

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

B.1 Theoretical Framework

In this study, the researcher applies a discourse-analytic approach grounded in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), specifically the Appraisal Theory developed by Martin and White (2005), to examine the evaluative language used in Retno Marsudi's 2024 UNGA speech. Appraisal Theory is a framework for analyzing how speakers and writers express attitudes, negotiate interpersonal positioning, and align or disalign with audiences. Within this framework, Judgment is a key component of the Attitude subsystem, focusing on the evaluation of human behavior in terms of social norms, moral values, and personal qualities.

Martin and White (2005) distinguish two main categories of Judgment: Social Sanction and Social Esteem. Social Sanction refers to moral and ethical evaluations, comprising Propriety (judgments of moral behavior) and Veracity (judgments of truthfulness). Social Esteem refers to evaluations of social worth, encompassing Capacity (competence), Tenacity (determination), and Normality (how typical or exceptional someone is). These categories enable a systematic classification of how a speaker assigns praise or blame, either explicitly or implicitly, in diplomatic discourse (White, 2015).

The focus on Judgment in this research allows the analysis to capture how Retno Marsudi positions Indonesia and other global actors within a moral and competence-based evaluative framework. By identifying the instances of Social Sanction and Social Esteem in the speech, the study investigates how evaluative language functions as a strategic rhetorical tool to construct Indonesia's diplomatic image. This approach aligns with the view of Thompson (2014) that political and diplomatic communication often relies heavily on moral framing and capability claims to influence international perception and policy discourse.

B.1.1 Systemic Functional Linguistics

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a theory of language developed by Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday, which views language not merely as a set of grammatical rules but as a resource for making meaning in social contexts. Rather than treating language as an isolated structure, SFL emphasizes its function in real-life communication, focusing on how people use language to achieve specific purposes (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

At the core of SFL is the idea that language simultaneously fulfills three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The ideational metafunction expresses the speaker's experience of the world, the interpersonal metafunction enacts social interactions and expresses attitudes, and the textual metafunction organizes the message to make it coherent and contextually relevant (Eggins, 2004). In political discourse, particularly, the interpersonal metafunction becomes

essential because it involves the speaker's stance, judgments, and attempts to align or persuade audiences.

SFL operates through systems of choices rather than fixed rules where speakers select linguistic elements based on what they want to mean and the context in which they are communicating. These choices occur at different grammatical levels, such as clauses, groups, and phrases, which are all structured according to social function (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). This framework allows for a nuanced analysis of language, especially in evaluating attitudes and positioning in political texts.

SFL has been widely applied in discourse studies, education, media analysis, and increasingly in political speech analysis. Its relevance to the current research lies in its ability to explain how language functions ideologically and interpersonally in contexts like diplomatic speeches. Since political communication involves negotiating meaning, asserting values, and projecting national identity, SFL provides the necessary tools to analyze these dimensions of language use.

Among these, the interpersonal metafunction is particularly relevant to the current research because it involves the evaluative and attitudinal dimensions of language, which are central to political discourse. Within this metafunction lies the foundation for Appraisal Theory, which provides a more detailed account of how language expresses attitudes, negotiates values, and builds relationships between speakers and audiences (Martin & White, 2005).

B.1.2 Appraisal Theory

Appraisal Theory is an extension of the interpersonal metafunction in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which focuses on how language is used to express attitudes, evaluate people and situations, and manage interpersonal positioning in discourse. Developed by Martin and White (2005), this theory provides a more refined framework to analyze evaluative meaning beyond what traditional grammar offers. It enables researchers to explore how speakers or writers construct stance, align or disalign with audiences, and negotiate social values through linguistic choices. As such, Appraisal Theory is particularly useful in studying persuasive or influential genres such as political speeches, media commentaries, and editorials, where the speaker's values and ideological stance are foregrounded. The theory is organized into three major subsystems: Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation. Each subsystem captures a different dimension of evaluative language.

The Attitude subsystem concerns the expression of personal feelings, judgments of behavior, and aesthetic evaluations. It is divided into three domains: Affect, which deals with emotions and feelings; Judgment, which refers to assessments of human behavior according to social norms; and Appreciation, which evaluates objects, events, and phenomena in terms of their aesthetic or social value. In political discourse, judgment is particularly outstanding, as it allows speakers to morally evaluate actions, decisions, or actors. For instance, praise for diplomacy or criticism of aggression often falls under this category. Attitude plays

a central role in constructing the speaker's stance and ethical identity, and in aligning audiences around shared values (Martin & White, 2005).

The Engagement subsystem focuses on the speaker's or writer's positioning toward other voices, perspectives, or assumed viewpoints in the discourse. It captures how utterances either acknowledge, reject, entertain, or align with other positions. This system includes monoglossic (single-voiced) statements, which present propositions as unchallenged truths, and heteroglossic statements, which incorporate or respond to alternative viewpoints. In political communication, engagement resources are used strategically to align with allies, challenge adversaries, or show openness to international norms. Thus, engagement is critical for understanding how speakers manage interpersonal relations and ideologies through acknowledgment or denial of dialogic alternatives (White, 2012).

The Graduation subsystem refers to the intensification or downscaling of attitudes and stances. It has two major subcategories: Force, which adjusts the intensity or volume of evaluation (e.g., "strongly condemn" vs. "condemn"), and Focus, which sharpens or softens category boundaries (e.g., "a real hero" vs. "kind of brave"). Graduation is particularly relevant in persuasive discourse, where speakers often amplify their emotional or moral stance to influence the audience. It can enhance the persuasive power of an argument or mitigate potential backlash by softening criticism.

Among these, Attitude becomes especially relevant when examining political discourse, as it allows for a deeper analysis of how language encodes

moral and emotional evaluations. Political figures often use language not only to inform but also to morally appraise behaviors, individuals, and events. These evaluations help them frame national identity, express solidarity, or criticize global injustices. In this way, Appraisal Theory does more than simply categorize linguistic features; it provides insight into the ideological and ethical positions of the speaker.

B.1.3 Attitude

Attitude is one of the three subsystems in the Appraisal framework and plays a key role in shaping interpersonal meaning. It refers to how speakers or writers express evaluation in terms of emotions, ethics, and aesthetics. According to Martin and White (2005), Attitude is divided into three main categories: Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation. These categories help identify how language positions people emotionally, morally, and in terms of value or worth. Through Attitude, evaluative meanings are embedded in discourse to express approval or disapproval, alignment or resistance, and to construct relationships between the speaker and the audience.

Affect is the subsystem that deals with the expression of personal emotion. It reflects how speakers feel whether positively or negatively towards a situation, event, or individual. Emotions can be explicitly stated (e.g., “I am angry”) or implied through indirect phrasing (e.g., “It was disappointing”). Affect can also vary in intensity and may be triggered by external experiences or internal states. In political speeches, affect is often used to establish emotional connections with

audiences; for instance, expressing sorrow about a humanitarian crisis can strengthen the persuasive power of a diplomat's message (Alhuthali, 2024).

Judgment involves the evaluation of human behavior in terms of social norms, ethics, or personal character. It is used to assess whether people are capable, honest, brave, fair, or trustworthy. Judgment is especially relevant in political speeches where speakers often make value-laden assessments of actions either to legitimize their own position or to criticize others. Evaluative statements like "a responsible government" or "a violation of human rights" reflect the speaker's moral stance. Although judgment will be the primary focus of this research and is further elaborated in the next section, it is important to note here that it serves as a tool for moral alignment in public discourse (Martin & White, 2005).

Appreciation, on the other hand, is concerned with evaluations of things, processes, or states of being, rather than people. Based on Martin and White (2005), appreciation includes aesthetic assessments (e.g., "a beautiful solution"), assessments of value (e.g., "a significant moment"), and complexity (e.g., "a complicated issue"). In political contexts, appreciation can be used to describe policies, peace agreements, or global efforts in a positive or negative light. Unlike judgment, which focuses on behavior, appreciation evaluates the quality or worth of abstract entities. This subsystem helps speakers frame policies or global initiatives in a positive or negative light based on their qualities.

In summary, the attitude system enables speakers to convey emotional responses, ethical evaluations, and value judgments. While affect and appreciation support the emotional and contextual dimensions of a speech, this research emphasizes judgment due to its central role in assessing human behavior and constructing moral positioning.

B.1.4 Judgment

In Appraisal Theory, Judgment is a central component of the Attitude subsystem, focusing on the evaluation of human behavior against social and moral standards. Martin and White (2005, p. 53) identify two main categories: Social Sanction, which assesses moral and legal integrity, specifically through Propriety and Veracity; and Social Esteem, which appraises personal qualities such as Capacity, Tenacity, or Normality. In this study, the terms Social Sanction and Social Esteem follow these definitions, with Social Sanction referring to moral and ethical evaluations and Social Esteem referring to evaluations of social worth. These categories enable analysts to systematically classify a speaker's language when they praise, criticize, or endorse behavior (White, 2015).

It is important to note that in other disciplines, these terms may carry different meanings. For instance, in sociology, social sanction refers to rewards or punishments used by society to enforce norms (Gibbs, 1981), and social esteem may refer to the respect or admiration granted to individuals or groups within a community (Rawls, 2004). In political science, social sanction can denote diplomatic penalties or restrictions, while social esteem may refer to a state's

prestige or standing in the international arena (Lake, 2018). These broader interpretations are not the focus of this study, which applies the terms strictly within the linguistic framework of Appraisal Theory as proposed by Martin and White (2005).

Social Sanction addresses behaviors judged according to ethical standards or truthfulness. It comprises two subtypes: Propriety, which evaluates whether actions are ethically acceptable, and Veracity, which examines honesty and credibility. Describing someone as “just” or “transparent” invokes positive moral judgment, while calling them “corrupt” or “dishonest” signals disapproval and delegitimization. According to Alhuthali (2024) these judgments are potent tools for political speakers seeking to establish moral high ground or critique opponents.

Social Esteem covers evaluations of a person’s ability, resilience, or typicality within a social context (Martin & White, 2005). For example, describing someone as “strong” (capacity), “determined” (tenacity), or “outstanding” (normality) highlights their valued qualities without necessarily invoking moral judgment. In political discourse, Social Esteem is often used to elevate leaders or citizens, emphasizing competence and solidarity.

Judgment expressions can be either positive or negative, and they play essential roles in persuasion and identity construction. In formal speeches, speakers often use positive social esteem to highlight virtues, while negative social sanction marks the wrongdoing of adversaries. Alhuthali’s (2024) analysis of Ban

Ki-Moon's UNGA speeches illustrates this well: Judgment language is strategically deployed in sections requiring moral leadership to invite audience agreement.

B.2 Review and Related Studies

A growing body of research demonstrates the pivotal role of judgment within Appraisal Theory in political discourse. Tang (2006, as cited in Sun & Liu, 2023) argues that evaluation is inherently persuasive in political speech, serving to guide audience alignment by “naturalizing” preferred viewpoints, especially critical in high-stakes diplomatic or ideological contexts. This positions judgment as a core linguistic resource used by speakers to construct intersubjective stances and reinforce moral consensus.

Li and Zhu (2019) supports this idea by analyzing evaluative strategies in macro-level political discourse, showing that judgment, alongside with attitude and graduation, is employed to construct national ideology and legitimize state actions in global debates. Hoffmann (2018), in a micro-level study, explored the strategic use of negative judgment in U.S. presidential tweets, where labels like “crooked” or “dumb” functioned to frame opponents and shape public engagement. These studies collectively reinforce the theoretical grounding of the current research, illustrating how evaluative meanings are vital for negotiating power, ideology, and moral authority.

In a more discourse-focused context, Zhou et al. (2024) examined diplomatic discourse using the attitude system within appraisal theory. Their study found that judgment was often employed to construct solidarity, build ethical alignment with

international audiences, and position national policies as morally responsible. Similarly, Goudong and Afzaal (2023) conducted a corpus-based analysis of political debates on China's Belt and Road Initiative, revealing how political actors deploy judgmental language to manage stance, establish credibility, and influence ideological interpretations.

Other studies highlight how judgment is used in speeches by political or diplomatic figures. Shahmir et al. (2023) compared speeches by Noam Chomsky and Shah Mahmood Qureshi at the UN, showing that both speakers used judgmental language to present moral critiques of global injustice and assert their ideological positions. Mazlum and Afshin (2016) analyzed evaluative expressions in American and Iranian presidential speeches, concluding that both leaders selectively used moral and social evaluations to shape their national image and engage with international audiences.

Expanding into media and commentary, Hanief and Khaidir (2024) investigated judgmental resources in New York Times and Al Jazeera coverage of Indonesia's general election. They observed how media outlets use linguistic evaluations to reflect political ideology and critique authority. Similarly, Nanavaratorn (2025) studied evaluative language in media coverage of U.S. presidents, confirming the prevalence of judgment and its impact on public perception and bias in reporting.

The strategic deployment of evaluative resources in debates has also been a subject of analysis. Awaisuddin et al. (2024) examined the 2024 Harris-Trump U.S.

presidential debate through Appraisal Theory, revealing how candidates relied on affect and judgment to express empathy, frame opponents, and assert ideological commitments. Their findings emphasize the rhetorical weight of judgmental language in polarized contexts and its influence on audience alignment.

Several recent studies have also examined speeches by political and diplomatic figures at global forums. Reflinaldi et al. (2024) conducted a critical discourse analysis on King Salman's speeches at the UNGA, illustrating how evaluative language constructs authority and ethical leadership. A recent study by Pratama (2025) focused on Retno Marsudi's speech concerning the humanitarian crisis in Palestine. Although it employed a framing and rhetorical lens rather than Appraisal Theory, the study highlights how Marsudi's discourse conveys strong moral stances and humanitarian values. This reinforces the current research's assumption that evaluative meaning, particularly through judgment, plays a significant role in shaping Indonesia's diplomatic identity on the global stage.

Lastly, studies like Alhuthali (2024) and Onyegbu (2024) have explored how Appraisal Theory aids in interpreting political speech across different cultural contexts, offering further validation for the framework's adaptability. Meanwhile, Shabriani (2023) applied Appraisal analysis to Nadiem Makarim's speech at the G20, noting how judgmental resources are used to affirm Indonesia's global standing and developmental vision.

Together, these studies show the wide-ranging application of Appraisal Theory, especially judgment, in unpacking how language constructs moral

positions, reflects ideological alignments, and asserts national identity in political discourse. The present study seeks to extend this line of inquiry by focusing specifically on Retno Marsudi's 2024 UNGA speech to examine how judgment is used to articulate Indonesia's stance on global justice and diplomacy.

