

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the background and context of the study, followed by the research aim, research questions, and specific objectives. It also explains the theoretical and practical significance of the research, along with its scope and limitations.

1.1 Background of the Study

These days, communication is no longer limited to real-life interactions. The evolution of digital communication platforms has continued to transform the way humans exchange ideas, share experiences, and build connections. Yanti & Sulhan (2023) emphasize that the participatory nature of online interaction allows users not only to consume information but also to actively respond to content, build credibility, and strengthen messages as part of a new form of communication. These changes in digital communication also influence the way people use language. In online platforms, people often express feeling, give opinions, and respond to others through comments, chats, and videos. Because of this, it becomes important to study how language is used in digital communication when interacting online.

Among the many platforms that facilitate such interactions, YouTube has developed into one of the most powerful. As a global video-sharing platform, YouTube allows users to create, share, and respond to audiovisual content. These activities represent what Barton & Lee (2013) refer to as digital practices in digital discourse. Because of its features, YouTube has also become a preferred platform for content genres that foreground personal expression and evaluative commentary, including reviews, tutorials, vlogs, and particularly reaction videos.

In particular, reaction videos have developed into a unique genre in YouTube. Reaction videos generally depict a single individual or a group of people watching something and reacting to it while relaying their live responses and viewpoints to their audience. As Feerrar & Finney (2020) explain that reaction videos are not just a form of entertainment, but offer a way for individuals to engage

in personal learning, build media literacy, and connect their viewing experiences to their identity and social community. Because reaction videos mix spontaneous affective response with evaluative commentary, they create a hybrid content that is emotional, reflexive, and socially engaging. This makes reaction videos offer richness for linguistics research, particularly for studying how language functions to express attitude, posture stance, and build relationships with their audiences in real time.

From a linguistic perspective, evaluative language can be effectively analyzed through Appraisal Theory proposed by Martin and White (2005). This theory provides a framework for examining how speakers express emotions, make evaluations, and position themselves toward the people, objects, or phenomena they discuss. Since reaction videos are characterized by spontaneous emotional responses and evaluative commentary, the Attitude subsystem is particularly relevant to this study. According to Martin & White (2005), Attitude subsystem consists of Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation, which enable the researcher to investigate how the reactor expresses feelings, evaluates people's behavior, and appraises the aesthetic qualities. To complement this analysis, the study also adopts the evaluative functions proposed by Hunston and Thompson (2000), namely Expressing Stance, Building Relationship, and Organizing Discourse, in order to explain how attitudinal language functions in constructing interpersonal meaning within reaction-video discourse.

This study examines reaction videos produced by Bob Cieslinski on YouTube. The videos were selected because they contain a substantial amount of verbal commentary related to musical performances, allowing the researcher to identify various forms of evaluative language. Throughout the reaction process, Bob frequently expresses emotional responses, evaluates performers' abilities, and comments on musical elements such as melody, rhythm, arrangement, and vocal technique. These characteristics provide rich linguistic data for analyzing the Attitude subsystem of Appraisal Theory, particularly Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation. Therefore, Bob Cieslinski's reaction videos offer a relevant source of data for investigating how evaluative meanings are constructed in reaction-video discourse.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study, this research addresses the following questions:

1. What types of Attitude are realized in the attitudinal language of Bob Cieslinski's reaction videos to the *KPop Demon Hunters* soundtracks?
2. What evaluative functions are realized in the attitudinal language of Bob Cieslinski's reaction videos to the *KPop Demon Hunters* soundtracks?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In line with the research questions above, the objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To identify the types of Attitude realized in the attitudinal language of Bob Cieslinski's reaction videos to the *KPop Demon Hunters* soundtracks.
2. To explain the evaluative functions realized in the attitudinal language of Bob Cieslinski's reaction videos to the *KPop Demon Hunters* soundtracks

1.4 Significance of the Study

Theoretically, this research contributes to advancing linguistic studies by using Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005) and Evaluative Function (Hunston & Thompson, 2000) to a new form. By examining how Attitudinal language is employed and functions in Bob Cieslinski's reaction videos, this study contributes to the growing understanding of how evaluative language are constructed in the context of online media. Additionally, the study presents how both of these frameworks work in synchronicity, as it effectively captures the complex relationship between emotion, evaluation, and communicative meaning within spoken, online interaction.

Practically, this study benefits students and researchers interested in discourse analysis, pragmatics, and media linguistics. Its findings may offer a source of reference for those wishing to investigate or analyze evaluative language in rapidly developing digital form such as reaction videos, vlogs, or reviews. This research may also be beneficial to content creators, educators, and digital communicators to consider how their linguistic choices can affect audience

engagement and perceptions. By raising awareness of the evaluative and interpersonal functions of language in online reaction discourse, this study may also develop critical awareness of how emotion and stances are expressed in and through online discourse.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This research is conducted within the framework of Attitude, a subsystem of Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005) and Evaluative Function (Hunston & Thompson, 2000). The research aims to analyze Attitudinal language for the purposes of analyzing how evaluative meanings are construed and function in spoken digital discourse. The analysis will be limited to identifying and interpreting the three subsystems of Attitude and their evaluative function.

The data used for this research are taken from three reaction videos by Bob Cieslinski to the *KPop Demon Hunter*'s movie soundtrack song, such as *Golden*, *How it's Done*, and *Soda Pop*. This study focuses only on the verbal utterances within the reaction videos. Any nonverbal elements involved, such as gesture, tone, or facial expressions are not included in the analysis, nor are other speakers involved, such as commenters. Because the data is synthesized from three videos, it is not aiming for generalization but rather in-depth analysis of how Attitudinal language represents evaluative language during a specific discourse.