

**The Problems of Early Childhood Education
During COVID-19:
An Appraisal Analysis of “Does Early Childhood Education
Still Matter during Covid-19? On The Jakarta Post**

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the rhetoric of Yuliana in describing the difficulties of parents, teachers, and school administration during covid-19 health crisis. This study is guided by content analysis and the analytical framework of Appraisal from systemic functional linguistics, which concerned with the language of evaluation. The study reveals that in order to show the problematic matters of poor early students, their parents, the teachers, and the owner of a daycare center, Yuliana utilizes the appraisal system in a variety ways, with the aim to show some alternative solutions to the owners of the schools and the governments as to invest more because of the importance of early education for young generations for the future.

Keywords: Early Childhood Education, Covid-19, the Jakarta Post, and Appraisal analysis.

INTRODUCTION

The Jakarta Post is one of the leading English language newspapers in Indonesia. Apart from presenting news in various fields, the newspaper also provides a column intended for public voices, namely the opinion column. In the issue of October 27, 2020, there was an interesting opinion from a lecturer at one of the leading private universities in Jakarta, and also the owner of one of the Daycare Centers in Depok. He told about the impact of Covid-19 on early school children, teachers and school administrators during the pandemic spreading.

The early childhood education is an important milestone in a person's life, and still many young children in Indonesia are missing out on school, recreation, interaction with their peers and in general, their Childhood, because of the health crisis (The Jakarta Post, October 27, 2020). The use of appraisal system for making meaning in the opinion column is interesting to do research. There are some previous researches on appraisal as an evaluation language. Such as Ross & Caldwell (2019), Sukma (2018), Tiani (2017), Handono (2017), Mazlum & Afhin (2016). Those articles are used to show the gap of this research, this research focuses on the use of attitude analysis on an opinion column.

Appraisal theory is part of the study of interpersonal metafunction in systemic functional linguistics which focuses on evaluating language, attitudes, emotions, and how a text has goals and problems (Martin & White, 2005). Appraisal can be used as a tool to dissect texts in critical discourse analysis as expressed by Fairclough (2001).

In discourse and communication, attitude as a part of appraisal system in the systemic functional linguistics may be regularly observed, particularly in relation to daily public opinions in the society. The use of language for evaluation is sensible in connection with journalistic media.

The language process involves three domains of meaning, namely (1) experiential meaning, Halliday (1994) calls it ideational meaning, (2) interpersonal meaning, emphasizes interpersonal relationships, and (3) textual meaning, something meaningful when visualized through writing. These writings can be realized through words, phrases, and clauses through proper diction, even aesthetically reflected visual appearance. In Systemic Functional Grammar these three domains are called metafunctions. The first metafunction is the ideational function, in this realm it plays a role in the construction of meaning related to the physical and experience of language users.

In this realm, it focuses on how a person's social experience is constructed in language. The second domain is the Interpersonal Function, which deals with the delivery of opinions and attitudes between writers and readers, between speakers and listeners. This function shows the action taken to experience in the social interactions, which is realized through speech acts. The interactions in this function show the clause as the subject of the exchange of meanings. One of the discourse analysis studies full of interpersonal meanings is the appraisal system as a negotiation of attitudes in the text. The third is the realm of meaning in the Textual Function. The realm of textual meaning becomes a link between ideational and interpersonal meanings.

Martin & White (2005) divided the appraisal system into three subsystems, namely attitude, engagement, and graduation. Attitude refers to the speaker's/writer's expression of feelings, including emotional reactions, assessments of one's attitudes, and evaluation of objects. Engagement governs how the speaker / writer position himself with the text and the listener / reader and how he bonds with the listener / reader. Meanwhile, graduation relates to a scale or grading that involves attitude and engagement. This study will only discuss one of the three subsystems, namely attitude. As mentioned above, the attitude subsystem focuses on evaluating oneself or other people, events, circumstances, or actions that are reflected in one's words and writings. These judgments can be either positive or negative.

Martin & White (2005) divided attitude into effect, judgment and appreciation. Affect is specifically related to an emotional response to something, whether other people, themselves, or events. Affect can be in the form of adjectives, such as: sad, happy, angry; verbs such as: like, hate, be happy; adverbs, such as: joyfully, with anger; and nominalization (a verb or adjective turned into a noun): happiness, sadness, anger and hatred. Judgment relates to attitudes or judgments, both positive and negative, of human behavior. In simple terms, judgment is related to ethical judgments, including judgments related to the practice of religious values (Martin & White, 2005).

Judgment is divided into two types, namely the judgment of esteem and the judgment of sanction (Martin & White, 2005: 52). Judgment award is related to

normality: how normal a person is; capacity: how capable a person is; and tenacity: how persistent or tenacious a person is. Meanwhile, judgment sanctions are related to veracity: how honest or trustworthy a person is; and propriety: how ethical a person's behavior is (Martin & White, 2005). Meanwhile, appreciation refers to an assessment of natural phenomena.

In short, appreciation is related to assessments that are aesthetic in nature (Martin & White, 2005). Apart from the three sub-categories of attitude above, the concepts that are also important and will be discussed in this study are the concept of appraiser and appraised. Appraiser refers to a subject or person who feels or gives an assessment, either in the form of affect, judgment, or appreciation, while appraised refers to something or object that is assessed or evaluated, whether human, object or activity (Martin & White, 2005).

METHODOLOGY

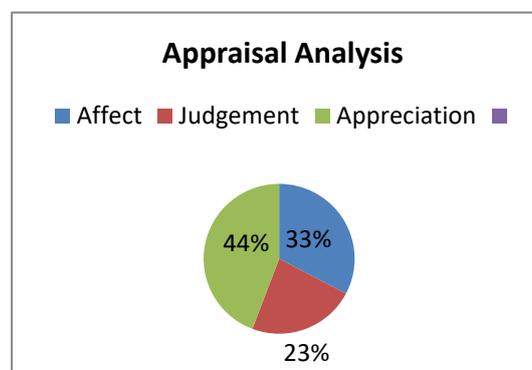
This research uses a qualitative method with content analysis technique. Data are in the form of lexico grammar containing an appraisal system from the data source of Marta Yuliana's article entitled 'Early Childhood Education during COVID-19'. The analytical framework uses an appraisal of systemic functional linguistics. Then the results of the analysis are presented in the form of a description and narrative.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The opinion column of ' Does Early Childhood Education Still Matter during Covid-19' by Marta Yuliana, October 27, 2020 edition has the uniqueness of language which are concise, straightforward and contains appraisal systems that can influence readers. Following are the findings of the appraisal data.

Table.1 Appraisal system

Attitude					
Affect		Judgment		Appreciation	
+	-	+	-	+	-
12	5	5	7	16	6



A total of 51 data were found, dominated by appreciation as many as 22 pieces, also found 12 judgments, and affect by 17 pieces. This shows that in rhetoric, the writer of the article uses lexicogrammar which shows appreciation. Appreciation relates to aesthetic judgments. This finding is different from the findings of Bayu permana Sukma's research, which found more judgments in the slogan data written on the campaign fabric of the prospective regional head candidates. The following is an example of each **attitude**.

1. Affect

a. Socio-emotional skill (+)

(1). James Heckman discovered in his research that quality early childhood education provided a persistent boost in socio-emotional skills, which had a greater effect on the later-life outcomes of an individual (Yuliana, The Jakarta Post, 2020).

In data 1a, the phrase that shows affect is socio-emotional skills. The author cites James Heckman's research to convince readers that social emotional skills are very important for the development of children in the future. By using the phrase socio-emotional skills, this paper brings out positive feelings towards early childhood education even during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is in line with Martin and White' assertion that affect is concerned with registering and negative feelings (2005, P. 42).

b. Greater effect (+)

(2). James Heckman discovered in his research that quality early childhood education provided a persistent boost in socio-emotional skills, which had a greater effect on the later-life outcomes of an individual (Yuliana, The Jakarta Post, 2020).

The same thing is also found in data 1b. In this data, the phrase greater affect which raises a positive feeling that early childhood education will greatly impact various intelligences, especially children's emotional intelligence in dealing with life problems and how to find ways to get out quickly in dealing with them.

c. Violent crimes (-)

(1). For instance, it can lead to a 65 percent reduction in lifetime violent crimes, a 40 percent reduction in lifetime arrests and a 20 percent reduction in unemployment. (Yuliana, The Jakarta Post, 2020).

The *negative affect* in the data of 1.c, namely; violent crimes emerged when early childhood education was shared by all parties. The author uses the appraisal form of negative affect with the purpose of endorsing all early education stakeholders to pay attention to the fate of early childhood education, especially children from those who are unable to experience difficulties accessing education during the Covid-19 pandemic. The difficulty is due to the lack of online facilities that it faces. Besides that, the teachers also have difficulties in carrying out their duties as educators to the children. The use of the phrase 'violent crimes' in the text is not just as information, but it has an intention of asking the government to take a

role in overcoming the problems faced by early childhood education institutions. The author emphasized that if we ignore the education for your learners, it will cause social unrest and violent crimes in the future.

d. Losing their jobs (-)

(2). early childhood educators *are losing their jobs* (Yuliana, The Jakarta Post, 2020).

In the Data of 1.d, the negative affect caused by the phrase losing their jobs can be meaningful to inform that stakeholders must pay attention to the fate of early childhood teachers, those who lose their jobs because there are no students studying in school because of the various difficulties they face. Losing a job causes sad feelings for the perpetrator. Many professional teachers are forced to find other jobs to support their lives.

2. Judgment

a. Claim (+)

(1). While experts *claim* that the early childhood years are important milestones in a person's life, many young children in Indonesia are missing out on school, recreation, interaction with their peers and in general, their childhood, because of the health crisis (Yuliana, The Jakarta Post, 2020).

Data 2.a *claim* shows that the author strengthens his argument by quoting several experts, he assesses that his argument will be easy to believe if it is strengthened by the research findings. The author considers that the community pays less attention to early childhood education. Therefore, people need to be reminded of the importance of education at that level. Thus, the use of the word 'claim' shows a positive judgment.

b. Reduction in lifetime violent (+)

For instance, it can lead to a 65 percent reduction in lifetime violent crimes, a 40 percent *reduction in lifetime* arrests and a 20 percent reduction in unemployment (Yuliana, The Jakarta Post, 2020).

The phrase in data 2.b *reduction in lifetime violent* expresses the assessment that early childhood education can reduce the crime problem by 40% and as much as 20% reduce for unemployment in the future. (Yuliana, The Jakarta Post, 2020).

c. Has to do it (-)

If her school gives her an assignment, she *has to do it* on the weekends, because during the weekdays, the only mobile phone in her house is used by her older brother and her mother, who cleans houses part-time (Yuliana, The Jakarta Post, 2020).

The phrase *has to do it* in data 2.c reminds us all that responsibility is part of moral judgment. Teachers as a professional profession must continue to carry out their responsibilities even though there are many obstacles that must be faced. The author uses these phrases to show that the teacher remains loyal to his profession. Therefore, we need to avoid negative attitudes towards teachers, especially those who teach in early childhood schools. In appraisal theory it is part of moral judgment. Indirectly, the writer wants to state that avoid negative assessments of teachers if they do not understand the real reality.

d. A huge impact (-)

Overall, the health crisis has had *a huge impact* on our children's emotional, social and mental health and wellbeing, and it has been hardest on children like Nayla who live in poverty and are digitally excluded. (Yuliana, The Jakarta Post, 2020).

The phrase *a huge impact* appears an assessment of the impact of the health crisis on early childhood education. The biggest ones are the emotional, social and mental health impacts, especially those faced by children of poor parents. The use of the phrase as rhetoric should be chosen by the writer. The rhetoric selection aims to ensure that it can be bad for children at this age and will affect the mental condition of the child as an adult.

3. Appreciation

a. To try and survive (+)

Many people who run preschools and kindergartens have had to let go of their staff, sometimes their most experienced teachers, *to try and survive* what is looking to be a lengthy process of recovery. (Yuliana, The Jakarta Post, 2020).

In 3.a data, appreciation is shown by the phrase *to try and survive*. The phrase refers to a pandemic that will last a long time. So that school administrators are forced to let go of their professional teachers so that they can still survive and save the school from the impact of the pandemic that has no end. This appreciation is positive for both teachers and schools. Teachers can find other jobs that can support their lives, while for school, they will still survive. In this case, the writer performs positive acts of appreciation.

b. Struggling (+)

The majority of early childhood centers are *struggling to* stay afloat, parents with young children are struggling with home-schooling, and early childhood educators are losing their jobs and having to make ends meet by taking odd jobs or offering tutoring lessons seven days a week (Yuliana, The Jakarta Post, 2020).

The word *struggling* in data 3.b above explains that schools and parents are still struggling to survive their life from the calamity. Children still struggle to learn even with limited facilities, and for school they try to keep going even though

they are stumbling. The author shows a positive attitude of appreciation for the business of the school owner and the parents of students. They don't blame anyone, but they are looking for a solution in order to exist.

c. Solution (-)

There is no easy *solution* to overcome this calamity, but it must start with every one of us, and it must start now (Yuliana, The Jakarta Post, 2020).

The phrase no easy solution in data 3.c emphasizes that solutions to the impact of a pandemic need comprehensive and joint handling. We must all be involved in dealing with this pandemic. The author shows a negative appreciation for efforts that are not done together, and still start from each individual himself.

d. Financial difficulties (-)

Worse, many parents with children below 6 years of age have decided to stop sending them to school, citing *financial difficulties* and health concerns. (Yuliana, The Jakarta Post, 2020).

The author acts of negative appreciation towards parents for not sending their peacock children to school during this pandemic. The author uses the phrase financial difficult is to show that without sufficient finance, early childhood education will not work well. Precisely because the need for credit (pulsar) and cellphones to be able to take part in online learning cannot be avoided. For poor parents, the choice to stop their child's schooling is a decision that must be taken even if it threatens their child's future. Actually, the author wants to remind the government to pay attention to this problem and immediately provide assistance.

CONCLUSIONS

The results and discussion indicate that the three attitude sub-categories, namely affect, judgment, and appreciation are used in the author's rhetoric opinion. The most dominant appreciation is based on the efforts of parents, teachers and early childhood school management in order to survive the onslaught of long Covid-19 pandemic.

From all appraisal data, it is known that feelings, judgments and appreciation are positive and negative. All are used by the author so that the writing of the article has a strong influence on the reader. So this article does not only provide information but also invites us all to care about the impact of this disaster on the early childhood education sector.

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Appendixes

Appraisal analysis on 'Does Early Childhood Education Still Matter during COVID-19'

by Marta Yuliana

No	Lexicogrammar	Attitude		
		Affect	Judgment	Appreciation
1	Claim		V (+)	
2	Missing out			V (-)
3	Health crisis		V (-)	
4	To stop sending them		V (-)	

5	Financial difficulties			V (-)
6	Health concerns			V (-)
7	The low enrolment			V (-)
8	Try and survive			V (+)
9	No exception		V (-)	
10	Socio-emotional skill	V (+)		
11	Greater effect	V (+)		
12	Violent crime	V (-)		
13	Unemployment			V (-)
14	Struggling			V (+)
15	Wait out			V (+)
16	Achieving the country's target	V (+)		
17	Mattered	V (+)		
18	A persistent boost in socio-emotional skills	V (+)		
19	A greater effect	V (+)		
20	Reduction in lifetime violent crimes		V (+)	
21	Reduction in unemployment.		V (+)	
22	Struggling to			V (+)
23	Losing their jobs	V (-)		
24	Unable to sit	V (-)		
25	Becoming bored	V (-)		
26	With hardly any scheduled physical	V (-)		
27	So important	V (+)		
28	A matter of priorities			V (+)
29	The greater priority			V (+)
30	Usually pushed aside as			V (+)
31	Has to do it		V (-)	
32	A huge impact			V (+)
33	Clearly exacerbates		V (-)	
34	A need to design	V (+)		
35	Holistic and integrated		V (+)	
36	Lack of stimulation			V (+)
37	No easy solution		V (-)	
38	Solution			V (-)
39	With fun	V (+)		
40	Coaching to help			V (+)
41	Special incentives			V (+)
42	Tax reductions			V (+)
43	To provide a child			V (+)
44	Low-income families		V (-)	
45	Multibranch			V(+)
46	Multidimensional			V (+)
47	Multidisciplinary			V (+)
48	Commitment	V (+)		

49	Educated	V (+)		
50	Entertained and excited	V (+)		
51	Must start		V (+)	
Jumlah		17	12	22

