



**RICHARD LAGRAVENESE'S APPRAISAL VIEW
IN *FREEDOM WRITERS* SCREENPLAY**

THESIS

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for the degree of *Magister Pendidikan* in English Education**

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I hereby declare that this thesis is definitely my own work. I am completely responsible for the content of this thesis. Other writers' opinions and findings included in this thesis are quoted or cited in accordance with ethical standard.

Semarang, February 2016

Nani Hidayati

MOTTO

For indeed, with hardship [will be] ease. (Al-Qur'an 94:5)

This thesis is dedicated with love to:

My beloved mom & dad; SRI DARYATI & M. YUWONO who give endless love

My unique brother; AGUNG SUWARSONO

All my friends who always support and remind me to finish this long delayed thesis

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ABSTRACT

Hidayati, Nani. 2016. *Richard LaGravene's Appraisal View in "Freedom Writers" Screenplay*. A Thesis. English Education Program, Post Graduate Program of the State University of Semarang. Advisers: 1. Subur Wardoyo, PhD, 2. Prof. Mursid Saleh, PhD.

Keywords: Appraisal Devices, Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation.

Choosing interpersonal diction in a text to suit with its context is very crucial. The appraisal devices can be used as tools to investigate that kind of text, in this case: a movie screenplay. Therefore, this study attempts (1) to find out conveyed messages in the movie from the realization of the appraisal and narrative structure and to describe the use of the Appraisal System to express LaGravenese's (2a) Attitudes, (2b) Engagement & (2c) Graduation towards the main characters in *Freedom Writers* movie screenplay.

The research method used in this study is quantitative and qualitative descriptive, synthesizes and interpretive discourse analysis. Technique of analysis was done by breaking down the screenplay into several lexical chunks, coding them and analyzing them to find out the appraisal devices realizing on the screenplay and the types of Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation that are used then figure out the conveyed messages in it.

The result shows that in Attitude the dominant result appears in Negative Emotional State (75,68%) for the distribution of Affect; Negative Capacity for Judgment (65,63%) and Negative Valuation (41,46%) for Appreciation. In Engagement the Denial Disclaim appears dominantly (43,26%) for the distribution of Heterogloss while Monogloss only takes minimal part in it. Graduation result shows that Explicit Raise for the distribution of Force reaches higher (56,36%) than others and for the distribution of Focus, Sharpen Expression appears dominantly (88,20%).

The conclusion reveals that (1) there are several messages found in *Freedom Writers* movie from the realization of Appraisal and Narrative Structure either in the dialogues or monologues of *Freedom Writers*' characters. Through good dictions, LaGravenese gives the messages of tolerance, earning respect and trust, honor diversity, and striving for success and trust. It also shows the Appraisal Devices realizing (2a) Attitudes used in *Freedom Writers* movie are: LaGravenese likes to express characters' negative emotion explicitly than implicitly. He likes to express characters' negative capability than other kinds of Judgments. He appreciates the characters using more Negative Value which denotes that in his opinion, they see each other negatively. (2b) Engagement used in the screenplay describes that he emphasizes more on characters' denial towards each others' opinion and existence with the use of more Disclaim Heterogloss in the screenplay. (2c) Graduation used in the screenplay describes that the use of more Sharpening Focus indicates he emphasizes on characters' category boundary more than scaling of intensity.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This first chapter presents the discussion of several introductory points of the thesis. The first point is background of the study which explains the general information of the basic issue being studied. The next point deals with reasons for choosing the topic, research questions, objectives of the study, significances of the study, limitation of the study, definition of the terms and organization of the thesis.

1.1. Background of the Study

Human beings basically use language to share ideas and exchange meaning in their daily life. By using language, people can tell what they mean and make others understand what they think about. This language which is divided into two kinds; non verbal and verbal, also conveys news which is shared in a community that also shares the same language. Presentational codes such as gestures, eye movements, or quality of voice is included into non verbal communication that can give messages only about here and now so that it makes people cannot send messages about what they feel last week (Fiske, 1990: 67). In the other hand, verbal communication which appears for instance in speech, conversation or letter can be recorded so the messages about people's feeling can be sent either now or last week as well. This verbal language has two forms;

written and spoken language. Since verbal language has characteristic for being able to be recorded, so it makes research on this written and spoken language can also be conducted. Therefore, a number of research on this matter have been conducted since then, such as research on everyday conversation, formal and informal letters, the work of popular authors etc. Pinker (1995: 404) says that conducting study on the matter of language is natural because having language is part of what it means by human and because people hope that this knowledge will lead them to insight about human nature.

Halliday (in Halliday and Hasan, 1985: 5-11) notes that the way in understanding language lies in the study of text. According to him, text is defined as a semantic unit which consists of words and sentences that are not only made of meanings, but also as social exchange of meanings. As a form of exchange, a text is meaningful because it can be related into interaction among speakers. Precisely for definition about text itself, Halliday (1985:10) stated as follows.

A Text is a language that is functional. By functional, we simply meant language that is doing some job in some context. So, any instance of living language that is playing some part in a context of situation, we call a Text. It would be either spoken or written or indeed in any other medium of expression that we like to think of.

He further proposed that the important thing about the nature of a Text is that:

(1) a text is really made of meaning, (2) a text is essentially a semantic unit, (3) a

text is a product and process, and (4) a text is a social exchange of meanings.

The four components of text cannot be separated one another.

Speaking about verbal language research especially in written text, many researchers in their daily basis often meet problems dealing with study on text such as book, magazine, movie script, newspaper, novel etc. Discourse Analysis would be appropriate way of approaching and thinking about the problem as stated by (Gslis:1),

Discourse Analysis is ... a manner of questioning the basic assumptions of quantitative or qualitative research methods It will enable a researcher to reveal the hidden motivations behind a text or behind the choice of a particular method of research to interpret that text It is meant to provide higher awareness of the hidden motivations in others and ourselves and, therefore, it enables us to solve concrete problems, not by providing unequivocal answers, but by making us ask ontological and epistemological questions.

Therefore, we can know the ideas beyond a text by using Discourse Analysis.

Discourse Analysis could be applied to any text, that is, to any problem or situation. It would focus on the existence and message of the text and locate them within a historical and social context, so it is applicable to every situation and every subject. The Discourse Analysis, however, pays more attention to the interrelatedness among some syntactical constructions that compose a complete text or conversational exchanges as Stubbs (1987:1) stated "Discourse Analysis refers to attempts to study the organization of language above the sentence or

above the clauses and therefore to study larger linguistic units, such as conversational exchanges or written text.”

Dealing with Discourse, there are three general social functions that people use language for. These functions are what Matthiessen (1995:85) called as Metafunctions of Language. The terms for each of the functions are the Interpersonal (the resource for enacting roles and relations in dialogic interaction), the Ideational (the resource for construing our experience of the world around us and inside), and the Textual Metafunction (the resource which enables the speaker to present Ideational and Interpersonal meanings as information organized into text that unfolds in context).

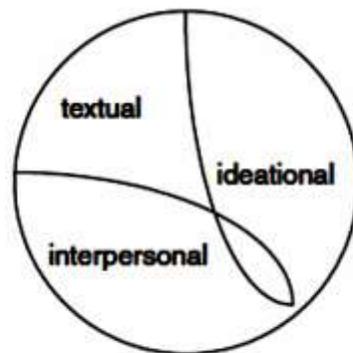


Figure 1.1 Ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions

Then, Martin and Rose (2003:7) developed these three Metafunctions in the Discourse System into five systems. They are Appraisal (negotiating attitude), Ideation (representing experience), Conjunction (connecting event), Identification (tracking people and things), and Periodicity (the rhythm of Discourse).

From the explanation above, it could be deduced that Appraisal is the only system dealing with Interpersonal Metafunction. Appraisal itself is regionalized as three interacting domains – ‘attitude’, ‘engagement’ and ‘graduation’. Attitude is concerned with our feelings, including emotional reactions, judgments of behaviors and evaluation of things. Engagement deals with sourcing attitudes and the play of voices around opinions in discourse. Graduation attends to grading phenomena whereby feelings are amplified and categories blurred. Appraisal has an important role to interpret people’s attitudes, engagement and graduation. It relates the power of a text and makes the text meaningful. Consequently, people should feel and understand the ideas of the text, including a movie transcript. It shows that using Appraisal while producing a text in writing would be very important.

A movie script writer should always be aware of the appropriate use of Appraisal Devices so that he or she may be successful in negotiating his or her meanings realized in the movie with the watchers. As a movie watcher, on the other hand, he/she should devise him/herself with adequate understanding of and working knowledge about the Appraisal System used in the movie transcript which is being read in order to come to the appropriate understanding and interpretation of the meanings negotiated by the writer through the text.

This study analyzed how language which is central in the movie script works to unfold social discourse. The movie script is chosen as a medium to know the power of movie script itself and its writer and because it is one of the

literary texts that perform real life. It consists of dialogues being supported by context of culture so that it becomes meaningful. It draws human beings' interaction. Therefore, movie script as part of our life will not be separated from its situation and culture.

This study appraised Richard Lagravenese, the movie script writer's attitudes, engagement, and graduation toward characters in *Freedom Writers* movie based on Appraisal Devices. *Freedom Writers* is a movie that is based on a "Freedom Writer's Diary: How a Teacher and 150 Teens Used Writing to Change Themselves and the World Around Them" book written by Erin Gruwell which tells a true story about her students at an inner city high school in Long Beach, California that come together after she as a 23-year-old new teacher, comes to teach at their school and finally transform their live. Gruwell inspired her troubled students—many of them gang members—to use writing to persevere through life's challenges and succeed. Based on a true story, "Freedom Writers" is an inspirational tale and testimony to courage, hope and the human spirit's triumph over intolerance. As the students' diaries transform from schoolwork into life preservers, Gruwell's commitment to her students grows and affects her in ways she did not imagine. Gruwell and her students have appeared on numerous television shows, including The Oprah Winfrey Show. Her class has been chronicled in national newspapers, People magazine, and National Public Radio. A major film studio is currently developing this inspiring story into a feature film. Currently, Gruwell is the Founder and President of the

Erin Gruwell Education Project, a non-profit organization that funds scholarships for disadvantaged students and promotes innovative teaching methods. Gruwell has won numerous awards including California Credential Analysts and Counselors' California Teacher of the Year Award, 100 Black Men Award in Education, the National Conference of Community, and Justice Human Relations Award. Gruwell and the Freedom Writers were also recipients of the Spirit of Anne Frank Award.

Paramount Pictures presents the MTV Films / Double Feature Films production, "Freedom Writers," starring Hilary Swank, Patrick Dempsey, Imelda Staunton and introduces a host of young actors making their feature film debuts who were acted for Ms. Gruwell's students. Directed by Richard LaGravenese, he wrote the screenplay based on the book *The Freedom Writers Diary* written by Erin Gruwell herself besides materials gathered from his extensive research and interviews with the original Freedom Writers to develop the characters within the film in an attempt to maintain optimum realism and authenticity. The film is produced by Stacey Sher, Michael Shamberg, and Danny DeVito. This film is rated PG13 for violent content, some thematic material, and language. Over the course of a few years of writing the drafts, he continually kept Erin and the Freedom Writers included. He asked a lot of questions, conducted endless interviews, participated in their events and eventually earned their trust. He promised them that he would do the most honest representation possible. A large part of maintaining the truth in storytelling was using real excerpts from the

diaries within the film. LaGravenese explained that several of the Freedom Writers gave him and the movie crew permission to use their actual diaries in the script, so their own words and experiences are represented. Nothing in the script or in the film is made up – it's either based on his interviews or on their diaries.

Therefore, I chose to analyze this movie script since the movie is based on the true story and is also focused more in the events of daily lives which usually contain negotiating attitudes, engagement and graduating the values. Beside, it can also be used as a medium to criticize social educational phenomena, especially in Indonesia which meets rather similar condition, even though not in all aspects, with what happened in the movie. Hopefully, people may use the findings to communicate interpersonally to others in real life. By applying Appraisals, people could feel and understand well what the writer intends beyond the screenplay he wrote.

There have been some studies related to Appraisal before this in UNNES digital library. It was recorded that Widhiyanto (2004), Milasari (2005) and Harimurti Jatikusumo (2012) had taken thesis about appraisal devices previously. All of them only focus on Attitude as one part of Appraisal. In this thesis, I try to encourage myself researching all 3 aspects of Richard LaGravenese's Attitudes, Engagement and Graduation towards the *Freedom Writers'* characters viewed from appraisal devices through his movie transcript/screenplay.

1.2 Reasons for Choosing the Topic

In this study, a topic on discourse field especially Appraisal System was chosen based on reason that this field talks a lot about the nature of the participants. Appraisal as a discourse system has an important role to interpret people's attitudes. It relates to the power of a text and makes the text meaningful. Consequently, people may feel and understand the ideas of the text. It can be considered that using Appraisal while people create or read a text could be very essential.

Many researchers conducted research on this field by making use of drama, short story, speech, news, etc as objects of their study. In this thesis, I tried to investigate Appraisal from a different kind of text that is a movie script/screenplay to provide new source for readers in analyzing a text by using Appraisal System.

Learning Appraisal System through a screenplay provides new insight to writing skills and it also may give the feeling of enjoyment. The *Freedom Writers* movie screenplay were analysed based on Appraisal Devices since the screenplay under research performs real life, so we could appraise the characters on it and learn many valuable things from them objectively.

This study focused on appraising the writer's attitudes towards the characters on *Freedom Writers*; one in not many education kind of movies. Therefore, this study is very important for researchers, teachers, or students to

understand the power of *Freedom Writers* movie screenplay and its author through the Appraisal Devices used.

1.3 Research questions

The research questions of this study are as follow:

1. What messages are conveyed in the movie (especially for English teaching and learning) from the realization of the appraisal and narrative theory?
2. How is the Appraisal System used to express Richard LaGravenese's Attitudes (Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation) towards Erin Gruwell and people around her especially her students in the movie script of “Freedom Writers” which is based on her true story as an English teacher in room 203 at Wilson High School, Long Beach, California in 1994?
3. How is the Appraisal System used to express Richard Lagravenese's Engagement (Monogloss and Heterogloss) towards Erin Gruwell and people around her especially her students in the movie script of “Freedom Writers” which is based on her true story?
4. How is the Appraisal System used to express Richard Lagravenese's Graduation (Force and Focus) towards Erin Gruwell and people around her especially her students in the movie script of “Freedom Writers” which is based on her true story?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. Figuring out conveyed messages in the movie from the realization of the appraisal and narrative theory.
2. Describing the use of the Appraisal System to express Richard Lagravenese's Attitudes (Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation) towards Erin Gruwell and people around her especially her students in the movie script of "Freedom Writers Diary" which is based on her true story as an English teacher in room 203 at Wilson High School, Long Beach, California in 1994.
3. Describing the use of the Appraisal System to express Richard Lagravenese's Engagement towards Erin Gruwell and people around her especially her students in the movie script of "Freedom Writers Diary" which is based on her true story as an English teacher in room 203 at Wilson High School, Long Beach, California in 1994.
4. Describing the use of the Appraisal System to express Richard Lagravenese's Graduation towards Erin Gruwell and people around her especially her students in the movie script of "Freedom Writers Diary" which is based on her true story as an English teacher in room 203 at Wilson High School, Long Beach, California in 1994.

1.5 Significances of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to contribute theoretically, practically and also pedagogically.

Theoretically, this study gives more view in the study of discourse. Researchers, English learners and teachers, writers and readers hopefully may open their mind with the result of this study. English learners and teachers may use it as a reference to study Genre and Discourse study. Next, for writers who care about their writing, feeling, and attitude, this study may provide knowledge that their novel will become beautiful, more powerful so that it could influence their readers. Then, readers who are interested in this study may use the findings as a nice reading text/material.

Practically, researchers may re-study the finding for later investigation. English learners and teachers may use it as a practical way for learning Genre and Discourse study. Students hopefully will also learn more the example of appraisal devices that can be used to help them understand English, especially in the matter of diction both in speaking and writing skill. Writers who deliver their writing could use them as corpus containing important values. They may know why they can influence their audience, thus they make considerations what thing is needed to be presented and which one is not. While movie watcher may use the findings to take the right position in understanding the conveyed messages because there are some cases that a good touching-heart movie could change people's mind and their decision.

Pedagogically, English learners and teachers, especially those in higher education, may find it beneficial as valuable input in teaching English, especially in writing skills. It would be very important making the meaning of a text clearer for readers through the knowledge of Appraisal System when the writers write or produce texts. This study hopefully may also raise awareness of English teachers and learners of the use of Appraisal Devices, because when we write a text we actually express our attitudes and feelings about someone, something or other people's characters; and it would also give a new perspective in teaching reading and especially writing, and in turn, it may facilitate the learning of English to produce meaningful texts that could work properly.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

This study focuses on the investigation of Richard LaGraveness's Attitude – the feelings and values that are negotiated with movie watchers (Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation) – Engagement – the sourcing attitudes and the play of voices around opinions in discourse that are expressed to movie watcher (Monogloss and Heterogloss) – and Graduation – the resources for “adjusting the volume” of items which strengthen or weaken attitude that are exposed to movie watchers (Force and Focus) - towards *the Freedom Writers's*

characters: Erin Gruwell and people around her especially her students in his movie transcript: *The Freedom Writers*.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, some technical terms used in the study need to be clearly defined. Based on the title of this thesis, the description of the terms used in this study is defined as follows.

- **Appraisal**, according to Martin and Rose (2003:22), is “a system of interpersonal meaning”. On the other hand, White (2001a:1) defined it as “the linguistic resources for by which a texts/speakers come to express, negotiate and naturalize particular inter-subjective and ultimately ideological positions”. So, Appraisal is Discourse System of interpersonal meanings which is concerned with the linguistic resources (Attitude, Engagement and Graduation) by which texts/speakers come to express, negotiate and naturalize particular inter-subjective and ultimately ideological positions. It is a tool for negotiating our social relationships, by telling our listeners or readers how we feel about things and people.
- **Attitude**, according to Psychist (2005: 1), is “positive or negative views of an of an ‘attitude object’: a person, behaviour, or event”. Besides, Martin and Rose (2003:22) argued that Attitude can be more or less intense and the Attitude may be the writer’s own or it may be attributed to some other source.

So, in my views, Attitude is positive or negative view of an Attitude Object: a person, behaviour, or event which could be more or less intense (amplified) and could be the writer's own or it could be attributed to some other source. It is the linguistic resource (Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation) which is used by Burrell to evaluate the Royal Family and his feelings towards them expressed in the novel under research.

- **Engagement**, based on Martin & White (2005), refers to the presence or absence of other voices in a text in which utterances can be classified as monogloss or heterogloss. Those that deliberately seek to signal the existence of other voices is labelled as heterogloss. In contrast to heterogloss utterances, monogloss utterances do not explicitly refer to other sources and indicate that the writer or speaker is the originator and the source of the assertions.
- **Graduation**, Martin & White (2005) describes it as the intensity of appraisal in terms of two independent dimensions of force (or 'intensity') and focus ('prototypicality'). Graduation is largely expressed via modifiers such as 'very' (increased force), 'slightly' (decreased force), 'truly' (sharpened focus), or 'sort of' (softened focus), but may also be expressed lexically in a head adjective e.g., 'greatest' vs. 'great' vs. 'good'.
- **Screenplay**, in online Free Dictionary, is a script (written text of a play, broadcast, or movie) for a film including dialogue and descriptions of characters and sets.

- **Message**, based on Cambridge dictionary, is the most important idea in a book, film, or play, or an idea that you want to tell people about.

1.8 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis comprises five major chapters. Chapter one is an introduction and includes eight subchapters: Background of the Study; Reason for Choosing the Topic; Research Questions; Objective of the Study; Significance of the Study; Limitation of the Study; Definitions of the Key Terms and Organization of the Thesis.

Chapter two reviews the theoretical framework of the study, including Discourse System; Appraisal; Attitude which described more in 2 sections: Definition of Attitude and Kinds of Attitudes; Engagement which further divided into 2 sections: Definition of Engagement and Kinds of Engagement; Graduation which also described more in 2 sections: Definition of Graduation and Kinds of Graduation; Previous Research Related to Appraisal Theory and Its Application to English Teaching and the last subchapter is Theoretical Framework.

Chapter three describes the research methodology, including the Research Approach, Object of the Study, Unit of Analysis, Source of the Data, Role of the Researcher, Reliability and Validity, Technique of Data Collection, and the last is Technique of Data Analysis.

The results and further discussion related to the problems explained in this chapter four. It consists of Findings and Discussion of the Findings which are detaily described more into 4 subchapters: Appraisal Devises Realizing Attitude in *Freedom Writers* screenplay; Appraisal Devises Realizing Engagement in *Freedom Writers* screenplay; Appraisal Devises Realizing Graduation in *Freedom Writers* screenplay; and the Conveyed Messages in *Freedom Writers* movie from the Realization of the Appraisal Stylistic System.

Finally, Chapter five offers a concluding statement and an account of the pedagogical implications of the research questions previously.