



## The Appraisal of Eulogies Delivered at Mrs. Lee Kuan Yew Memorial Service

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### Abstract

The study reports the appraisal analysis and the rhetorical structure of eulogies delivered at Mrs. Lee Kuan Yew memorial service. Eulogies are meant to remember the person who died in a positive light, and offer an opportunity to speak about who the deceased was and the ways in which she or he made a difference in the lives of family, friends, and his or her community. Since eulogy contains praises for someone admired, and the speaker recalls the memories shared, he has to evaluate his feelings and relation by expressing attitude, his position towards the deceased, and gradable valuation. Such evaluation has to do with appraisal system. The research integrates the appraisal theory proposed by Martin and White (2005) and rhetorical structure (Kunkel and Dennis, 2003). This study employs discourse analysis method of research. The findings reveals that the eulogies have primarily used the judgement resources rather than affect and appreciation within the attitude system. As eulogizing function, the eulogy composed largely of laudation and praise, the use of judgement appraising items shows how the eulogizer's assessment towards the admiring behaviour of the deceased during her life. Moreover, the utilization of the rhetorical structure contributes to the achievement of the communicative purpose of eulogy. Through the well-structured eulogies, the eulogizers heighten the audience member's feelings of regard, love, and appreciation for the deceased.

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## INTRODUCTION

Eulogies are meant to remember the person who died in a positive light, and offer an opportunity to speak about who the deceased was and the ways in which she or he made a difference in the lives of family, friends, and his or her community. The eulogy is part of ritualistic speaking events existing in nearly every culture in the world (Kent, 1997: 1). The funerals as ritual provides some amount of closure and helps individuals deal with their grief. In most cases, the funeral oratory, or eulogy is delivered within the context of the funeral itself. According to Frijda (1997: 3) the important ritualistic functions of funerals, such as affirming affection and bonding. A eulogy must respond to the situation and the special expectations of the audience. Hence, it is a mandatory to celebrate, to commemorate, to honour, to dedicate, to mourn, and to praise the life of the deceased.

Eulogy is kind of genre in English. Genre is defined by Martin (2009: 10) as staged goal-oriented social process. It has particular purpose to commemorate someone who passed away, and it is commonly delivered in memorial service. To achieve the goal, it has to be structured in sequential order and contain distinct feature with other genres. In writing eulogy, appraisal contributes a significant role in order to achieve the purpose of eulogy. According to Martin and White (2005), appraisal is composed of three interacting domains: attitude (feelings, emotional reactions, judgements of behaviour and evaluation of things), engagement (sourcing attitudes and the play voices around opinions in discourse), and graduation (grading phenomena whereby feelings are amplified and categories blurred).

By applying appraisal, the person who will deliver the eulogy tries to gain sympathy of the audience, to praise the deceased and to console the family. As a funeral ritual, eulogy provides some amount of closure and helps individuals deal with their grief. As rhetoric, the eulogy must respond to the situation and the special expectations of the audience (Kunkel

and Dennis, 2003: 3). Thus, the consolatory obligation is crucial to the success of delivering eulogy.

There are some previous studies related to this study. Swain (2007), Read (2009), and Gallardo and Ferrari (2010) focused on engagement resources. Their studies implies that constructing an effective persuasive textual voice draws on a wide range of engagement resources.

Regarding to attitudinal resources Souza (2003), Page (2003), Pekarova (2011), Priyatmojo (2011), and Morrish and Staunton (2013) found that attitude is in fact can be implicit or invoked, rather than explicitly indicated. Dealing with rhetorical analysis, West (2014) analyzed President Barrack Obama's rhetoric in three of his national eulogies in order to examine how Obama consoled the nation following various tragedies, and how his strategies differ from the past presidents. The result of the study illustrated that President Obama focused on the survivors of tragedy rather than the victims which promoted a sense of hope for the survivors and the nation by empowering the people to move on from the tragedy.

In analyzing the eulogy, it was performed using a form of genre criticism. The components of the genre criticism were drawn from Kunkel and Dennis's (2003). Kunkel and Dennis proposed a framework concerning eulogy rhetoric. Therefore, the framework of genre criticism proposed by Dennis and Kunkel (2003) is used in this present study.

This study is different from previous studies above since not only presenting the appraisal manifested in a certain genre but also investigating the rhetorical structure of a particular genre which is eulogy. Therefore, the researcher hopes that this study will contribute to the field of appraisal and rhetorical studies.

## METHOD

This study employs the discourse analysis method of research. Mouton (2001: 168) stated discourse analysis as a design type is a recent

version of textual analysis which aims to study the meanings of words but within the larger “chunks” of text such as conversation or discourse. It aims to explain the appraisal of attitude, engagement, and graduation manifested in eulogies delivered at Mrs. Lee Kuan Yew memorial service and how the rhetorical structure contributes to the achievement of its communicative purpose. The object of the study was the eulogies delivered at Mrs. Lee Kuan Yew Memorial Service.

In order to collect the data, the researcher used some documents as the research instruments. The documents were in the form of tables to analyze each of the Appraisal subsystem as well as the rhetorical structure of eulogies.

After collecting the data, the researcher classifying and marking the appraisal of attitude, engagement, and graduation based on Martin and White (2005) and identifying the rhetorical structure of eulogies proposed by Kunkel and Dennis (2003). The researcher focuses on the data to achieve the objective and displayed those data to help her understand the findings then explains them. This is also followed by tabulating the percentage of the data result and interpreting the data analysis. Next, the conclusion is drawn.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

In this section, we present the results and discussion of the appraisal of attitude, engagement, and graduation of the eulogies and how the rhetorical structure contributes to achive its communicative purpose.

**The Appraisal of Attitude, Engagement and Graduation**

After conducting the analysis of the appraising items, some findings are generated. The summary of the findings of the appraisal of attitude manifested in the eulogies are shown in table 1.

**Table 1.** Distribution of Attitude choices

Type	Affect	Judgement	Appreciation
Instances	63	92	30
%	34	50	16

The table maps out that judgement exceeds other attitude appraising items by a fair margin in the whole texts. 50% of attitudinal resources in eulogies constitutes judgement. The eulogies have primarily used the judgement resources rather than affect and appreciation within the attitude system. As eulogizing function, the eulogy composed largely of laudation and praise (Kunkel and Dennis, 2003). Hence, the use of judgement appraising items shows how the eulogizer’s assessment towards the admiring behaviour of the deceased during her life, the eulogizer tends to employ positive attitude rather than negative attitude through the chunks/ clauses containing positive judgement values to reveals their position towards the deceased.

The distribution of appraising items of engagement in the eulogies is set out in table 2.

**Table 2.** Distribution of Engagement choices

Type	Disclaim	Proclaim	Entertain	Attribute
Instances	70	13	70	2
%	45	8	45	2

The table shows that the number of disclaim and entertain exceeds other appraising items. With 45% of engagement resources in eulogies constitutes disclaim and entertain. Proclaim is in the second place with 8% and followed by appreciation with 2%.

This way of using engagement appraising items tends to align than to disalign the audience as they are sharing the statements or assertions that express a judgement or opinion that form a community of shared values. Furthermore, using entertain means ‘dialogically expand manner” (Wu, 2007). As stated earlier, eulogy is meant to gain sympathy of the audience, to praise the deceased and to console the family. Thus, by producing utterance that acknowledges a proposition as

one possibility amongst others through the use of modals (Wu, 2007).

The distribution of appraising items of graduation in the eulogies is set out in table 3.

**Table 3.** Distribution of Graduation choices

Polarity	Force	Focus
Instances	187	21
%	90	10

Graduation is central to appraisal system (Martin and White, 2005: 136). It operates across two axes of scalability that of grading according to intensity or amount, and the preciseness by which category boundaries are drawn.

It can be seen from the table that the eulogizers had predominantly employ graduation as force to express meanings of intensity and quantity when they describe and their memories and time spent with the deceased.

In the appraisal system, graduation is utilised to scale attitudinal meanings and engagement resources. The scalling is binary, either it is focus 'prototypicality' or force 'preciseness'. The way the eulogizers varies these scalling options in writing the eulogy truly indicates the positioning or evaluation being given in that text. The table shows that sharpening are the ones most realized as opposed to softening. According to Martin and White (2005: 139) focus: sharpening is utilised it 'often flag a positive attitudinal assessment.' A number of sharpening values in the text positively evaluate the attitudinality of participants and entities.

**The Rhetorical Structure of Eulogy**

In constructing the eulogy, Lazarus (1991) as cited in Kunkel and Dennis (2003: 5) suggested that there are two major types of coping: problem-focused coping (acting and dealing with the problem that is causing the stress) and emotion-focused coping (regulating and dealing with the emotion that is surrounding the stress). Hence, based on contemporary grief theories, Kunkel and Dennis

(2003) proposed a new analytical approach to the rhetorical analysis of eulogy by dividing the modern eulogy into seven common characteristics namely credibility of speaker, praise for the deceased, self-disclosure emotion, problem focused coping, emotion focused coping, affirmation of vivid relationship, and continuation of interactive bonds.

**Table 4.** Rhetorical structure of eulogy

Rhetorical Structure	text 1	text 2	text 3	text 4	text 5
Credibility of speaker	v	v	v	v	v
Praise for the deceased	v	v	v		v
Self-Disclosure		v	v		
Problem-Focused					
Emotion-Focused	v	v	v	v	v
Positive Reappraisal	v		v	v	v
Affirmation	v	v	v	v	v
Continuation					

The table shows that almost all component of rhetorical framework can be found in each eulogy. Credibility of the speaker, emotion-focused coping, and affirmation of vivid relationships are the component that exist in all text while problem-focused coping and continuation of interactive bonds cannot be found in all text.

**Credibility of the Speaker**

It refers to the eulogizer acknowledging their relationship with the deceased early on in the speech. The instance is in the following passage:

*Hi everyone. My name is Xiuqi and I'm Mrs Lee's granddaughter...*

The five eulogizer established their credibility as eulogizers by acknowledging their relationship to the deceased very early in the presentation. Even in a dreadful situation of the funeral setting, the eulogizers still feel the need to establish their credibility through describing the relationship with the deceased. This strategy is used by the eulogizer to build a case for his or her competence to speak in the ceremonial position. In addition, by establishing their competence through ties with the deceased generates the honored role for the eulogizer.

### **Emotion Focused Coping**

In appreciating the amount of time spent, or some particular experiences, that the eulogizer shared with the deceased, he or she often relate stories and recollection to promote the appreciation of the deceased in the audience. The instance is in the following passage:

*I have precious memories of our 63 years together. Without her, I would be a different man, with a different life. She devoted herself to me and our children. She was always there when I needed her. She has lived a life full of warmth and meaning...*

The focus of this strategy is to shift from the loss of present and future experiences to a thankfulness for shared past experiences. It can be seen from the instance that at first the eulogizer describes the time spent with the deceased then gradually shift to a gratitude of having the deceased in his life. He uses the appraising items of positive valuation to show how worthy their togetherness. How much he is grateful to have her for the past 63 years. Thus, this is in line with Dennis and Kunkel (2003) eulogy rhetoric of positive reappraisal which is defined as 'efforts to change, refocus, or reframe the meanings of an experience or event so that they are more positive and less threatening. In addition, these strategy aid in consoling the audience and exhorting the audience to take actions that honor the deceased.

### **Affirmation of Vivid Relationship**

The strategy is used to vividly remind the survivors that the deceased existed materially. A

vivid impressions of the lives and and characters of the lost promotes griever's ability and willingness to carry on relationship with them. The instance is in the following passage:

*Mama understood how passionately I felt about these missions. She did not stop me but would calmly put things into perspective for me and gently bring me down to earth. When I was miserable because I failed in a mission, she was simply there for me, knowing words would be cold comfort...*

In creating a more inclusive internalized vision of the deceased, the eulogizers reveal some private insights and interaction with the deceased. The instance elaborates the memories and relationships they shared with the deceased. This is actually similar to the Positive reappraisal-Affirmation of time(s) spent with the deceased strategy. However, this strategy is narrowing the relationship shared with the deceased. Not only appreciating valuable time shared with the deceased, but also the intimate relationship with the departed. How the deceased's strongly influence their life and thus represent the deceased well-protected memories in their psyche.

After analysing the rhetorical structure of the eulogies, the findings suggest that the eulogizers used the strategies to praise the deceased through mentions of their life, family, deeds, actions and other concerns of value of the community, and present the audiences with the memorable times spent with the deceased and how the deceased strongly affect their life as well as thankfulness for the lesson learned from the deceased.

The eulogizers mostly utilized the affirmation of vivid relationship-revelation of private insights and unique relationships. It creates a more comprehensive internalized relationship with the deceased by expressing the feelings toward the deceased. Expressing the feelings can be done in various ways, one of the successful ways is by putting feelings and thoughts about that which has been disturbing and confusing into language. Construing a coherent narrative in the form of eulogy makes

the troubling event more understandable and less distressed.

Therefore, the result is in line with the general purpose and function eulogy claimed by Kunkel and Dennis (2003) which derives from contemporary American funeral oratory. They points out that as a consolatory function where the dead are assimilated to those who preceded them and the living are comforted from their experiences of emotional pain.

Through the well-structured eulogies, the eulogizers heighten audience member's feelings of regard, love, and appreciation for the deceased. Shifting the grief of losing the loved one to a coherent narrative in the form of eulogies which foster the audience's emotional recovery. This result is in line with other studies done by Logan et al. (2017) and Landau and Jonker (2018), they agreed that stimulating the recovery with rhetoric provokes particular reactions and responses to the loss of the deceased by creating a new perspectives, effective reappraisal of the shocking loss through the used reference of worthiness of the deceased's traits and legacies as well as to her afterlife.

Based on the findings, the eulogies have primarily used the judgement resources rather than affect and appreciation within the attitude system. The result supports the finding of another research done by Warsono (2008), he found that judgement implies in addition to having positive feelings, the writer also ethically has positive judgement about the subject matter and positive appreciation strengthens the earlier conclusions that the eulogizer has positive attitudes towards the deceased.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

From the research findings and discussion, it concludes that the eulogies have primarily used the judgement resources rather than affect and appreciation within the attitude system. As eulogizing function, the eulogy composed largely of laudation and praise, the use of judgement appraising items shows how the eulogizer's assessment towards the admiring

behaviour of the deceased during her life, the eulogizer tends to employ positive attitude rather than negative attitude through the chunks/ clauses containing positive judgement values to reveals their position towards the deceased.

Furthermore, dealing with the engagement, the realization of engagement appraising items including disclaim, proclaim, entertain and attribute, are dispersed unevenly in the whole eulogies. Both disclaim and entertain are highly appeared exceed the other engagement appraising items. This way of using engagement appraising items tends to align than to disalign the audience as they are sharing the statements or assertions that express a judgement or opinion that form a community of shared values.

In the realization of graduation, the findings indicate that force is used more than focus. It can be implied that in expressing meaning and describing the deceased the eulogizers utilized the degree of intensity and amount.

In addition, the finding indicates that the utilization of the rhetorical structure contributes to the achievement of the communicative purpose of eulogy. Through the well-structured eulogies, the eulogizers heighten the audience member's feelings of regard, love, and appreciation for the deceased. Shifting the grief of losing the loved one to a coherent narrative in the form of eulogy which foster the audience's emotional recovery.

Based on the findings, the researcher suggests that as language learners we should understand the language evaluation which includes appraisal analysis. By understanding the appraising resources, it enables us to explore and identify how the speaker or writer of both spoken and written discourse pass judgement on people generally, the material objects and happenings and so on.

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