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## APPRAISAL ANALYSIS ON PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE DEBATES

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### Abstract

*This study aims to describe three main aspects: (1) describing affect in the presidential debates during the 2024 presidential election campaign; (2) describing the candidates' judgement in the presidential debates during the 2024 campaign; and (3) describing appreciation expressed by the presidential candidates in the debates during the 2024 presidential election campaign. This study uses a qualitative approach. The data in this study are utterances delivered by the presidential candidates in the debates, including debates 1, 2, and 3 involving all three candidates. The data sources in this study are the three presidential candidates, namely candidates number 1, 2, and 3. Data collection techniques in this study were carried out through: (1) observation, and (2) note-taking. The results of this study are as follows: (1) 16 data items of affect were found in the presidential debates. The findings show forms of attitude, namely inclination affect, happiness affect, security affect, and satisfaction affect, each of which appears in both positive and negative forms. Thus, from the perspective of critical discourse analysis based on affect features, the findings indicate that the debates contain affect reflected in emotional responses (feelings) toward something, including others, oneself, and events, both positive and negative. (2) 19 data items of judgement were found in the presidential debates. These data are characterized by aspects related to normative evaluation, categorized into four aspects. The findings show that the presidential candidates generally demonstrate strong capability, civility, experience, and wisdom, and also display moral and ethical attitudes such as honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, humility, and compassion. (3) 16 data items of appreciation were found in the presidential debates. The forms of appreciation identified include: (1) reaction appreciation, covering (a) positive and negative impact, and (b) positive and negative quality reactions; (2) composition appreciation, including (a) balance composition and (b) complexity composition; and (3) evaluation appreciation.*

**Keywords:** Appraisal, affect, judgement, appreciation, presidential candidate debate.

## INTRODUCTION

The debate of presidential candidates is an important part of the general election because it plays a role in shaping voters' views and decisions. Debates are a means for candidates to convey their vision, mission, and policies directly to the public. According to Chaffee and Kanihan (1996), debate is effective in democratizing political information and increasing voter participation. In addition, debates provide an opportunity for presidential candidates to respond to criticism of political opponents so as to encourage voters to make more in-depth assessments (Lau & Pomper, 2001). The importance of debate can also be seen from its influence on the formation of public opinion. According to Jamieson and Birdsell (2010), debate is an effective medium to build the image of leadership and integrity of presidential candidates. Debate rhetorical analysis can show a candidate's communication strategy in building a narrative and reinforcing their political image (Carlin & Schreiber, 2017). In the era of social media, debates are also an important means for candidates to prove their credibility to increasingly critical and informed voters (Perlmutter, 2008). Therefore, the success or failure of a candidate in a debate can affect public perception and the outcome of the general election.

Language has an important role in politics, especially in the communication of presidential candidates. Language is not only used to convey information, but also as a persuasive strategy that can shape perceptions and influence voter opinion. Word selection, language style, and argument preparation are able to create certain political images and narratives. George Orwell (1946) in his essay *Politics and the English Language* emphasized the importance of using clear language in understanding politics. In addition, political communication theory explains that language is used as a persuasive strategy to achieve political goals (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Within this framework, the works of Fairclough (1995) and van Dijk (1997) affirm that language plays a role in shaping ideology and the construction of political reality through word choice, framing, and representation. The analysis of political discourse put forward by Chilton (2004) and Wodak (2015) also emphasizes that political language does not only function as a medium for conveying messages, but also shapes meanings and interpretations related to political identity and policy. In addition, Bennett and Edelman (1985) show that political conflicts and ideological battles are reflected through the use of language. Therefore, the language in the presidential candidate debate is not only a medium for conveying facts, but also a tool to build credibility, arouse emotions, strengthen the logic of arguments, and maintain a political image in front of voters.

The relevance of Appraisal analysis in this study lies in its ability to examine how language is used to convey attitudes, assessments, and gradations of political issues in presidential candidate debates. The Appraisal framework developed by Martin and White (2005) is a theory of language analysis that focuses on the evaluative aspect of communication. This theory includes three main subsystems, namely attitude, *affect*, and gradient. Through these three subsystems, Appraisal can be used to understand how speakers express judgment, emotions, and intensity levels through language.

Appraisal analysis allows researchers to examine how language is used to convey positive and negative attitudes towards political issues in presidential debates. Appraisal systems that include *attitude*, *engagement*, and *graduation* help understand the complexity of judgments and emotional responses in political

arguments. This approach is also relevant to uncover the persuasive dimension of language in building political narratives through word choice, sentence structure, and language style. Thus, research can explain how language is used to build the image of a presidential candidate's leadership, character, and policies and its influence on voters' opinions and choices.

The context of the 2024 presidential election presents complex political dynamics, so it is important to understand the communication strategies of presidential candidates in debates. This research is relevant because it examines how presidential candidates adjust the use of language to changing political situations and voter needs. By linking the Appraisal analysis to this context, the research is expected to be able to explain how language is used as an effective and responsive political communication tool to the political reality in 2024.

Although much research has been done on political discourse analysis and Appraisal, there is still a research gap, especially in the context of presidential debates. Most previous research has focused more on analyzing political discourse in general without examining the use of Appraisal systems in depth. Research by Johnson (2018) and Smith (2020), for example, discusses more analysis of political discourse in general. Previous research from Hunston (2011) and Monika Bednarek (2008) has also made important contributions to the development of Appraisal, but has not specifically highlighted its application in presidential debates. Hunston points out that Appraisal is able to uncover rhetorical and persuasive strategies in political discourse, while Bednarek focuses more on the expression of emotions in language in general.

Several studies in Indonesia also discuss Appraisal theory. Research by Muhammad Aprianto Budhie Nugroho (2020) found the dominance of positive appreciation in online news articles. Research by Panggabean and Lestari (2017) shows a tendency to use negative appraisals in student articles, while research by Pasaribu (2019) found the dominance of Joko Widodo's positive image in the Kompas daily news. In addition, Bayu Permana Sukma's (2018) research shows that *the judgment aspect* is the most dominant in political campaign slogans.

In contrast to previous research, this study focuses on the use of the Appraisal system in presidential debates that have their own linguistic complexity and tension. This research aims to deepen understanding of how presidential candidates use evaluative language to build arguments, respond to questions, and influence voter perceptions in dynamic political debate situations.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The following is a description of the theory that underlies this research. Appraisal Theory is a concept that emphasizes evaluative aspects, attitudes, and assessments in communication. This theory views language not only as a tool for conveying information, but also as a means of expressing values, attitudes, and evaluations of an event or phenomenon. Thus, language can reflect the speaker's perspective and feelings on what is being discussed. The history of Appraisal theory dates back to the thoughts of M. A. K. Halliday, a British linguist who developed the *Systemic Functional Linguistics approach*. Through his book *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (1994), Halliday emphasized that language has an interpersonal function that allows the speaker to convey attitudes and evaluations. This thought later became the basis for the development of the theory of Appraisal by James R. Martin and Peter R. R. White. This theory presents a new paradigm in

linguistic analysis by focusing on evaluation and attitudes in the use of language.

At the beginning of its development, Appraisal theory focused on three main dimensions, namely *attitude*, *engagement*, and *graduation*. *Attitude* refers to the speaker's evaluation of an event or phenomenon, *engagement* highlights the speaker's involvement and position towards his or her statement, while *graduation* deals with the level of intensity or strength of the attitude expressed in language. As it develops, Appraisal theory has expanded its concept to adapt to the complexity of language evaluation in various communication contexts. The development of this theory was also enriched by the contributions of James R. Martin and Peter R. R. White who continued the thought of M. A. K. Halliday. Through their work *The Language of Evaluation: Appraisal in English* (2005), Martin and White explain the application of Appraisal theory in various genres of texts, such as political speech, advertising, and news reports.

Since its inception, Appraisal theory has become a relevant analytical framework in various language studies, such as critical discourse analysis, political language, and literature. The application of this theory not only helps to understand the evaluative function in language, but also provides insight into how values, attitudes, and ideologies are reflected in various communication situations. As the use of Appraisal theory increases, various studies continue to develop and test its application in various contexts and types of languages. The development of this theory shows the evolution of thinking in the study of Systemic Functional Linguistics pioneered by M. A. K. Halliday and further developed by James R. Martin and Peter R. R. White. Thus, Appraisal theory is one of the important approaches to understand the role of evaluation and attitudes in the use of human language.

The emergence of appraisal system theory is motivated by the limitations of interpersonal meaning in Systemic *Functional Linguistics (LSF)* which is still considered descriptive and limited to the division of *mood* and *residue*. In LSF, *mood* consists of finite subjects and verbs, while *residue* includes other elements outside of *mood* (Peter R. R. White, 1998). Based on these conditions, Peter R. R. White (1998) summarizes various previous studies, such as the work of Martin (1995a; 1995b), Christie and Martin (1997), in his dissertation entitled *Telling Media Tales: The News Story as Rhetoric*. Furthermore, White developed Appraisal studies through the Appraisal Website and formed academic discussion groups through mailing lists to expand the development of Appraisal theory.

In Appraisal theory, language is not only understood as a means of communication, but also as a means of expressing emotions, views, and evaluations. The choice of vocabulary, sentence structure, and grammar can show the speaker's attitude and assessment of a topic. By analyzing these evaluative elements, Appraisal theory helps researchers understand the implicit meaning and ways in which language reflects an individual's subjective thinking. *Appraisal* is concerned with the evaluation of the type of attitude negotiated in the text, the level of emotional strength involved, and how values are constructed between the author and the reader (James R. Martin, 2003). This system is used to build social relationships through language by showing how the speaker feels about someone or something.

In a political context, Appraisal theory provides an opportunity to understand a candidate's communication strategy and its influence on public perception. In the 2024 presidential candidate debate, this theory can be used to analyze how candidates convey political messages, build an image, and respond to critical questions through the evaluative language they use. Therefore, Appraisal theory is an important foundation for examining the complexities of political rhetoric and verbal interaction in political debate. The main focus of Appraisal theory lies in three categories, namely *attitude*, *engagement*, and *graduation*. *Attitude* is related to the speaker's evaluation of an event, *engagement* shows the speaker's involvement in his or her statement, while *graduation* highlights the intensity of the attitude expressed. Thus, Appraisal theory provides an analytical tool that helps understand how language reflects an individual's perception, emotions, and judgment of the social realities around him.

### **Affective/Affective**

Affective Attitude, or Affective Attitude, is one of the main dimensions of attitude within the framework of appraisal theory. This dimension includes the expression of the speaker's feelings or emotions towards an object or event, providing insight into how the speaker is emotionally engaged in the context of communication. At the affective level, language is used to convey and respond to subjective feelings such as joy, joy, fear, anxiety, or happiness.

In Affective Attitude, the choice of vocabulary and sentence structure is the main indicator. For example, the use of positive words, such as "happy," "happy," or "excited," can reflect a positive affective attitude. In contrast, words with negative connotations such as "upset," "angry," or "disappointed" express negative affective attitudes. In addition, signs of intonation, word emphasis, or facial expressions can also be part of an affective attitude.

In the political context, Affective Attitudes are key in analyzing how candidates present themselves to voters. For example, a candidate may use positive affective expressions to increase emotional appeal and connect with voters. Instead, candidates can also use negative affection to express disapproval of political opponents or highlight controversial issues.

### **Judgement**

Another major dimension of attitude in the framework of appraisal theory is Judgement. This judgment refers to the way the speaker expresses a personal view or assessment of the value, truth, or goodness of a thing. In the Judgement dimension, language is used to critically evaluate and express the speaker's position or view of a particular object. Judgment in the context of appraisal theory not only includes positive or negative aspects, but also delves into more complex evaluative dimensions.

The choice of vocabulary is an important element in expressing the Judgment. Speakers use words that reflect subjective judgments, such as "good" or "bad," "favorable" or "harmful," to convey their evaluative attitudes. Sentence structure can also be a strong indicator, where the formation of sentences with a certain grammar can give a certain nuance of judgment.

In a political context, the Judgement dimension is particularly relevant for analyzing how candidates convey their critical views on political opponents' policies, social conditions, or specific issues. For example, a candidate might use language that details the



pros or cons of a policy or creates favorable or detrimental judgments against political opponents.

### Appreciation

Another key dimension of attitude within the framework of appraisal theory is *Appreciation*. Appraisal theory refers to how the speaker expresses a positive assessment or appreciation of something. This dimension includes the way language is used to express the value, beauty, or positive qualities of an object, event, or idea. Appreciation provides an idea of how the speaker responds to beauty or kindness in a context.

In the Appreciation dimension, the choice of vocabulary and expressions is key. Speakers use words that reflect appreciation or admiration, such as "beautiful," "amazing," or "impressive," to express a positive evaluative attitude. Sentence structure can also help convey a sense of appreciation, where sentences can be formed to emphasize the uniqueness or uniqueness of something.

In a political context, the Appreciation dimension can be a powerful tool for analyzing the way candidates convey positive views on their own policies, personal achievements, or their campaign vision and mission. For example, candidates may use language that praises previous governments' successes, expresses pride in certain achievements, or expresses appreciation for public support.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach, which is a research method that aims to understand phenomena in depth through analysis of certain contexts. In Appraisal analysis, a qualitative approach is used to explore the complexity of evaluative language as well as uncover the meanings contained in it. The focus of this research lies in the quality and depth of data so that it is able to provide detailed insights into the use of evaluative language in presidential candidate debates.

The main technique of data collection is carried out through the collection of complete transcripts of presidential candidate debates. The transcript includes the entire verbal conversation during the debate, including the moderator's questions, the presidential candidate's answers, and the interaction between the candidates. The use of complete transcripts allows researchers to carefully analyze every word, phrase, and sentence structure that reflects evaluative language.

In addition to verbal data, this study also uses video recordings of debates as a source of supporting data. Observations of video recordings are carried out to understand nonverbal aspects, such as facial expressions, body language, and voice intonation that can strengthen the evaluative meaning in the presidential candidate's speech. Thus, the combination of verbal and visual data can enrich the understanding of the use of evaluative language in political debates.

The selection of complete transcripts and video recordings as data sources provides a solid foundation for analyzing the nuances, intensity, and variations of evaluative language used by presidential candidates during debates. Through a qualitative approach that combines verbal and visual data, this research is expected to be able to provide a deep and holistic understanding of the dynamics of evaluative communication in presidential candidate debates. Thus, the data collection techniques in this study are carried out through: (1) the observation technique and (2) the recording technique.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

*In this section, the results of research and discussion are described by analyzing data in the form of descriptions of the appraisal system in the form of attitudes, affects, judgments, and appreciation used in the 2024 presidential candidate debate.*

### 1. Forms of Affection in the Presidential Candidate Debate

Attitude reflects the way a person presents a situation. This attitude can be traced from the choice of words used by presidential candidates in expressing the situation. The results of the study found the form of attitude, namely the affective tendency, the happiness affect, the security affect, and the satisfaction affect. Each has positive and negative ones.

#### Tendencies/ Inconsistencies

#### a. Positive

- (1) *We want to be more advanced, we want to be fairer, we want to eliminate poverty, and we want to eliminate corruption. (EKCP02/1/2)*

Based on the data stated in data (1) there is a phrase *We want to* expressed by the 02 presidential candidate as a speaker shows positive feelings, namely the tendency of speakers to crave or expect justice and eliminate poverty and corruption in Indonesia. This statement has a positive effect on the audience who hears it. It is evident that at the time of the election around 52% voted for the pair of presidential candidates 02. This shows that the Indonesian people crave and long for progress and prosperity. This is understood by the elected presidential candidate. The public's hope for the presidential candidate's statement can be realized.

#### b. Negatives

In addition to positive attitudes/tendencies, there are also negative attitudes/intendencies in the presidential candidate debate. The statement of negative attitude in question is contained in the presidential debate as described below.

- (2) *Do you agree or disagree with this digital imbalance, and how? (EKCNO3/3/6).*

Statements stated in data (2) "*agree or not*" which Pronounced by the presidential candidate (03) as a speaker, it shows negative feelings, namely the tendency of speakers to demand Prabowo to provide answers to solutions to the problem of digital inequality. It is suspected that there has been digital inequality carried out by Prabowo. So the ultimatum to solve the digital problem agrees or disagrees that there must be a solution to the problem. Therefore, it is categorized as a negative attitude.

### 2. Forms of Judgment/Assessment in the Presidential Candidate Debate

Judgment/assessment (*judgement*) is an aspect related to the assessment based on the speech of the presidential candidate when conveying his ideas. In addition, it also describes the attitude of morality, positive ethics, honesty, humility, and compassion. This is in accordance with the theory of Martin & White (2005).

#### Social Judgments

Social appreciation in the aspect of judgment/judgement with (a) normality (habit), (b) capacity (ability), and (c) tension (reliable firmness in solving problems). The research data related to this is described as follows.

## Normality (behavior in society)

### Normality

#### (a) Positive

- (3) "If you give nutrition to pregnant women, then I agree. If you have been born and grown, it may not be stunting, sir, but poor nutrition. If you want to improve your poor nutrition, you can fix it. So, don't be confused between stunting and feeding" (PRPN3/3/29).

The statement in the data (3) of providing nutrition to pregnant women I agree with, including the assessment of positive normality spoken by the presidential candidate (03). The speaker assessed that nutrition is very necessary for pregnant women to prevent stunting. So, nutrition must be done from the time the child is still in the womb before experiencing growth in the natural world. This statement is a speech that creates a positive situation because it contains the characteristics of a positive judgment/assessment speech in the form of praise.

- (4) "What I am saying is **which is more important**, free internet or free meals for people who are already struggling. for the poor for the lower class. that's what I mean" (PNRP02/3/30)

The statement *which is more important* is implicitly to say that the free feeding of the poor is important. *Important* include moral judgment that is responsible for the welfare of the community. A positive judgment regarding the speaker's assessment of his or her opinion that the lower class or poor is more important to be given free meals than to be given free internet

#### (b) Negative

- (5) *Do not hide behind legal decisions, instead we must say that the duty of high leaders is to set an example when there is an ethical violation.* (PNRN01/1/26)

The statement in data (5) indicates that there is an ethical violation because *do not hide behind legal decisions*. The statement contains criticism of the nation's leaders. That means it is included in the form of critical judgment in a negative situation.

- (6) *This is the law in reality it is bent so that it is sharp downwards blunt* (PNRN01/2/27)

Statements contained in data (6) *Squirt* contains criticism of policyholders related to the law. Criticized for enforcing the law correctly on the lower class (economically weak society). However, the law is not enforced as it should. The statement revealed the form of critical judgment in a negative situation by the presidential candidate (01).

### 3. Forms of Appreciation in the Presidential Candidate Debate

Appreciation is used to make an assessment of objects, processes or products. The authors in this study tend to examine the positive impact reactions, quality, balance, and evaluation of activities carried out based on the speeches made by presidential candidates. This is in accordance with Martin & White's (2005) theory which divides appreciation into three aspects, namely: (1) reaction which includes impact and quality, (2) composition which includes freshness and complexity, and (3) evaluation.

## Reaction

Reaction appreciation can be positive and negative depending on the impact and quality of the meaning caused in the presidential candidate's speech. The reaction includes two parts, namely (1) impact and (2) quality.

### Impact

#### (a) Positive

- (7) *So that's why we see the need for a good strategy so that our strengths can work optimally* (ARDP01/2/2)

The statement stated in the data (7) is a good strategy including appreciation for positive impact reactions because it provides direction so that the Indonesian nation has the strength to work optimally. The speaker of the 01 presidential candidate appreciated the existence of a strategy that has an impact on the optimal national defense strength.

- (8) *This will increase our economic growth by at least 1.5-2%* (ARDP02/3/54)

The statement stated in data (8) ... *will increase* ... including a form of appreciation for positive reactions, namely the impact that will arise from Nutritious feeding programs and overcoming maternal mortality during childbirth. If this program is successful, it will improve the welfare of the community. Economic growth has also increased.

#### (b) Negatives

- (9) *Innocent people, women, parents, and unarmed children are terrorized by separatist terrorist groups* (ARDN02/1/50)

The statement stated in data (9) is that the people ... *terrorized by terrorist groups* separatists include a form of appreciation of impact reactions, namely negative impacts. Presidential Speaker 02 revealed the negative impact of *Terror* in Papua carried out by terrorist groups. This is a form of attention and a form of appreciation for the presidential candidate to the public. At the same time, it is intended to attract public attention so that the presidential candidate can get the most votes. This form of attention paid off so that he could be elected president.

- (10) *So don't eat too much, sir. Later, satiety will not occur until obesity occurs later* (APRN03/3/53).

Statements on data (10) *Obesity will occur later* Including a form of negative reaction appreciation from the free meal program made by the presidential candidate (02). The eating together program, if excessive, can have a negative impact, namely obesity, meaning excess weight. This shows an appreciation of negative reactions that can occur as a result of excessive feeding. So it needs good planning.

As described in the data analysis results, the theory used to analyze the data in this study is the theory of Martin & White (2005). There are three things that are discussed in this study, namely (1) the forms of affective attitudes contained in the 2024 presidential debate, (2) the forms of judgmental attitudes contained in the presidential debate, and (3) the forms of appreciation in the 2024 presidential debate.

The use of affective in the 2024 presidential debate is caused by the three pairs of presidential candidates wanting to invite debate participants to feel the emotions that are being expressed by the presidential candidate, so that they can gain public sympathy. The use of affective is characterized by the emotional response of

feelings to something good for others, oneself. Affectivity consists of four aspects, namely tendencies/distendencies, security/insecurity, and satisfaction/dissatisfaction. Through affect: tendency/non-tendency, more advanced (+), fairer (+), desire (+), inequality (-), non-choice (-) are found. Through the affectation of happiness/unhappiness in the presidential debate, a form of gratitude (+), change (+), doubt (+), far from ideals is found. Through the effect of security/insecurity in the presidential debate, it was found that the form of safety (+), really can be (+), distrust (-), correct (-). Through the affectation of satisfaction/dissatisfaction in the presidential debate, it is found that the full form of struggle (+), agreeing (+), complaining (-), only saying (-). Thus, through the perspective of critical discourse based on the characteristics of affect, the findings of data in the presidential debate through these four aspects have an affectation characterized by an emotional response (feeling) to something, both other people, oneself, and events, both positive and negative. Based on the findings of the results of this study, it is in accordance with the theory of appraisal Martin & White (2005) which states that affectation is a response of emotions and feelings towards something showing positive or negative feelings.

Furthermore, the forms of judgment (*judgement*) are characterized by aspects related to the normative assessment method categorized into four aspects according to the results of this research, presidential candidates generally have strong capacities, civilized, experienced and wise abilities and presidential candidates have moral attitudes, positive ethics, namely honesty, alim, trustworthiness, humility, and compassion. This finding is also in accordance with Martin's (2005) theory.

Based on the results of the analysis of the forms of appreciation (*apreciaton*) in the presidential debate, it was found that there were (1) reaction appreciation which includes reactions (a) positive and negative impacts, (b) positive and negative quality reactions, (2) composition appreciation including (1) balance composition, (2) complexity composition, (3) evaluation appreciation.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the study are as follows: (1) The form of affect, in the presidential candidate debate, there are 16 data found. The results of the study found the form of attitude, namely the affective tendency, the happiness affect, the security affect, and the satisfaction affect. Each has positive and negative ones. Thus, through the perspective of critical discourse based on the characteristics of affect, the findings of data in the presidential debate through these four aspects have an affective effect characterized by an emotional response (feeling) to something, both other people, oneself, and events, both positive and negative. (2) The form of judgment (*judgement*) in the presidential candidate debate has 19 data found. The data found are characterized by aspects related to the normative assessment method categorized into four aspects according to the results of this study, presidential candidates generally have strong, civilized, experienced and wise abilities and presidential candidates have a moral attitude, positive ethics, namely honesty, alim, trustworthiness, humility, and compassion. (3) The form of appreciation in the presidential candidate debate was 16 data found. The forms of appreciation (*apreciaton*) in the presidential debate are: (1) reaction appreciation which includes reactions (a) positive and negative impacts, (b) positive and negative quality reactions, (2) composition appreciation includes (1) balance composition, (2) complexity composition, (3) evaluation appreciation.

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