A step-wise methodology for annotating APPRAISAL

Fuoli, Matteo

2015

Document Version:
Other version

[Link to publication](#)

Total number of authors:
1

A step-wise methodology for annotating APPRAISAL

Matteo Fuoli, Lund University
matteo.fuoli@englund.lu.se

APPRAISAL theory (Martin and White, 2005) has gained increasing recognition as a useful framework for analyzing evaluative phenomena in discourse. Within this framework, manual text annotation has become a popular method for examining and comparing the use of evaluative language resources across texts and corpora (e.g. Bednarek, 2006, 2008; Carretero and Taboada, 2014; Fuoli, 2012; Fuoli and Hommerberg, in review; Hommerberg and Don, in press; Lipovsky, 2008, 2014; Mackay and Parkinson, 2009; O'Donnell, 2014; Pounds, 2010, 2011; Taboada and Carretero, 2012; Ryshina-Pankova, 2014; Santamaría-García, 2014). Manual annotation facilitates comprehensive and detailed analyses of evaluation that would not be possible with purely automatic techniques (Fuoli and Hommerberg, in press). But manual annotation can also be seen as an important part of the process of theory building. By applying the set of categories included in the APPRAISAL framework to the annotation of concrete instances of text, we obtain information that can be used to progressively develop and refine the model.

However, annotating APPRAISAL poses a number of challenges. First and foremost, identifying APPRAISAL-bearing expressions in text is a highly complex and subjective task. In addition, analysts are frequently confronted with the problem of dealing with infelicitous matches between the definitions and examples provided in the literature and the instances found in their texts, possible multiple interpretations for textual items and fuzzy boundaries between the categories. Finally, the practicalities of annotating APPRAISAL have not been sufficiently discussed in the current literature and, to date, there is no established annotation protocol. The lack of a shared methodological framework might be an obstacle for both novice practitioners as well experienced analysts, and poses a challenge to achieving transparent and replicable analyses.

How should we deal with the problem of subjectivity? How should we account for our decisions so that our analyses are explicit, transparent and maximally replicable? What steps are involved in the process of manually annotating text based on the APPRAISAL framework? While there is growing awareness about methodological issues (e.g. Hommerberg and Don, in press; Macken-Horarik and Isaac, 2014; Thompson, 2014), the literature on APPRAISAL theory has provided incomplete or unsatisfactory answers to these questions. This paper aims to address these challenges and propose solutions to overcome them. It describes a simple step-wise procedure for the manual annotation of APPRAISAL in text and corpora that is designed to help maximize the reliability and transparency of analyses. The procedure spans all stages from the creation of a context-specific annotation manual to the statistical analysis of the quantitative data derived from the manually-performed annotations. By presenting this method, the paper pursues the twofold purpose of (i) providing a practical tool that can facilitate more systematic and replicable APPRAISAL analyses, and (ii) fostering a discussion of the best practices that should be followed when using the APPRAISAL framework in combination with

manual text annotation. In this sense, this paper can be seen as a step towards a shared and more formalized manual annotation methodology for APPRAISAL analysis.

References

Bednarek, M. (2006). *Evaluation in media discourse: analysis of a newspaper corpus*. London: Continuum.

Bednarek, M. (2008). *Emotion talk across corpora*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Carretero, M. & Taboada, M. (2014). Graduation within the scope of attitude in English and Spanish consumer reviews of books and movies. In G. Thompson & L. Alba-Juez (eds.), *Evaluation in Context*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, pp. 221–239.

Fuoli, M. (2012). Assessing social responsibility: A quantitative analysis of APPRAISAL in BP's and IKEA's social reports. *Discourse & Communication*, 6(1):55–81.

Fuoli, M. & Hommerberg, C. (in review). Bridging corpus and discourse approaches: Annotation principles and inter-coder agreement in the an- notation of evaluative language expressions.

Hommerberg, C. & Don, A. (in press). Appraisal and the language of wine appreciation. *Functions of Language*.

Lipovsky, C. (2008). Constructing affiliation and solidarity in job interviews. *Discourse & Communication*, 2(4):411–432.

Lipovsky, C. (2013). Negotiating ones expertise through appraisal in CVs. *Linguistics and the Human Sciences*, 8(3):307–333.

Mackay, J. & Parkinson, J. (2009). My very own mission impossible: An appraisal analysis of student teacher reflections on a design and technology project. *Text & Talk*, 29(6):729–753.

Macken-Horarik, M. & Isaac, A. (2014). Appraising Appraisal. In G. Thompson & L. Alba-Juez (eds.), *Evaluation in Context*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, pp. 67–92.

Martin, J. & White, P. (2005) *The language of evaluation: Appraisal in English*. London & New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

O'Donnell, M. (2008). Demonstration of the UAM CorpusTool for text and image annotation. In *Proceedings of the 46th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics on Human Language Technologies: Demo Session*, 13–16. Association for Computational Linguistics.

O'Donnell, M. (2014). Exploring identity through appraisal analysis: A corpus annotation methodology. *Linguistics and the Human Sciences*, 9(1).

Pounds, G. (2010). Attitude and subjectivity in Italian and British hard-news reporting: The construction of a culture-specific reporter voice. *Discourse Studies*, 12(1):106–137.

Pounds, G. (2011). This property offers much character and charm: evaluation in the discourse of online property advertising. *Text & Talk*, 31(2):195–220.

Taboada, M. & Carretero, M. (2012). Contrastive analyses of evaluation in text: Key issues in the design of an annotation system for attitude applicable to consumer reviews in English and Spanish. *Linguistics and the Human Sciences*, 6(1-3):275–295.

Thompson, G. (2014). AFFECT and emotion, target-value mismatches, and Russian dolls: Refining the APPRAISAL model. In G. Thompson & L. Alba-Juez (eds.), *Evaluation in Context*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, pp. 47–66.

Ryshina-Pankova, M. (2014). Exploring argumentation in course-related blogs through engagement. In G. Thompson & L. Alba-Juez (eds.), *Evaluation in Context*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, pp. 281–302.

Santamaría-García, C. (2014). Evaluative discourse and politeness in university students' communication through social networking sites. In G. Thompson & L. Alba-Juez (eds.), *Evaluation in Context*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, pp. 387–411.