

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A.1 Background of the Research

Political speeches at international forums, such as the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), have long served as powerful tools for nations to assert identity, demonstrate values, and respond to global challenges. In the context of 21st-century diplomacy, speeches are more than just policy statements, it serve as platforms for nations to build global narratives and frame their position in morally resonant terms. According to Shahmir et al. (2023), political speeches function to persuade, position, and project the identity of a nation in relation to international norms and expectations. These speeches often blend ethical values with strategic interests, allowing leaders to influence both global public opinion and multilateral diplomacy.

Indonesia, a vocal representative of the Global South, frequently uses these platforms to express solidarity, justice, and peace-oriented values. One of the most notable examples is the speech delivered by Retno Marsudi, Indonesia's minister for foreign affairs, during the 79th UNGA session in 2024. As it marked her final speech in the forum, Marsudi took the opportunity to reassert Indonesia's international role as a peace-builder and ethical actor, especially in voicing strong support for Palestinian independence. Through emotionally charged language and

moral assertions, she framed Indonesia not just as a participant in diplomacy, but as a nation with a firm moral compass.

To better understand how Marsudi constructed such a stance, this study adopts the appraisal theory introduced by Martin and White (2005), particularly the subsystem of judgment. Appraisal theory, which is part of the broader Systemic Functional Linguistics framework, explores how language encodes evaluative meanings. Within it, judgment specifically refers to assessments of human behavior based on norms, ethics, and social expectations. These judgments are categorized into two domains: social sanction (propriety, veracity) and social esteem (capacity, tenacity, normality). Analyzing the types and functions of judgment in political discourse reveals how moral alignment and ideological positioning are linguistically performed (Alhuthali, 2024).

The importance of judgment in diplomatic speech lies in how it functions to assert national credibility, build international trust, and highlight perceived injustices. Leaders use judgment strategically not only to praise allies or criticize adversaries, but also to situate their own nation within globally accepted moral frameworks. According to Le & Vo (2024), evaluative language in international speeches reinforces national branding and helps shape how a country is perceived in terms of legitimacy, responsibility, and morality. In this regard, Marsudi's speech offers a compelling case of how Indonesia uses language to both condemn injustice and elevate its role in multilateral governance.

While appraisal theory includes other subsystems (affect and appreciation) this study focuses mainly on judgment due to its direct relation with moral evaluation and social behavior. Nevertheless, expressions of affect or appreciation may be referenced to support or contextualize judgmental meanings when necessary. Previous studies have shown that dominant use of judgment in speeches is often a reflection of the speaker's ethical stance, particularly when addressing issues of conflict, injustice, or human rights (Alhuthali, 2024). Marsudi's repeated condemnation of Israel's actions and defense of Palestinian rights can thus be seen as part of a broader evaluative strategy grounded in moral reasoning.

The data for this study is based on the full transcript of Retno Marsudi's address at the 79th UNGA session, delivered in New York in 2024. The video was accessed from the official United Nations YouTube channel and the transcript was cross-checked for accuracy. As this is her last UNGA address before the end of her term, it contains a summative reflection of Indonesia's diplomatic values over the past decade. Her firm moral tone, repeated use of ethical evaluations, and emphasis on peace and justice present rich material for analyzing evaluative stance using the appraisal framework.

Therefore, the analysis of judgment in Marsudi's speech becomes significant not only for understanding the content of her diplomatic message but also for interpreting the broader ideological and ethical stance it represents. By analyzing the types of judgment in Marsudi's speech using Martin and White's (2005) appraisal framework, this study aims to uncover how evaluative language

functions as a tool for constructing Indonesia's ethical positioning in global diplomacy.

A.2 Problems of the Research

Based on the background explained, this research proposes the main problem as follows:

1. What types of judgment are presented in Retno Marsudi's UNGA speech?
2. Which types of judgment are most frequently occurred in the speech, and what do they reveal about the speaker's stance on the issues addressed?

A.3 Objectives of the Research

Based on the research problems explained, objectives can be formulated as follows:

1. To identify the types of judgment presented in Retno Marsudi's UNGA speech.
2. To determine the most frequently occurring types of judgment in the speech and what they reveal about the speaker's stance on the issues addressed.

A.4 Significances of the Research

This research holds both theoretical and practical significance to the readers.

The significance can be formulated as follows:

1. Theoretical Significance
 - Contribution to Political Discourse Analysis

This study contributes to the field of political discourse analysis by applying the appraisal framework, particularly the subsystem of judgment to a real-world diplomatic speech. Through the analysis of Retno Marsudi's UNGA address, the study offers deeper insight into how moral evaluations are constructed linguistically to project a nation's position on global issues.

- Expanding the Use of Appraisal Theory in Diplomatic Contexts

By focusing on a speech delivered on a multilateral global stage, this research extends the application of appraisal theory beyond its more common use in media texts, comment sections, or classroom discourse. It demonstrates how the framework can be applied to high-level diplomatic communication, where evaluative language such as expressions of capacity, propriety, or tenacity serves not only to reflect the speaker's ethical stance but also to construct a nation's identity and moral positioning on the international stage.

2. Practical Significance

- Understanding Indonesia's Evaluative Positioning in Diplomacy

This research offers practical insights into how Indonesia constructs its identity as a principled and ethical actor in global diplomacy. By examining the types of judgment in Retno Marsudi's speech, the study reveals how language is strategically used to position Indonesia as a defender of peace, justice, and multilateral cooperation.

- Implications for Language Use in Political Leadership

This study offers valuable input for diplomats, political leaders, and policymakers regarding the power of evaluative language in shaping international perception. It shows how linguistic choices particularly in terms of moral judgment can be employed to legitimize foreign policy positions, build international solidarity, and reinforce ethical leadership.

A.5 Limitation of the Research

The limitation of this research is that it focuses solely on the Judgment subsystem of the Attitude framework within Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005). Although Affect and Appreciation are also part of the Attitude system, they are only referenced briefly when necessary to support the interpretation of judgmental meanings. This narrow focus means that the full range of evaluative language in the speech is not explored in depth. Another limitation is this research does not investigate the reception or impact of the speech on the international audience. The study is limited to textual analysis, without examining how different listeners or institutions may interpret or respond to the speaker's evaluative stance. Future studies may incorporate reception theory, audience response, or comparative analysis for a more comprehensive understanding.

A.6 Definition of Key Terms

A.6.1 Political Speech

Political speech refers to public discourse delivered by political figures, often aimed at expressing ideological positions, influencing public opinion, or justifying governmental actions. It serves both communicative and performative functions in shaping policy debates and legitimizing authority. According to Chilton (2004), political speeches are not merely informative but are structured to persuade audiences, align them with specific worldviews, and perform political acts such as promising, blaming, or legitimizing.

A.6.2 UNGA Speech

UNGA (United Nations General Assembly) speech is an official statement delivered by a representative of a member state during the General Debate at the annual General Assembly session. It is a high-stakes, diplomatic form of political speech that allows nations to articulate their positions on global issues, promote their international image, and appeal to multilateral cooperation. As explained by Weiss (2008), UNGA speeches reflect both national interests and collective values, often combining political intent with moral discourse.

A.6.3 Global South

The term Global South broadly refers to countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and Oceania that are often characterized by historical experiences of colonialism, economic disadvantage, or political marginalization in the global order. It also implies a shared identity in advocating for equity in global

governance. According to Dados and Connell (2012), the Global South has emerged as both a geopolitical and discursive category that highlights power asymmetries and calls for a more just international system.

A.6.4 Appraisal Theory

Appraisal Theory is a framework within Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) that explains how speakers or writers express attitudes, align themselves with readers, and evaluate people, behaviors, or phenomena. It is composed of three subsystems: Attitude (including Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation), Engagement, and Graduation. Martin and White (2005) emphasize that Appraisal Theory helps unpack the interpersonal meaning of discourse, particularly how language constructs evaluations and social positioning.

A.6.5 Judgment

Judgment is a subsystem of the Attitude category in Appraisal Theory that focuses on evaluating people's behavior in terms of moral or personal standards. It is divided into two broad domains: social sanction (ethics-related evaluations) and social esteem (performance or capacity-based evaluations). As Martin and White (2005) explain, judgment reflects how speakers morally position individuals or groups and assign credibility, propriety, or competence to their actions.

A.6.6 Social Sanction

Social sanction refers to one of the two subcategories of judgment, used to assess behaviors in relation to moral codes and ethical norms. It includes evaluations of propriety (whether someone acts appropriately or responsibly) and

veracity (truthfulness or honesty). These judgments signal the moral approval or disapproval of a person's actions. According to White (2012), social sanction is crucial in political discourse for affirming moral high ground or delegitimizing opponents.

A.6.7 Social Esteem

Social esteem is the second subcategory of judgment in Appraisal Theory, referring to assessments of behavior that relate to social expectations rather than moral standards. It covers evaluations of normality (how usual or special someone is), capacity (how competent they are), and tenacity (how resolute or dependable they are). These types of judgment are often used to build credibility and admiration. Martin and White (2005) emphasize that social esteem helps shape perceptions of leadership and personal character.

A.6.8 Evaluative Language

Evaluative language refers to the use of linguistic resources to express attitudes, judgments, and stances toward people, actions, or ideas. It includes both explicit markers (e.g., "brave," "corrupt") and implicit strategies (e.g., metaphor, repetition) that convey approval or disapproval. As Thompson and Hunston (2000) argue, evaluation is central to how language constructs value and intersubjective alignment between speakers and audiences.

A.7 Organization of the Research

This research is organized into five chapters to systematically present the background, theoretical framework, data analysis, and conclusion of the study.

Each chapter is described as follows:

1. Chapter I: Introduction

This chapter presents the general overview of the research. It includes the background of the research, problems of the research, objectives of the research, significance of the research, definition of key terms, and organization of the research. The chapter serves to contextualize the study and outline its direction.

2. Chapter II: Review of Related Literature

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework that underpins the analysis. It begins with an overview of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), followed by a detailed explanation of appraisal theory with a focus on the Attitude system, particularly the judgment subsystem. The categories of Judgment (social sanction and social esteem) are elaborated as the core analytical tools. This chapter also includes a review of previous related studies to position the current research within existing scholarly work.

3. Chapter III: Research Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology of the study. It covers the type of research, the data and data source, methods and techniques of collecting

data, and the method of analyzing data. It explains the qualitative approach used to examine evaluative language in the speech.

4. Chapter IV: Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents the research findings in three parts: Data Description outlines the speech and its context, Data Analysis identifies and explains the types of judgment used and categorized into social sanction and social esteem, and Discussion interprets how these dominant types reflect the speaker's stance and shape Indonesia's image in global diplomacy.

5. Chapter V: Conclusion and Suggestion

The final chapter summarizes the research findings, highlights the conclusions drawn from the analysis, and offers suggestions for future research in similar areas.