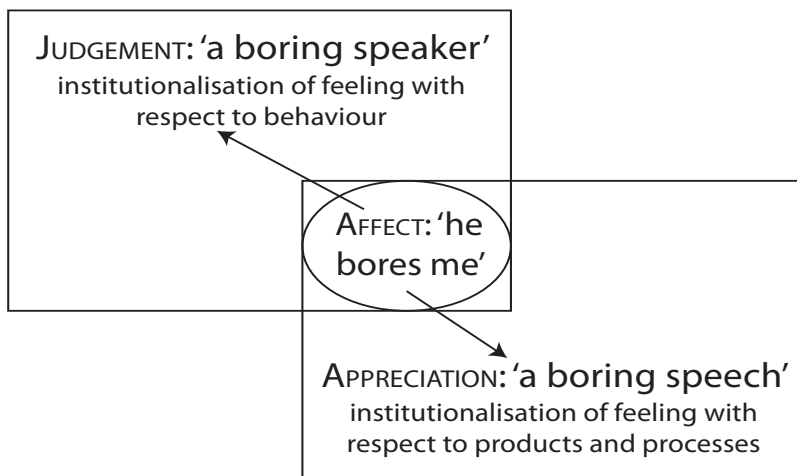


Figure 3.1 Semantic interconnection among attitudinal values (White, *Telling* 108).

3.1. AFFECT

Affect is the emotional response to the person, thing, happening or state of affairs and is indicated through various lexical items as verbs of emotion, adverbs and adjectives of emotion and nominalization. Its realisations comprise modification of participants and processes, affective mental and behavioural processes, and modal adjuncts. Beyond this we find the usual range of grammatical metaphors (Halliday, *Introduction*), including nominalised realisations of qualities and processes. Because affect focuses on the feelings and emotional dispositions of individuals, they are especially important in creation of reader empathy. Affect can be positive or negative, explicit or invoked. The Sydney-based work from which our own research evolved classifies affect into three major sets of emotions:

In/Security: emotions to do with well-being (anxiety, fear, confidence and trust, etc.);

Dis/Satisfaction: emotions to do with the pursuit of goals (ennui, dis/pleasure, curiosity, respect, dis/comfort, etc.);

Un/Happiness: emotions to do with what Martin (2000: 150) calls “affairs of the heart” (sadness, anger, happiness, love, etc.).

The most obvious rhetorical function of the use of affect is to indicate an attitudinal position towards the person, thing or situation which triggers the emotion. Accordingly, such emotional assessments may or may not reside entirely in the individual subjectivity of the speaker/writer. Through “authorial affect”, the speaker/writer strongly foregrounds his/her subjective presence in the communicative process. With this revelation of emotional response he/she seeks to establish an interpersonal rapport with the reader to the extent that the reader agrees with, understands or at least sympathises with that emotional reaction. By contrast, in “non-authorial

affect,” the speaker/writer is not the source of the emotion by which the evaluation is conveyed but presents him/herself as merely reporting on the emotional reactions of others. It should also be noted that when the speaker/writer attributes some kind of emotion to a social actor, this attribution provokes in the reader/listener either a sympathetic or unsympathetic response to that social actor.

3.2. JUDGEMENT

Judgement is the negative or positive attitudinal evaluation of human behaviour by reference to social norms or rules. Accordingly, it is a parameter that has to do with those norms about how people should or shouldn't behave. Judgement, as a system of attitudinal positioning, is then shaped by the particular cultural and ideological situation in which it operates. In this sense, the same event may receive different judgements, according to the ideological position of the person who is making those judgements. Judgement is divided into *social esteem* and *social sanction*. Five major categories are classified which is aligned to the modal system in English. The table below illustrates the judgement value subsystem:

TABLE 3.1. JUDGEMENT SUBSYSTEM (WHITE, "APPRAISAL" 12).		
SOCIAL ESTEEM	POSITIVE [ADMIRE]	NEGATIVE [CRITICISE]
Normality (custom) 'is the person's behaviour unusual, special, customary?'	standard, everyday, average...; lucky, charmed...; fashionable, avant garde...	eccentric, odd, maverick...; unlucky, unfortunate...; dated, unfashionable...
Capacity 'is the person competent, capable?'	skilled, clever, insightful...; athletic, strong, powerful...; sane, together...	stupid, slow, simple-minded...; clumsy, weak, uncoordinated...; insane, neurotic...
Tenacity (resolve) 'is the person dependable, well disposed?'	plucky, brave, heroic...; reliable, dependable...; indefatigable, resolute, persevering	cowardly, rash, despondent...; unreliable, undependable...; lazy, distracted, unfocussed...
SOCIAL SANCTION	POSITIVE [PRAISE]	NEGATIVE [CONDEMN]
Veracity (truth) 'is the person honest?'	honest, truthful, credible...; genuine, authentic...; frank, direct...	deceitful, dishonest...; bogus, fake...; deceptive, obfuscatory...
Propriety (ethics) 'is the person ethical, beyond reproach?'	good, moral, virtuous...; law abiding, fair, just...; considerate, sensitive, caring...	bad, immoral, lascivious...; corrupt, unjust, unfair...; cruel, mean, brutal, oppressive...

It remains meaningful and significant to distinguish between *implicit* (or evoked) and *explicit* (or inscribed) judgement. Under these categories the evaluation may be explicitly presented by means of a lexical item carrying the judgement value (inscribed judgement) or values can be viewed as purely "simple" facts, unevaluated descriptions of some event or state of affairs (evoked judgement) which, nonetheless,



are likely to lead to some inference of good or bad, praiseworthy or blameworthy or appropriate or inappropriate behaviour. As the distinction between the explicit and implicit evaluation is not always clear, White (*Language*) indicates that there are instances in which an utterance does not contain values of explicit judgement but it employs some evaluative language and this evaluative language acts to direct us towards a judgement response. In such cases, an inference of a judgement value is provoked in the reader/writer. This mode of judgement is termed by White provoked (implicit) judgement.

3.3. APPRECIATION

Appreciation is the subsystem of resources for aesthetic evaluation of objects, artefacts (a term used to include not only material objects which result from human industry but also works of art, texts, buildings and so on), processes and states of affairs rather than for human behaviour. Like affect and judgement, appreciation also has a positive and negative dimension. It is organised around three variables: *reaction*, *composition* and *valuation* (see Table 3.2.). Reaction concerns the impact of the text/process on our attention (reaction: impact) and its emotional impact (reaction: quality). Composition concerns perceptions of proportionality/balance (composition: balance) and detail (composition: complexity) in a text/process. Valuation has to do with our assessment of the social significance of the text/process. Affect, judgement and appreciation constitute an interconnected and interactive system of evaluation. They are all motivated by affectual response with judgement institutionalizing affectual positioning with respect to human behaviour and appreciation institutionalizing affectual positioning with respect to product and process.

TABLE 3.2. APPRECIATION CATEGORIES (MARTIN, "BEYOND" 160).

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
Reaction: impact 'did it grab me?'	arresting, captivating, engaging	dull, boring, tedious
Reaction: quality 'did I like it?'	lovely, beautiful, splendid	plain, ugly, repulsive
Composition: balance 'did it hang together?'	balanced, harmonious, symmetrical	unbalanced, discordant
Composition: complexity 'was it hard to follow?'	simple, elegant, intricate	ornamental, extravagant, simplistic
Valuation 'was it worthwhile?'	challenging, profound, original	shallow, insignificant, conservative

4. CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF ATTITUDINAL VALUES

There are various ways of analysing appraisal. Analysis can focus on lexical expressions of attitude or the analyst can start with the textual environment and explore patterns of choice from the point of view of their higher order semantic function. In our study we have focused on the axiological function of appraisal choices. Table 4.1. clearly shows that in the sample of opinion articles from *The Guardian* and *The Sun* among the three subsystems of attitude, the writers employed many more judgement and affect items than appreciation ones. As it will be stated, this pattern in the use of attitudinal resources is regarded as being characteristic of opinion writing. Statistically, the attitudinal values tend to be encoded more in a negative way rather than in the positive one.

TABLE 4.1. OVERVIEW OF THE ATTITUDE SUBSYSTEM.

	ATTITUDINAL RESOURCES					
	AFFECT		JUDGEMENT		APPRECIATION	
	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>The Sun</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>The Sun</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>The Sun</i>
Positive	34	21	38	242	0	0
Negative	98	192	188	76	61	43
Total	132	213	226	318	61	43

The analysis based on the systems of attitude is divided into three sub-analyses: one based on the system of affect, one based on the system of judgement, and one based on the system of appreciation.

4.1. AFFECTUAL POSITIONING

Under affect, the writer may take responsibility for the attitudinal value assessment. Through such authorial affect, the writer foregrounds his subjective presence in the communicative process, establishing an interpersonal rapport with the reader in the sense that, for the evaluation to carry any rhetorical weight, the reader must see this personalised response as in some way relevant, significant, valid, justified or at least understandable. By the use of such affect, the writer bids to establish an interpersonal bond with the reader to the extent that the reader agrees with, understands or at least sympathises with that emotional reaction. This is one mode of appraisal which involves an infusion of feeling into an event sequence and it is important to analyse within opinion writing since it is a primary mechanism by which a text insinuates itself into reader attitudes. The texts analysed from *The Guardian* and *The Sun* show that most of total affect values in both newspapers are authorial affect which indicates that the writer takes responsibility for the attitudinal



value assessment. Since the social purpose of argumentative texts is to argue a case in such a way that the audience is convinced of the truth of the viewpoint or the merits of the proposal, we have considered in the analysis only differences between utterances where an attitudinal assessment is directly and overtly indicated. This kind of foregrounded affect has the potential to bring the readers round to the author's view and position them attitudinally, provoking their emotional response to actions evaluated by the writer. In fact, the predominance of foregrounded affect items in the corpus also reveals disclosure of personal emotions and the preference for direct ethical or moral evaluations.

The opinion articles in our study clearly show an impersonalised and backgrounded use of affectual resources in the corpus from *The Guardian* being the affect represented by nominalised realisations of qualities and processes as *sadness, sorrow, grief, anxiety, displeasure, risk, poverty, unhappiness*, etc. By contrast, the affectual meanings in the articles from *The Sun* are mostly construed by behaviour surge or surge of feelings, affective mental and behavioural processes, and modal adjuncts. Some examples of these are *tremble, fearful, terrorised, abuse, miserable, sweetsounding, upset, disliked, wept, feared, sadly, angry, furious, in tears*. The evaluated agents in these surges of feelings are present and foregrounded. It is this kind of foregrounded affect which has the potential to position *The Sun* readers attitudinally and provoke their emotional response to actions evaluated by the writer. This is exemplified in the following extracts (Affect values are in bold):

These are the people that have been suppressed over the years. It's time to make a **happier** life for themselves. (*The Sun* 27 Feb. 2012: *SAS get 150 Brits out of Libya*)

We should admit our **anxiety** and own it as we try to determine what is **sadly** happening in Libya. (*The Guardian* 03 Mar. 2011: *Libya is not helped by this prism of propaganda*)

The use of positive affect items in *The Guardian* is relatively small and constitutes only five examples of happiness, 29 examples of satisfaction and no security values at all. Similarly, the distribution of affect items in *The Sun* is encoded with 21 positive affectual values, having found in the analysis 13 examples of satisfaction values, and 8 items of happiness, without any examples of security values. As a matter of fact, this small number of positive affect items in both newspapers constitutes a distinct feature of the corpus analysed. The fact that there are few positive affect items is inherently related with the case of our study, the 2011 Libyan civil war as an ongoing armed conflict in the North African state of Libya being fought between those seeking to depose Muammar Gaddafi and hold democratic elections, and pro Gaddafi forces. At its core, the prominent target of journalistic criticism doubts the logic of going to war and asks why political alternatives were not sought. In addition, the negative criticism against the repressive government in Libya supports the necessity of foreign military intervention. Consider the following text extracts by way of exemplification (see bold):

Some contacts have claimed that Gaddafi and Kolotnytska have a **love** relationship. (*The Sun* 28 Feb 2011: *Nurse 'lover' sticks by Gaddafi*). **Affect (happiness)**

Eva Braun stayed with Hitler in his bunker so why shouldn't Galyna stay **pleased** with Gaddafi? (*The Sun* 28 Feb. 2011: *Nurse 'lover' sticks by Gaddafi*). **Affect (satisfaction)**

At last some **good** news on Libya. (*The Guardian* 26/ Jul. 2011: *Libya's stalemate shows it is time to tempt Gaddafi out, not blast him out*). **Affect (happiness)**

For the two Nato countries which did most to get the alliance to start bombing in order to produce regime change in Tripoli, the shift is **rewarding**. (*The Guardian* 26 Jul. 2011: *Libya's stalemate shows it is time to tempt Gaddafi out, not blast him out*). **Affect (satisfaction)**

In relation to the distribution of negative authorial affect as indicated in the corpus, *The Guardian* encodes 59 examples of insecurity values, 28 of unhappiness and 11 examples of dissatisfaction. The distinct features in the patterns of negative affect resources in the comment articles from *The Sun* show again the relatively small number of dissatisfaction items which constitutes 17, among all negative affect items 192. Most authorial negative affect are unhappiness (94) and insecurity (81) values. By way of further illustration consider the following examples: (See bold)

It is a measure of how **nervous** the Saudi ruling class must be as revolution laps at its front door in Bahrain and at its back door in Yemen. (*The Guardian* 25/ Feb. 2011: *Saudi Arabia: The need to change*). **Affect (insecurity)**

Gaddafi is obviously a **controversial** character and at this time their society is going through big changes. (*The Sun* 26 Feb. 2011: *British joy after Libya escape*). **Affect (dissatisfaction)**

The **hated** leader has lost control of huge swathes of his homeland stretching east to Benghazi and Tobruk. (*The Sun* 02 Mar. 2011: *Bloodbath fears grow in Libya*). **Affect (unhappiness)**

Gaddafi has not been bombed out of Tripoli and the territorial progress of the rebel army is **painfully** slow, with rebel fighters exasperated at Nato pilots. (*The Guardian* 26 Jul. 2012: *Libya: about turn*). **Affect (unhappiness)**

In brief, results show that there is an apparent tendency in *The Sun* to show affect forms far more frequently than in *The Guardian* (213 instances for *The Sun* versus 132 for *The Guardian*). Within affect, unhappiness constitutes the preferred orientation about emotions in *The Sun* comment articles. This result indicates that stories tend to be dramatised in the popular press and the style is more emotional if we compare it with the qualities, as it is *The Guardian*. In fact, the articles in tabloids are structured mainly around the most emotive and shocking elements of the information itself. One such difference stems from the emotiveness present in some



words. This means that informal language (tabloids) tends to be highly attitudinal and emotional, while formal language (broadsheets) is more neutral and objective. Another feature of British tabloids, as opposed to British broadsheets is connected with the high degree of personalization found in tabloids. By personalization we argue that tabloids tend to be packed with items about individuals, but they are lacking in reports of general or extended processes. This certainly goes hand in hand with the emphasis that tabloids place on gossip, emotion and scandal. Finally, regarding dissatisfaction, this set of emotion appears in the texts from both newspapers with similar frequency dealing with feelings of frustration in connection with the war itself. Similarly, the insecurity variable is covered in both newspapers by emotions mainly concerned with anxiety and fear in relation to the armed conflict.

Table 4.2 summarises the number of affect values as they appear in the sample from *The Guardian* and *The Sun*.

TABLE 4.2. AFFECT SUBSYSTEM IN THE CORPUS

	AFFECT					
	HAPINESS	UNHAPINESS	SATISFACTION	DISSATISFACTION	SECURITY	INSECURITY
<i>The Guardian</i>	5	28	29	11	0	59
<i>The Sun</i>	8	94	13	17	0	81

4.2. ASSESSING HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

Attitudes can be divided into another aspect of appraisal in order to evaluate people's character. The resources for judging people's character is referred to as judgement. The aim of judgement, then, is to exert control over people's behaviour. Drawing on Halliday's description of English modality two types of judgement have been proposed (Iedema et al.): the *social esteem* of the appraised refers to their *normality, capacity or tenacity*; alternatively, the *social sanction* of the appraised may be at stake, for example their *veracity or propriety* (Martin, "Interpersonal"; "Reading"). As mentioned previously, judgements of people's character can be *positive* or *negative*, and they may be judged explicitly or implicitly (Martin and Rose 28). Positive personal judgements are referred to as *admiration*, and negative ones as *criticism*. Positive moral judgements are referred to as *praise*, and negative ones as *condemnation*.

The results based on the system of judgement in *The Guardian* and *The Sun* show a predominant number of occurrences in judgement items in the two newspapers which mean a clear disclosure of personal emotions. In the texts analysed belonging to *The Guardian* 226 judgement items have been found, of which 188 judgement meanings are encoded in a negative way and 38 in a positive one. The results also show that 185 of these judgement values belong to the social sanction subsystem and 41 to the social esteem. In view of this fact, it follows that the writer in this broadsheet publication gives more importance to the evaluation of

the behaviour of the characters based on ethical principles codified in laws and regulations. By contrast, the social aspects related to the strengths or weaknesses in their personality are less relevant. The high use of judgements of sanction in *The Guardian* has to do with the densely nominalized speech that characterizes this publication, which depersonalizes the protagonists of the event, and transforms the evaluations on assumptions, even for opinion pieces, as it is reflected below in the following examples. These judgements of sanction are mostly negative: 176 negative social sanction meanings with a predominance of veracity (104 items) and less propriety (72 items) vs. 9 positive judgements of sanction with 6 veracity items and 3 propriety ones (see bold):

It is **true** too there have been more serious clashes in the east of the country, and air raids witnessed by my colleague Martin Chulov. But still there is much about this narrative that does not feel real. (*The Guardian* 03 Mar. 2011: *Libya is not helped by this prism of propaganda*). **Positive veracity**

“These guys know they aren’t going to fare well if the **manipulative** regime goes down,” Jason Pack, a Libya scholar at Oxford university, told the journal. (*The Guardian* 22 Mar. 2011: *What next for the Anglo-French forces in Libya?*). **Negative veracity**

Contrast this to the statements that David Cameron made in February and you get some measure of how this military campaign has gone, even in the eyes of those who launched it. **Badly**. (*The Guardian* 26 Jul. 2011: *Libya: about turn*). **Negative propriety**

Unless the economic and military pressure on Gaddafi inside Tripoli really is intense—and if so he is doing a **good** job of hiding it—this is make-believe. (*The Guardian* 26 Jul 2011: *Libya: about turn*). **Positive propriety**

The Guardian editorials show that the social esteem of the appraised is encoded more in a positive way than in a negative one (29 positive social esteem meanings vs. 12 negative ones). The editorials in this newspaper are characterized by the predominance of positive capacity (18 items) and positive tenacity judgement items (11) without any examples of positive normality values in the judgement system. The majority of negative social esteem items fall into the capacity values (6 items), followed by negative tenacity values (4 items) and finally negative normality values (2 items). Unlike the social sanction items which involve the moral judgement of praise or condemnation, the social esteem items do not indicate much religious or legal or moral implication. In the Appraisal system, social esteem items encode the writer’s personal judgement of admiration or criticism and the person judged could be raised or lowered in the esteem system in the target discourse community. Regarding the distribution of value judgements based on groups and individuals present in the editorials, those seeking to oust Gaddafi’s government as well as the victims of the attack receive most positive values and they are discursively constructed as being strong and courageous; on the contrary, Gaddafi’s forces are the most censored and criticized ones. Some examples are listed below (see bold):



“Early in his reign, Gaddafi targeted Libya’s **powerful** eastern tribes, redistributing their land to others and awarding them few influential posts.” (*The Guardian* 22 Mar. 2011: *What next for the Anglo-French forces in Libya?*). **Positive capacity**

Mr Moreno-Ocampo said his investigation into war crimes was continuing, and this could have an **odd** effect on those in Tripoli contemplating life after regime change. (*The Guardian* 17 Apr. 2011: *Libya: Caught in a vice*). **Negative normality**

The Franco-British shift is a big blow to Luis Moreno Ocampo, the **impetuous** prosecutor at the international criminal court who rushed to seek the Libyan leader’s arrest only weeks after fighting erupted. (*The Guardian* 26 Jul. 2011: *Libya stalemate shows it is time to tempt Gaddafi out, not blast him out*). **Negative tenacity**

The comment articles from *The Sun* show a clear contrast in the number of occurrences in the judgement items. Thus, we have counted 318 judgement items, of which 242 correspond to positive judgement and 76 to negative values. 107 of these items have to do with judgements of sanction (91 negative vs. 16 positive), and 211 with judgements of esteem (188 positive vs. 23 negative). As it is seen, the majority of the judgement items fall into the social esteem category. This pattern of judgement values present a sharp contrast with that in *The Guardian* editorials in which the social esteem accounts only for 41 items. The values of judgement in *The Sun* involve mainly evaluations by which the person judged is lowered or raised in the esteem of their community.

The texts in *The Sun* newspaper show, as in the sample from *The Guardian* that the judgements of sanction are predominantly negative (91 negative social sanction meanings in which there are 78 veracity items and 13 propriety items vs. 16 positive judgements of sanction with a predominance of veracity items (11) and 5 propriety values. Similar to *The Guardian* the comment articles in the popular *The Sun* reveal a similar number of negative judgements of social esteem (23): 16 tenacity values and 7 examples of capacity values. Regarding this point, the density of negative evaluative judgements is higher in *The Sun*. By contrast, ordinary people receive the most positive judgements of social esteem in *The Sun* which features a dominance of tenacity (45) and capacity (143) and irrelevance of normality items. One distinctive feature in this publication is how the victims of the Libyan crisis are evaluated very favourably in the semantic dimension of judgement as strong and courageous characters. This high number of positive judgements found in the characterization of individual characters is ultimately the consequence of the personalization of the information in the popular press. In this respect, the construction of the judgement value subsystem in *The Sun* corpus is exemplified by the following (see bold):

The **bloodthirsty** leader—in power for four decades- turned on his people and vowed to fight to the death. (*The Sun* 27 Feb. 2011: *Hague says Gaddafi must go*). **Negative propriety**

The former PM—who made friends with the **defiant** dictator despite Libya’s role in the Lockerbie bombing—has personally urged him to go in two phone calls. (*The Sun* 28 Feb. 2011: *‘Friend’ Blair told Gaddafi to go*). **Negative veracity**

The uprising in the North African nation has seen hundreds killed in pro-democracy demonstrations in which Gaddafi ordered **loyal** troops to fire on his country's own people. (*The Sun* 28 Feb. 2011: *'Friend' Blair told Gaddafi to go*). **Positive tenacity**

Aid agencies predicted a vast tragedy among the **unlucky** droves of refugees unless a mass evacuation ordered. (*The Sun* 02 Mar. 2011: *Bloodbath fears in Libya*). **Negative normality**

Ruthless leader Colonel Gaddafi sent troops to crush the rebellion against him in the east. (*The Sun* 02 Mar. 2011: *Bloodbath fears in Libya*). **Negative propriety**

"Time is of the essence. We have seen the uprising of a people against a **brutal** dictator, and it will send a dreadful signal if their **legitimate** aspirations are crushed." (*The Sun* 15 Mar. 2011: *Time to act now over jets*). **Negative propriety/Positive veracity**

British military officers are set to hit the ground in Libya to bolster rebels fighting **tyrant** Colonel Gaddafi. (*The Sun* 19/ Apr. 2011: *Brits join ground fight in Libya*). **Negative tenacity**

This contingent will be drawn from **experienced** British military forces. (*The Sun* 19 Apr. 2011: *Brits join ground fight in Libya*). **Positive capacity**

Table 4.3. shows the contrast in the number of occurrences in judgement items in *The Guardian* and *The Sun* corpus of study.

TABLE 4.3 JUDGEMENT SUBSYSTEM IN THE CORPUS

	JUDGEMENT									
	Social Esteem						Social Sanction			
	Normality		Capacity		Tenacity		Veracity		Propriety	
	G*	S*	G*	S*	G*	S*	G*	S*	G*	S*
Positive	0	0	18	143	11	45	6	11	3	5
Negative	2	0	6	7	4	16	104	78	72	13

G* (*The Guardian*)

S* (*The Sun*)

4.3. VALUING THE WORTH OF THINGS

Appreciation is the subsystem of resources for aesthetic evaluation of objects, artifacts, entities, presentation, etc. In general terms, appreciations can be divided into our reactions to things, their composition and their value. As with affect and judgement, we can recognise positive and negative evaluations.



Our analysis shows that in the editorials from *The Guardian* all the examples of appreciation are negative, with 61 items, all of them war-related. The conflict in Libya is particularly associated with the dimension of valuation, with 38 of these values having to do with the gravity, cruelty and violence of the attacks, followed by reaction: impact (12 items) and reaction: quality (7 items) and composition: balance (4 items). Some examples of these are: *important, significant, crucial, damaging, dangerous, unhealthy* (valuation); *dull, uninviting, arrestable, stunning, unexpected, impressive* (reaction: impact); *plain, unattractive, unpleasant, unacceptable* (reaction: quality).

Similar to *The Guardian* *The Sun* comment articles also exhibit negative appreciation with a lower proportion than in *The Guardian* editorials, with 43 items. The analysis also reveals a similar pattern in the use of appreciation resources in *The Sun* corpus which features a dominance of valuation (27 items), followed by reaction: impact (7 items), reaction: quality (3 items), composition: balance (2 items) and composition: complexity (4 items). The lower number of appreciation items in *The Sun* articles might be due to the widespread tendency in this kind of publications to explicit subjectivity, being more typical in the quality press the evaluation of objects, text/process and natural phenomena. Take as an example some of the meanings construing evaluations of “things,” that are typical of the tabloid press: *dangerous, hard, heavy, strong, enormous, profound, important, unhealthy* (valuation); *tight, sharp, straight* (reaction: impact); *horrible, disgusting* (reaction: quality); *strange, unpleasant* (composition: balance).

Illustrative realisations for appreciation are presented in the following examples from *The Guardian* and *The Sun* for reaction, composition and valuation (see bold):

In the days before oil, the British provided the gold which held together this very **disparate** polity. (*The Guardian* 25 Feb. 2011: *Saudi Arabia: The need to change*).
Composition: balance

As the final evacuation efforts continued **everyday**, the international community hardened its line against Muammar Gaddafi’s regime—discussing **repulsive** sanctions at the United Nations. (*The Sun* 27 Feb. 2011): *SAS get 150 Brits out of Libya*:
Valuation/ Reaction: quality

The chorus contains **plain** lyrics that reflect his speech, suggesting he will clean Libya. (*The Sun* 28 Feb. 2011: *‘Friend’ Blair told Gaddafi to go*). **Composition: complexity**

“There are very **predictable** dangers of what Colonel Gaddafi could do to his own people.” (*The Sun* 02 Mar. 2011: *Bloodbath fears grow in Libya*). **Reaction: impact**

What you read of events often close to the city, filtered through opposition voices, is frequently equally as **misleading**. (*The Guardian* 03 Mar. 2011: *Libya is not helped by this prism of propaganda*). **Valuation**

The cupboard is **bare**. Nobody expects big giveaways. (*The Sun* 23 Mar. 2011: *Bold comfort*). **Reaction: impact**

The excessive de-Ba'athification process in post-Saddam Iraq set a **bad** precedent. (*The Guardian* 26 Jul. 2011: *Libya's stalemate shows it is time to tempt Gaddafi out, not blast him out*). **Reaction: quality**

Table 4.4. shows the use of appreciation values in the corpus.

TABLE 4.4. APPRECIATION SUBSYSTEM IN THE CORPUS.					
	APPRECIATION				VALUATION
	REACTION: IMPACT	REACTION: QUALITY	COMPOSITION: BALANCE	COMPOSITION: COMPLEXITY	
<i>The Guardian</i>	12	7	4	0	38
<i>The Sun</i>	7	3	2	4	27

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

By drawing on Appraisal Theory, this paper has explored the deployment of attitudinal resources in opinion writing in *The Guardian* and *The Sun* two British national newspapers that belong to different cultural idiosyncrasies, in relation to the Libyan civil war in 2011. Very broadly, the results of the study reveal that the sample contains a variety of attitudinal items with judgement constituting the highest percentage and appreciation with the least number of attitudinal meanings in both newspapers. A comparison of the discursive construction of these events in the two dailies has also demonstrated that attitude resources play a key role in the construction of a critical voice leading to a successful writing. Furthermore, the findings have pointed to cultural differences in the patterning and exploitation of attitude items in broadsheet and popular opinion discourse.

We believe that the approach we have brought along here from an integrated perspective, without splitting apart the linguistic study of texts from particular choices of attitude to construct an evaluative stance, could be an outstanding overall means to know more about different types of journalistic commentary in relation to culture bound features. Overall, this study has argued in favour of viewing language as a social semiotic resource people use to accomplish their purposes by expressing meanings in context. As Halliday puts it (“Systemic” 7): “The value of a theory lies in the use that can be made of it, and I have always considered a theory of language to be essentially consumer oriented.” In this line, we hope the present study has shown this.



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