

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides several sub-chapters, including background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope, and limitations of the study. This chapter mostly introduces the general understanding of the rationale of this thesis.

1.1 Background of the Study

A movie is a form of visual storytelling that combines moving images, sound, dialogue, and music to convey narratives, emotions, and ideas. Sihombing et al (2021) argue that the movie is a media that reflects the social life of humans. Movies span a wide range, including romance, drama, action, comedy, and horror, each offering distinct themes and stylistic approaches. Typically structured around a plot unfolding through character interactions and cinematic techniques, films function not only as entertainment but also as cultural artifacts that reflect societal values, historical context, and artistic expression. They can influence public opinion, evoke empathy, and inspire imagination, making them a powerful medium for both personal and collective experience. Among these genres, horror stands out for its unique ability to explore fear, the unknown, and the darker aspects of human experience.

Church (2021), asserts that horror is certainly the most polarizing of all popular genres; it evokes profound passion from enthusiasts who see it as their preferred film category, while others actually avoid the genre for any reason. Horror is a movie genre that focuses on fear, suspense, and the unknown to create emotional tension for viewers. It often features dark settings, unsettling characters, and disturbing events that reflect deeper social anxieties. Limantoro & Atma (2024), argue that horror serves as a means of expressing social tensions and concerns, both on an individual level and within society at large. Through visual and narrative techniques, horror films explore the boundaries between safety and danger, reality, and imagination. Language in horror also plays a key role in shaping mood and meaning.

In movies, language plays a central role not only in delivering dialogue but also in shaping characters, building emotions, and conveying ideological messages. Wirawan et al (2022), asserts that language is a human way of conveying feelings, opinions, and information, and also that language style can describe a person's personality depending on the condition of the human. Through spoken utterances, written text, and strategic use of silence, filmmakers construct narratives that embody cultural norms and social values. According to Halliday (2004), language has different functions, such as sharing ideas, showing feelings, and organizing the text. In SFL (Systemic Functional Linguistics), there are three metafunctions of language: ideational meaning, textual meaning, and interpersonal meaning. However, this study focuses on appraisal, which is a branch of interpersonal meaning, studying how people show attitude, engagement, and graduation in language. According to Martin & White (2005), an appraisal is one of three major discourse semantic resources that construe interpersonal meaning. This theory is useful for understanding how language in movies can influence viewers, particularly in genres such as action, romance, or horror. By looking at how language is used in film, we can learn more about how meaning is made and how stories connect with people.

Based on this framework, this research will examine *The Conjuring: Last Rites* to understand how attitudes are expressed and interpreted through utterances produced by characters. This movie is chosen because it is one of the most popular films in *The Conjuring* series currently and contains many scenes and dialogues that can be effectively examined using the attitudinal system. While horror is often associated with visual images of fear, this genre also depends on speech action verbs and evaluative questions to enact narrative moments and embed the audience's emotional state. Pinto & Valente (2025), highlight that in horror or mystery dialogues, linguistic choices are responsible not just for character revelation, but for the control of viewer evaluation and emotion. By examining *The Conjuring: Last Rites*, this study can observe how specific words and phrases are used to bridge the storyline and the audience, ensuring that the fear felt by the characters is directly

transferred to the viewer. Therefore, analyzing this movie gives a clear point of view to respond in a high-stakes supernatural context.

Moreover, exploring *The Conjuring: Last Rites* aims to examine how it utilizes language to construct emotion, judgment, and values through the lens of appraisal theory. This approach is necessary because horror cinema relies on more than just visual jumpscare; it uses specific attitudinal lexis to anchor the character's internal experiences and guide the audience's moral and emotional interpretation of the supernatural events. Regarding the textual construction of these emotions Debnath et al (2025), argue that appraisal theory is a superior framework for modelling affect flow, allowing researchers to track how a character's emotional state shifts and develops across a dialogue. Meanwhile, based on this internal linguistic mapping, it is equally important to consider how the language is translated to the audience Kiss et al (2024), argue that viewers' experiences of horror depend on the process of evaluation, their research shows that the way viewers label the feelings that arise, such as excitement or fear, is a crucial factor in how they subjectively evaluate and enjoy threatening cinematic. Thus, this framework provides a systematic analysis of how specific words and phrases function to build complex emotional meaning and influence the viewer's response. Regardless, there is a gap between the theoretical framework of appraisal theory and the research subjects chosen by previous researchers.

Based on the researcher's review of previous research, appraisal studies on movies tend to focus on the drama, comedy, or romance genres. However. The application of the appraisal framework is not limited to spoken dialogue in films; it can also be analyzed in written texts to uncover how authors express the feeling implicit or explicit. Furthermore, there are previous studies that focus on identifying the types of attitude systems, such as Khotimah and Widhiyanto's (2025) analysis of the attitudinal system in the movie *The Professor and The Madman*, with a drama genre. The second previous are Nafisah et al (2020) and Dyansthasia & Megah (2025), which investigated the attitudinal system focusing on the main character of the movie. In addition, there are previous studies that analyze types of attitude systems and the realization, such as by Asad et al (2021) and Mirzaaghabeyk

(2022), in news texts and academic writing. The researcher finds that the attitudinal analysis for horror movies is still very rare. What distinguishes this study from previous research is that it does not only identifies the types of attitudinal sub-systems, but also explains their realization, whether they are expressed directly or indirectly. However, the studies that identify the realization of attitude systems are applied in the news text and academic writing of students. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by explaining their realization and exploring how linguistic features in the horror genre are used to build tension and influence audience response. By focusing the analysis on the main characters' utterances, this study is expected to reveal how language expresses emotions, judgments, and values in supernatural situations. This is in line with Pham & Vo (2025), who state that attitudinal language is a key element in film dialogue to show how speakers express their feelings and judge the actions of others.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study above, the following research questions are formulated.

1. What types of attitudinal sub-systems are spoken in conversations between the main characters in *The Conjuring: Last Rites* movie?
2. What types of realizations of attitudinal sub-systems are spoken in conversations between the main characters in *The Conjuring: Last Rites* movie?

1.3 Objectives of the study

Based on the statement of the research questions, there are two objectives of the study:

1. To identify the types of attitudinal sub-systems spoken in the conversations between the main characters of *The Conjuring: Last Rites* movie.
2. To identify the realization of attitudinal sub-systems spoken in the conversations between the main characters in *The Conjuring: Last Rites* movie.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study has both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, it contributes to the development of appraisal theory, with a particular focus on the Attitude system, by applying it to the dialogue of a horror film. Although appraisal theory has been widely employed in the analysis of various texts such as news articles, political speeches, and novels, its application to horror films remains relatively underexplored. By examining *The Conjuring: Last Rites* to broaden the scope of the attitude system in understanding how emotions, judgements, and values are conveyed through cinematic dialogues.

Practically, this study offers insights that may help viewers interpret the emotional meaning and communicative intentions embedded in the characters' language and actions. Horror films often explore fear, morality, and social values. Through the lens of the Attitude system, this research seeks to reveal how these themes are linguistically constructed, moreover, reducing the risk of misinterpretation and enhancing audience appreciation of the film's deeper messages.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study focuses on the appraisal system, particularly the attitudinal system, as proposed by Martin & White (2005). The study also considers how the attitudinal subsystems are realized either directly or indirectly in the dialogue, drawing on the framework outlined by Martin & Rose (2007). The limitation of this study lies in its focus solely on words or phrases that consist of the attitude subsystem produced by the main characters; other characters are excluded because this study focuses on what emotions and judgments are expressed, rather than how strongly they are spoken or how the speakers position their arguments.