Appraisal Language in Examples of Promotional Discourse

Dr. Maryam Mahmood Hikmet Al-Attar
University of Baghdad, College of Languages, Department of English, Iraq
maryam.mh@colang.uobaghdad.edu.iq

Abstract. This study focuses on investigating appraisals in the promotional discourse types of print adverts, Facebook posts, Facebook comments, and customer reviews for cosmetics and cars which were collected from mainstream media, i.e., magazines, and online media, i.e., Facebook pages, and review websites. Although widely known, up until now, no work has studied and compared the employment of appraisals in such discourses. For this purpose, Martin and White's (2005) theory on appraisal is used as the model to show quantitively and qualitatively the evaluative language employed in these discourses in terms of the attitudinal resources, their polarity and graduation. This study shows that inscribed rather than evoked appraisals feature in all these discourses and that appreciation and affect are the mostly used attitudinal resources in them. It is also found that, unlike the comments and reviews that tend to contain both positive and negative appraisals, the adverts and posts are entirely positive in their appraisals. Finally, although these discourses are found to be evaluative, ungraduated evaluations characterise the adverts, posts, and comments compared to the more graduated appraisals in reviews.

Keywords: Appraisal, evaluation, promotional discourse

1. Introduction

The significance of appraisals in this research is understood in relation to the inherently evaluative nature of promotional discourses of different kinds.

Promotion, here, is conceived of in the broadest sense which allows to categories various discourse types from different media as promotional. Through evaluation[1], authors articulate their opinions and build a relation with their audience (Thompson and Hunston, 2000: 10). The appraisal theory (2005) of Martin and White is an analytical tool that has started to receive critical interest in the last decade or so. This framework offers a list of linguistic categories which make it possible to identify various kinds of appraisal instances semantically. This model is originated in the Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics and it is interested in the way 'language is used to evaluate, to adopt stances, to construct textual personas and to manage interpersonal positionings and relationships' (White 2001:1).

Various scholars have used Martin and White's (2005) appraisal theory to study discourses from different genres (promotional and non-promotional). As to the non-promotional discourses, Martin (2000) studied literary texts; White (2001), and Martin and White (2005) analysed newspapers; Page (2003; 2013) investigated narratives; and Gales (2011) examined threat letters. Similarly, discourses which are promotional were studied. Shaw (2006) studied reviews; Fuoli (2012) analysed business reports; brochures were undertaken by Mocini (2013), and Jalilifar and Moradi (2019); Burns et al. (2014) conducted research on Facebook comments; Wu (2013), Bullo (2014), and Al-Attar (2017) analysed adverts; and Wu (2018) did research on websites. These studies differ in the methodologies they adopt to utilise the appraisal framework. This model is subjective in its application, and thus qualitative search tends to use it. Nonetheless, mixed method approach studies have also employed this theory to quantitatively and qualitatively analyse the data, for instance Jalilifar and Moradi (2019) and Wu (2018).

Unlike the current research, all the studies stated above examine one discourse type only. An exception to these studies is the research carried out by Shaw (2006) on the interested and disinterested promotional discourses of design proposals, agent's particulars and book reviews. His study showed that the difference in these discourses was in term of the attitudinal categories they utilise. Nevertheless, the present work differs from that of Shaw (2006) in two ways. On one hand, the work of Shaw was qualitative, while this research is quantitative and qualitative in its approach. On the other hand, while the focus in Shaw's (2006) work was on inscribed evaluations only, explicit and implicit evaluations are both considered in this research.

---

[1] In my research, the terms *evaluation* and *appraisals* are used interchangeably.

Moreover, in spite of the fact that appraisals in adverts and Facebook comments were investigated in previous research, the types of adverts and comments considered in the present research differ from those scrutinised in other analyses of appraisal. Concerning adverts, while public service adverts were examined by Wu (2013), studying informants' responses to images from adverts was conducted by Bullo (2014). Moreover, Al-Attar's (2017) multimodal work linguistically investigated audience interpretations of visual elements in promotional discourses (print magazines and Facebook posts) where the interviewees' answers were proved to be evaluative. As to comments, Burns et al.'s (2014) research utilised corpus linguistics techniques to analyse appraisals in comments from mobile companies' Facebook pages.

Likewise, Edo Marzá (2013) and Vásquez (2014) investigated customer reviews. Nonetheless, rather than applying the appraisal framework categories, the evaluations in these studies were analysed using corpus linguistics techniques. Similarly, the product types of the reviews in these studies differed from the products of the current research. It seems that the appraisals in car and cosmetic adverts, Facebook posts, Facebook comments and customer reviews are not studied and compared yet. Thus, as the evaluative language in such promotional discourses is understudied, there is a need to investigate to the evaluations in these discourses using the appraisal model. The goal of the present research is to answer the questions below:

1. What attitudinal categories are used in the adverts, posts, comments and reviews?

2. How far do these discourses differ in their appraisal targets?

3. Are the appraisals used in these discourses positive or negative?

4. Are the appraisals in these discourses graduated or not? And if they are graduated, are they upscaled or downscaled?

2. Data and Methodology

In this study, four data sets of promotional discourses of cosmetics and cars, two authored by companies and two by customers, were sampled and analysed. Theses sets consisted of adverts, posts, comments and reviews.[2] In total, 212 adverts were collected from *ELLE UK* (109 cosmetic adverts) and *WHAT CAR?* (103 car adverts) print magazines. There were 468 posts (198 for cosmetics and 270 for cars) and 806 comments and replies (345 for cosmetics and 461 for cars) sampled from some official cosmetic and car companies'

---

[2] See the List of Data Collection Resources at the end of this study.

Facebook pages. With a total of 75 customer reviews and customer replies, 41 reviews were for cars and 34 reviews were for cosmetics. The reviews were gathered from *roadtestreports.co.uk*, for the former, and *reviewcentre.com*, for the latter. This research adopts the appraisal model (2005) of Martin and White because this framework differs from other models on evaluation in that it is detailed. It makes it possible to classify evaluations into different attitudinal types and where evaluative instances can be realised by various lexical and grammatical forms.

Martin and White's (2005) model involves the three systems of attitude, graduation and engagement to express appraisals. Nevertheless, the current analysis focuses on attitude and graduation only. The brief nature of some texts of the present data sets and the rather fragmentary language of the promotional discourse types examined here make the engagement system difficult to apply, and thus result in its exclusion from this study.

In the system of attitude of Martin and White's theory and based on the meanings evaluative instances encode, they can be distinguished into the resources of affect, judgement and appreciation (2005: 42, 43).[3] The articulation of reactions and emotions is referred to as affect, judgement occurs as behavioural assessments, and the expression of aesthetic evaluations is called appreciation (Martin, 2000: 146, 147). These attitudinal categories are indicated in the examples below:[4]

Car Post: 'This is what Autocar had to say about the new SLS AMG GT. If you like **[+Affect, happiness: affection]** what you see, you can find out more here: http://ow.ly/18NT6.'

Comment on car post: 'Why on earth don't you make this anymore!? Must be crazy **[-Judgement, social esteem: capacity]**'

Cosmetic advert: 'NEW AGELESS ELIXIR 2 IN 1 FOUNDATION + SERUM … For beautiful looking **[+Appreciation, reaction: quality]** skin now and tomorrow …'

Appraisals can also be distinguished in terms of being explicitly expressed by a phrase or a word, i.e. 'inscribed', or occurring as units longer than one

---

[3] See Martin (2000) and Martin and White (2005) for a detailed explanation of the different categories of this theory.

[4] Following Martin (2000), the symbol 't' is used for evoked evaluations, '+' indicates that an appraisal is positive and '–' refers to a negative appraisal. To be easily recognised, underlining is utilised for the appraisal instance and italicisation is used for the graduation device. An underlined evaluative example is directly followed by the appraisal annotation which is bracketed and marked in bold.

word or phrase which are indirect and can be understood form the context, i.e., 'evoked' (Martin, 2000: 142; White, 2001: 1). Inscribed evaluations are exemplified above, whereas the example below includes inscribed as well as evoked evaluations:

Cosmetic review: 'I bought the Channel Hydrabase Lipstick as a treat with birthday money and was *very* disappointed **[-Affect, unhappiness: misery]**. I found it was *very* greasy **[-Appreciation, reaction: impact]** and had to apply *continually* as it had no staying power and no hold **[t -Appreciation, reaction: impact]**. I will not be purchasing this item again **[t -Affect, dissatisfaction: displeasure]**'

Likewise, in the attitude system, polarity is another means for classifying appraisals where they can be distinguished into positive or negative (Martin and White, 2005), as shown in the above examples. In the present research, polarity is significant so as to investigate which of the discourses might open up the possibility for different ranges of attitude (for example, which might emphasise endorsement and/or critique).

The second system of the appraisal model examined, here, is graduation. It has to do with how strong the positively or negatively expressed attitudinal meaning is where force and focus are the graduation categories (Martin and White, 2005: 138). This study is concerned with the upscaling and downscaling of evaluations in terms of force. Concentrating on force can be attributed to the possibility of realising the intensification and quantification of force by some lexical and grammatical expressions, whereas with focus the evaluative example is scaled semantically based on the strength of its conveyed meaning (ibid). Thus, in the appraisal theory, the identifying principles of force are more fixed compared to those of focus. In addition, this work follows other research that concentrates on force only, for instance, Bauer and Bauer (2002), Page (2003) and Page (2012). These following examples illustrate the accentuation and mitigation of the evaluations:

Cosmetic review: 'Its *abit* on the pricey side **[-Appreciation: valuation]** but its *totally* worth **[+Appreciation: valuation]** it …'[5]

Comment on car post: 'Yuck *so* ugly **[-Appreciation, reaction: quality]** (like all concept cars *really*)'

While 'abit' mitigates the negative appreciation impact of 'the pricey side', 'totally' amplifies the positive evaluation of 'worth' in the first instance.

---

[5] In this research, all the excerpts appear as they are in the original collected data, i.e., they are not checked for grammar and spelling.

Similarly, in the second example, 'so' and 'really' accentuate the negative appraisal of 'ugly'.

Although this work is largely quantitative, the qualitative questions of this study are answered using the percentages of the quantitative analysis of the appraisals in four promotional discourses. The Excel software was used manually for analysing appraisals. By applying Martin and White's (2005) appraisal theory in this analysis, the evaluators as the discourse authors were the companies and customers. These evaluators directed their appraisals at various entities which resulted in coding the appraised entities as targets of appraisals.

The evaluative examples in each discourse type were categorised, based on the attitude system of the appraisal framework, into the categories of explicitness and implicitness, attitudinal meanings (affect, judgement and appreciation) and polarity (positive and negative appraisals). This means that, in each discourse, evaluations as single words or phrases and chunks even longer than these units were analysed. However, only primary appraisal types were coded where double-coding was not considered here to reduce the subjectivity of the appraisal analysis. Based on the features stated above, in each discourse type the total of all evaluations for each target of appraisals was counted and normalised as percentages. Similarly, the total of the upgraded and downgraded graduated appraisals was calculated and normalised as percentages for each dataset with regard to the graduation system.

3. Results and Discussion

The subsections below present the analysis results, comparisons and interpretations of the appraisal language in the four datasets. The attitude and graduation systems are tacked in 3.1. and 3.2., respectively.

3.1. Attitude System

Discussed in 3.1.1.-3.1.3. are the results of the evaluation explicitness and implicitness, the resources of attitude, the evaluated objects and the appraisal polarity.

3.1.1. Inscribed and Evoked

The evaluative nature of the adverts, posts, comments and reviews is revealed in the comparison of the inscribed and evoked appraisals of these discourses, as displayed in Figure 1 below. In these four discourses, the inscribed evaluations are shown to be more frequent than the evoked

appraisals. Inscribed evaluations form over three-quarters of the evaluation total in each discourse. In the adverts, post, comments and reviews, the total of the inscribed appraisals is 78% 87%, 84% and 83%, respectively. Inscribed evaluations are exemplified below:[6]
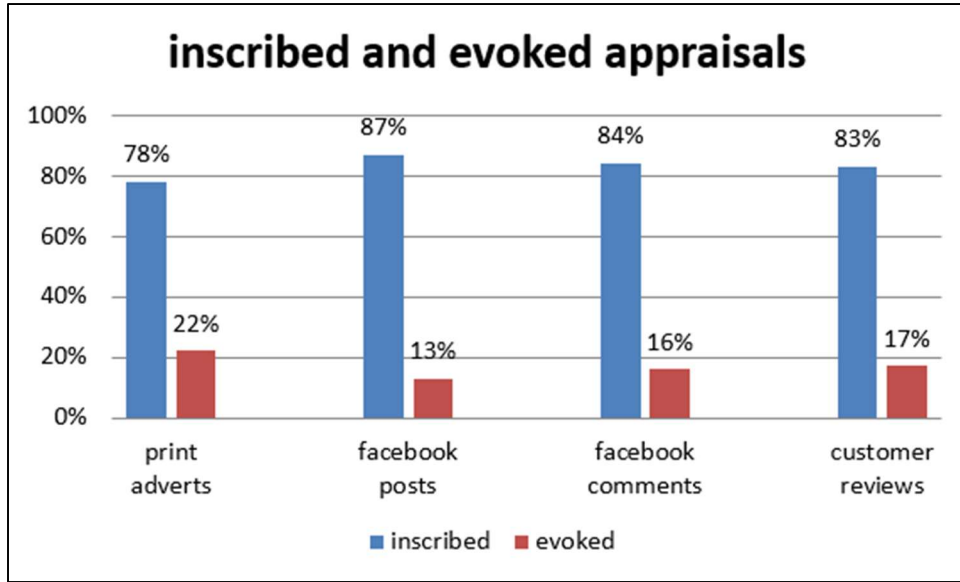

Figure 1. Evaluation: Inscribed and evoked

Comment on car post: 'I don't like **[-Affect, unhappiness: antipathy]**, It's Italian, so the build quality will be shoddy **[-Appreciation: valuation]** and it will break down **[-Appreciation: valuation]** *all the time*. Electrics will be *particularly* bad **[-Appreciation: valuation]**.'

Cosmetic post: 'Lashfinity is our new*est* innovation **[+Appreciation: valuation]** in long-wear mascara, making it an essential **[+Appreciation: valuation]** for holidays and festivals!'

In these promotional discourses, the high occurrence of evaluative instances could reveal that evaluation is a central employed rhetorical technique (Bhatia, 2005: 217). This is because for authors, as Thompson and Hunston (2000: 10) put it, the articulation of stances and the establishment of relations can be made through evaluation.

---

[6] In this study, the majority of the instances are inscribed appraisals because they are, unlike the evoked evaluations, the mainly occurring type in these discourses.

3.1.2. Attitudinal Resources

With respect to the attitudinal meanings, the comparison of the discourses, as outlined in Figure 2, reveals that affect, judgment and appreciation occur in all the promotional discourses.
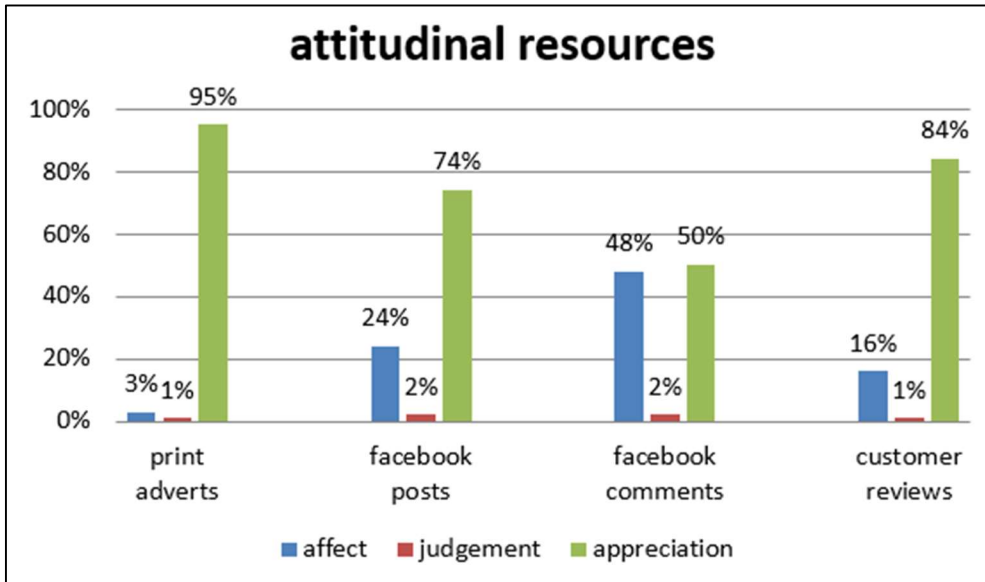

Figure 2. Attitudinal meanings: Affect, judgement, and appreciation

From these results, the highest occurring attitudinal meanings in these discourses are found to be those of appreciation and affect. In the adverts, posts and reviews, the resource that features the most is appreciations. Almost all the attitudinal resources (95%) in the adverts are appreciation, nearly three-quarters of the evaluations employed (74%) are appreciation in the posts and more than three-quarters of the appraisals (84%) occur in the reviews as appreciation. Appreciation is exemplified in the following:

Car advert: 'Is this the great*est* [+Appreciation: valuation] car range in the world? SLS AMG: Gullwing fascination [+Appreciation, reaction: impact] The pur*est* expression of sporting dynamism [+Appreciation: valuation]'

The company, here, appraises the product by appreciation. Nonetheless, not only products, but also customers or even something related to them can also be appraised, e.g.

Cosmetic advert: 'DULL [-Appreciation, reaction: impact], UNEVEN [-Appreciation, composition: balance] SKIN TONE? SWITCH ON LUMINOSITY NEW YOUTH CODE® LIMINIZE PERFECTING [+Appreciation: valuation] AND REFINING [+Appreciation: valuation]'

Here, the product as well as customers are appraised by the company. But while evaluating customers in appreciation occurs in term of the defects their skin could suffer from; products are appraised in appreciation as if they are the remedy to such skin issues.

It is also indicated from Figure 2 that the second most frequently used attitudinal category in these promotional discourses is affect. However, the use of affect in the comments is the most which is double the amount of the closest percentage to the affect used in the posts (48% versus 24%). Thus, it appears that affect and appreciation are more equally distributed in the comments (48% and 50%, respectively). In contrast to the comments, the dominant resource in the adverts, posts and reviews is appreciation. The evaluative instances as affect are given in:

Comment on car post: 'I'm waiting *all day* for a phone call from my local dealership to pick my new Auris Hybrid up either today or tomorrow I'm was *so* excited [+Affect, satisfaction: admiration] I paid *both* my deposits before I've even seen the car'

Comment on cosmetic post: 'How much *so* I dislike [-Affect, unhappiness: antipathy]'

It can be said that appraisals as affect and appreciation are articulated differently. Hence, a number of contrasts can be identified. Firstly, in the evaluation process of affect the emphasis goes to the evaluator, whereas in the evaluation process of appreciation the appraised entity is emphasised (White, 2001: 1). The second way to explain the difference is grammatical. While mental and behavioural process verbs can be used to express appraisals as affect, appraisals as appreciation can be expressed as epithets and attributes because appreciation cannot be articulated using mental and behavioural process verbs (Martin and White, 2005: 47). Thirdly, in terms of the affective appraisal grammatical structure, an appraisal has to be from a conscious participant and, in this sense, the evaluator is generally important and cannot be dispensed with (Martin, 2000:149; Martin and White, 2005: 58). In contrast, textually the evaluator is not necessarily included in the grammatical construction of appreciation, the matter which allows the appraised object (human or non-human) to be in the foreground (Martin and White, 2005: 59; White, 2001: 3). Lastly, Van Leeuwen's (2008) social actor framework can be

used to explain the difference between appreciation and affect. Although it is backgrounded, the exclusion of the appraiser is not total in appreciation, unlike the evaluated object which is foregrounded. In contrast, the inclusion of the evaluator in affect foregrounds it more. These aspects are exemplified in:

Comment on car post: 'I'm *so* <u>happy</u> [+**Affect, satisfaction: admiration**] with mine…'

Comment on cosmetic post: 'I <u>love</u> [+**Affect, happiness: affection**] #36 *the most*!'

The evaluated entity (products) and the evaluators using the personal pronoun 'I' appear in these examples.

Comment on cosmetic post: 'She's a <u>lovely person</u> [+**Appreciation, reaction: quality**]'

Unlike the famous Cheryl Cole who explicitly appears as the evaluated object, the appraiser is not directly expressed although can be inferred as it is the comment author.

As discourse writers and hence evaluators, the companies and customers can target their evaluations at objects and/or humans. Thus. the companies and customers themselves as authors, products, experts, media forms, and celebrities are identified as the appraised. The comparison across the discourses, outlined in Figure 3, shows that products and customers are the appraised entities at which/whom most of the evaluations are targeted in all the discourses. It appears that in all the discourses evaluations are directed at products the most. This implies that the appraised entity is not affected by the discourse authorship of the companies and customers. In addition, the similarity of the four discourses is shown in terms of appraising the same entity (products). This result differs from that of the attitudinal categories where comments are found not to be similar to the adverts, posts and reviews. Of all the appraised objects, products amount to over three-quarters in the adverts, comments, and reviews (80%, 82% and 83%, respectively) and products are the target of almost three-quarters of the evaluations (74%) in the posts. The exemplification of the evaluated object as products is given in:
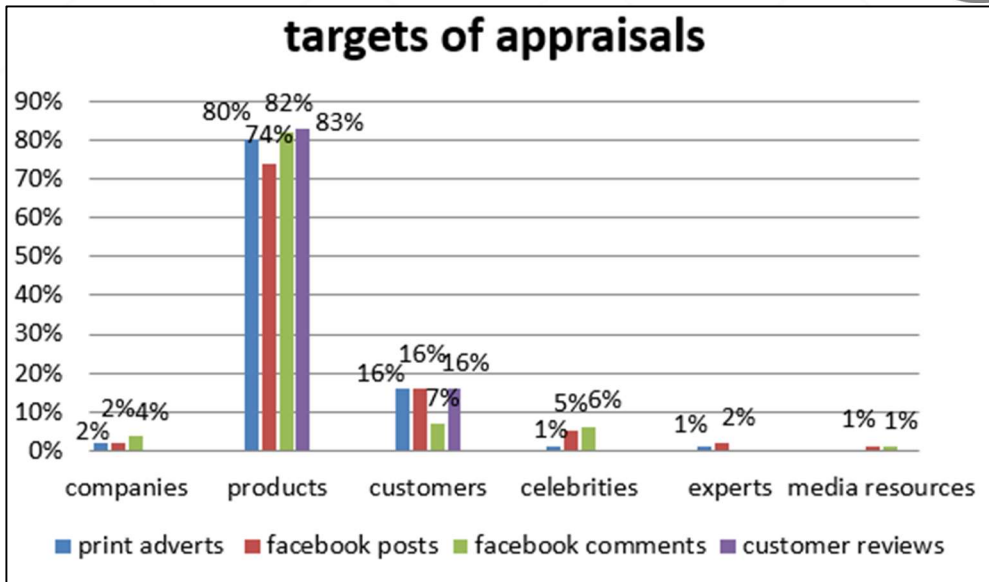
Figure 3. Evaluation targets

Cosmetic advert: '*SO* <u>SWEET</u> **[+Appreciation, reaction: quality]** *SO* <u>GLOSSY</u> **[+Appreciation, reaction: impact]** CANDYLICIOUS **[+Appreciation, reaction: quality]** COLOUR SWIRL NEW GLAM SHINE miss Candy'

Car review: 'Had the car in Italy for the past year (24,000 kilometres). *100% <u>perfect</u>* **[+Appreciation: valuation]** car'

Cosmetic post: 'Hello Ladies! The new CHANEL Summer Collection is online! The products are <u>limited</u> **[+Appreciation: valuation]**! If you have *some of them* let us know how <u>great</u> **[+Appreciation: valuation]** they are!'

Comment on cosmetic post: 'This is *definitely* <u>*the best*</u> **[+Appreciation: valuation]** mascara'

   As can be seen form these instances, the companies and customers tend to direct their evaluations at products. In these discourses, having the highest appraised object as products indicates how significant products are to attain the aim of these discourses, namely promoting products. This is because evaluations allow companies to differentiate their own products from other rival products in the market (Bhatia, 2005: 216). Moreover, through appraisals customers can voice their knowledge and opinions about products in their authored discourses of the comments and reviews. Hence, appraisals help to fulfil the goal of these discourses, that is, expressing views.

3.1.3. Polarity of the Attitudinal Resources

As illustrated in Figure 4, the comparison of the discourses in terms of appraisal polarity indicates that positive rather than negative evaluations feature in all these discourses. In addition, these results show that the positivity of evaluations is the highest in the adverts and posts. This suggests the similarity of these discourses where each discourse has approximately all its evaluations positive at 97%. Positive appraisals are exemplified below:
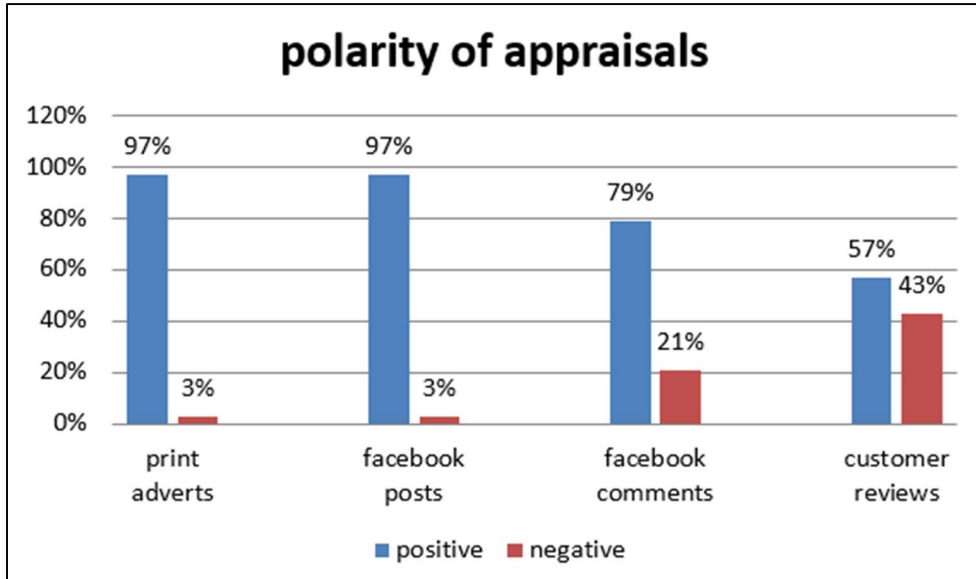

Figure 4. Evaluation polarity: Positive and negative

Car post: 'With its avant-garde **[+Appreciation: valuation]** design, world-leading **[+Appreciation: valuation]** aerodynamics and a radar-based precision **[+Appreciation: valuation]** braking system, the CLA is as sleek **[+Appreciation, reaction: impact]** as they come.'

Car advert: 'Thrilling **[+Appreciation, reaction: impact]**, Even when it's doing 0mph The shape of the new E-Class Coupé promises excitement' **[+Appreciation, reaction: impact]** and exhilaration **[+Appreciation, reaction: impact]'**

Discourse authoring can account for the greatest proportion of positive evaluations in comparison with that of the negative ones. Since companies are the authors of the adverts and posts, this means that these authors would do

their best to present their products as the best. This can be achieved using positive evaluations because promoting products is the aim of these discourses.

From Figure 4, in contrast to the results of the adverts and posts, the utilisation of more negative evaluations characterises the comments and reviews. The results of polarity suggest the similarity of these discourses. This means that, although only textually, the authors of the comments and posts can express not only their positive, but also their negative stances. However, the frequency of negative appraisals in the reviews is two times as higher as that in the comments (43% compared to 21%). Negative evaluations are exemplified in:

Car review: 'The main body of <u>issues</u> **[-Appreciation: valuation]** are electrical, *multiple* software and hardwards <u>issues</u> **[-Appreciation: valuation]**, it was even delivered <u>broken</u> **[-Appreciation: valuation]**! Its <u>let</u> me <u>down</u> **[-Appreciation: valuation]** *on more occasions than* my first car, *a 20yr old* 1981 Mkl Ford Fiesta.'

Car review: '<u>Poor</u> **[-Appreciation: valuation]** fuel consumption, *very* <u>cheap</u> **[-Appreciation: valuation]** car interiors (they are same kind of Fiat Panda).'

These examples make it clear that, in contrast to the evaluators who are backgrounded but can still be construed, it is the evaluated objects which are highlighted in appreciation (White 2001).

The goal of reviews can interpret the utilisation of more negative evaluations. This discourse aims to offer reviewers' information about products to assist interested customers in their purchasing decisions. Bell (1984: 191) and Marwick and Boyd (2010: 128) explained that in media, audience are built in the minds of authors, i.e. they are not real. However, authors tend to adapt their language based on their audience (Bell, 1984: 159). Review readers' need for both positive and negative information about products can account for the use of more negative appraisals by the reviewers. This is because the companies in their authored adverts and posts are very unlikely to provide negative information about their products. Similarly, Herring's (2007: 21) 'norms of organisation' of the review websites can explain the high occurrence of negative evaluations in the reviews in comparison with the comments.[7] In contrast to the brand companies that administer their Facebook pages, a third party sets up and moderates the review websites. This means that the companies are not likely to see the reviews on these websites. Moreover, the

---

[7] Norms of organisation refer to how an online platform is administered. For more information on the multi-level classification framework for analysing online discourse, see Herring (2007).

possibility for companies, in an attempt to preserve their positive image, to delete or block texts that are negative is higher on the Facebook pages than on the review websites. The last point that might also interpret the use of negative evaluations in the reviews more than in the comments has to do with the length of the reviews as compared to that of the comments. This means that the reviews would allow for more different polarised evaluations than the comments.

3.2. Graduation System

With respect to force in graduation terms, in spite of the extensive featuring of evaluations, it appears that the appraisal instances are not all graduated. Comparing the discourses, as demonstrated in Figure 5, reveals that the occurrence of the graduated evaluations is less than that of the ungraduated evaluations in all the discourses. In addition, from these results, the use of the graduated appraisals appears to be the highest in the reviews (42%), two times more than the quantity of the graduated evaluations in the posts (20%) and comments (20%). In this way, the relatively small frequency of graduated evaluations indicates the similarity of the adverts, posts and comments.
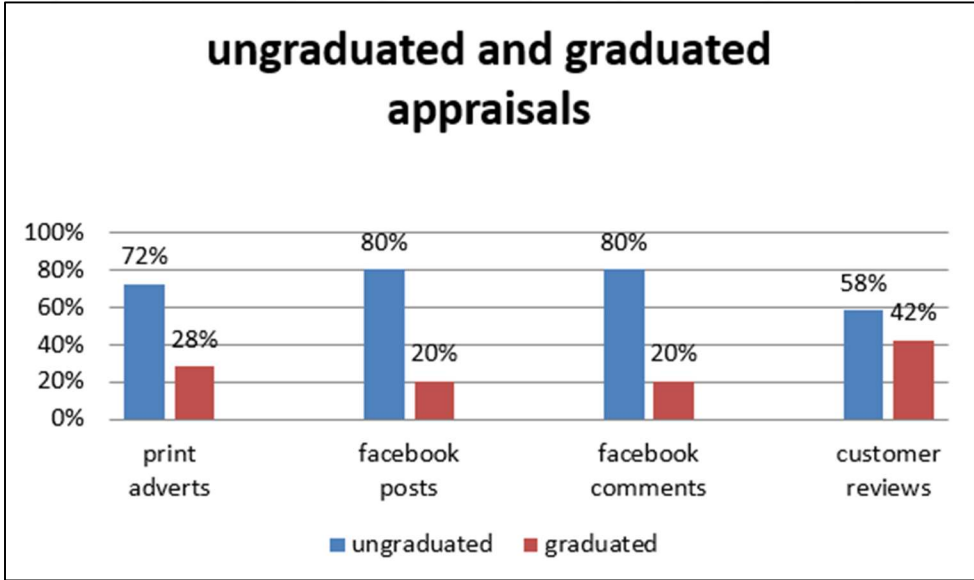
Figure 5. Graduated and ungraduated evaluations

To examine if, in force terms, the graduated evaluative instances are attenuated or intensified, a deeper investigation is carried out. As summarised in Figure 6 below, the results reveal that in all the discourses the use of the upscaled evaluations is higher than that of the downgraded appraisals. Furthermore, it appears that the adverts, posts and comments have nearly the same frequency of accentuated appraisals (96%, 97% and 93%, respectively). In this sense, augmenting evaluations indicates the similarity of the adverts, posts and comments. Therefore, this result shows that although positive evaluations are the most in the discourses authored by the companies (adverts and posts), they are not more upscaled than the appraisals used in the customer-generated discourses. Rather, the discourses authored by the customers and companies are found to have their upgraded appraisals at very close rates. The amplified evaluations are given in the instances below:
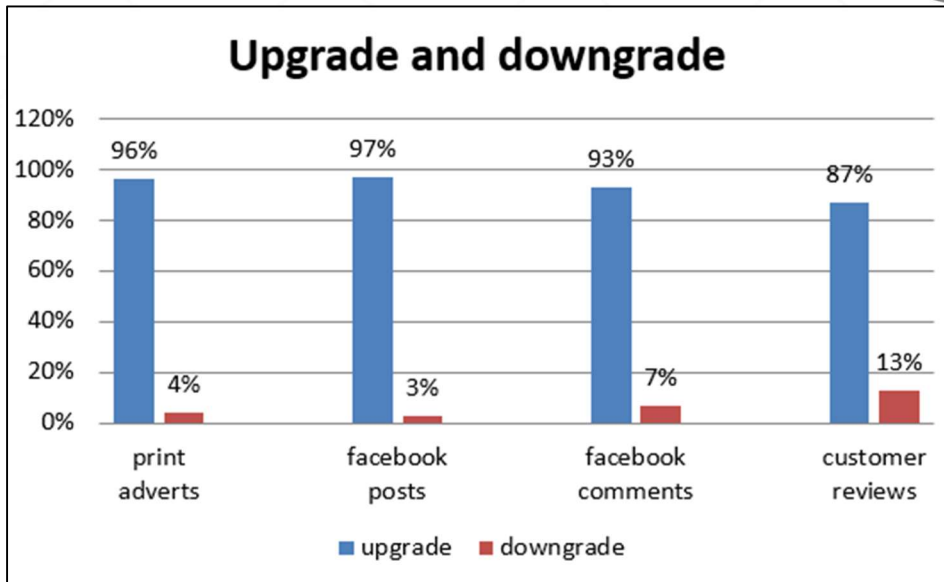
Figure 6. Graduated force: Upscaled and downscaled

Car advert: 'Never before has a new Mercedes arrived with *so many* intelligent **[+Appreciation: valuation]** features and developments **[+Appreciation: valuation]**. Like Collision Prevention Assist, a radar-based system that helps the driver avoid a collision with the vehicle ahead. Or the sleek **[+Appreciation, reaction; impact]** contours that make this the *most* aerodynamic **[+Appreciation: valuation]** car in its class. The new B-Class. Looks smart **[+Appreciation: valuation]**.Is.'

Cosmetic post: 'Have you discovered our new Youth Code Luninize BB Cream? With Liquid Light™, the tinted formula *instantly* illuminates **[+Appreciation: reaction: impact]** for a perfectly nude, fresh-faced finish **[+Appreciation: valuation]**. A perfect **[+Appreciation: valuation]** addition to our makeup bags for the mornings!'

Comment on car post: 'It's just *too* boring **[-Appreciation, reaction: impact]** somehow, compared with the other classes.'

These instances show that contrary to the commenters in whose evaluations the products are negatively amplified by 'too', the products are accentuated in the companies' positive evaluations using 'so many', 'the most', and 'instantly'.

However, unlike the comments, the use of more negative evaluations along with the upgraded appraisals means that the negative appraisals are perhaps more accentuated in the reviews. On the review websites, the absence of the

brand companies in comparison with the Facebook pages on which they tend to exit can account for this. It implies that the commenters on Facebook are likely to have attenuated comments so as not to be very face-threatening to the companies. Conversely, on the review websites and as there is no interaction with the reviewers from the companies' part, the reviewers might be less cautious about downscaling their negative appraisals.[8]

4. Conclusions

In terms of the appraisal language analysed in four promotional discourse examples, this study arrives at the conclusions that inscribed appraisals are dominant in these discourses. Similarly, the attitudinal categories of appreciation and affect are greatly used in these discourses. Nonetheless, while in the discourses of the adverts, posts and reviews, evaluations are conveyed as appreciation, the resources used for the articulation of appraisals in the comments are appreciation and affect. Affect differs from appreciation in what it highlights. The former gives prominence to the evaluator, whereas the appraised entity is made prominent in the latter.

It is also found that products are the highest evaluation targets in the discourses of the companies and customers. Rhetorically speaking and in terms of the objective of these discourses, the promotion of products in the adverts and posts is made possible by appraising the products. Likewise, voicing thoughts about products in the comments and reviews becomes likely by evaluating products.

As to the appraisal polarity, while the inclusion of positive and negative evaluations happens in the comments and reviews, the evaluations are completely positive in the adverts and posts. Nevertheless, the discoursal freedom that the reviewers have appears to be more restricted in the comments. This is because the companies themselves manage their pages on Facebook.

In the terms of graduation, while the reviews have graduated evaluations more than the other discourses, appraisals which are ungraduated feature in the adverts, posts and comments. Nonetheless, the appraisals of the four discourses are amplified where this accords with the goal of these discourses. This means that the companies highlight their products in a positive way in the adverts and posts. In contrast, the negative evaluations in the reviews tend to be upgraded unlike in the comments where the attenuated appraisals occur. This could be ascribed to the fact that, in moderation terms, the review websites differ from

---

[8] No brand company replied to any of the sampled reviews in this study.

the Facebook pages in that the companies are not present on the former while they are on the latter.

References

[1]   Al-Attar, M. M. H. (2017). A Multimodal Analysis of Print and Online Promotional Discourse in the UK. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Leicester: University of Leicester.

[2]   Bauer, L., and Bauer, W. (2002). 'Adjective Boosters in the English of Young New Zealanders'. Journal of English Linguistics, 30(3), pp. 244-257.

[3]   Bell, A. (1984). 'Language Style as Audience Design'. Language in Society, 13(2), pp. 145-204.

[4]   Bhatia, V. K. (2005). Generic Patterns in Promotional Discourse. In Halmari, H., and Virtanen, T. (Eds). Persuasion across Genres: A Linguistic Approach, (pp.213-225). Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

[5]   Bullo, S. (2014). Evaluation in Advertising Reception: A Socio-Cognitive and Linguistic Perspective. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

[6]   Burns, A. R., Matarazzo, O., and Abbamonte, L. (2014). Corpus Linguistics and the Appraisal Framework for Retrieving Emotion and Stance–The Case of Samsung's and Apple's Facebook Pages. In Recent Advances of Neural Network Models and Applications: Proceedings of the 23rd Workshop of the Italian Neural Networks Society (SIREN), (pp. 283-293). Springer International Publishing.

[7]   Edo Marzá, N. (2013). 'The Formation of the Image of Top-Ranked Hotels through Real Online Customer Reviews: A Corpus-Based Study of Evaluative Adjectives as Image-Formers/Providers'. International Journal of English Linguistics, 3(4), pp. 15-35.

[8]   Fuoli, M. (2012). 'Assessing Social Responsibility: A Quantitative Analysis of Appraisal in BP's and IKEA's Social Reports'. Discourse and Communication, 6(1), pp. 55-81.

[9]   Gales, T. (2011). 'Identifying Interpersonal Stance in Threatening Discourse: An Appraisal Analysis'. Discourse Studies, 13(1), pp. 27-46.

[10]   Herring, S. C. (2007). 'A Faceted Classification Scheme for Computer-Mediated Discourse'. Language@ Internet, 4(1), pp. 1-37.

[11]   Jalilifar, A., and Moradi, Y. (2019). 'Tourism Discourse Revisited: An Analysis of Evaluative Strategies in Tourist Brochures from a

Systemic Functional Linguistics Perspective'. Journal of English Studies, (17), pp. 211-232.

[12] Martin, J. R. (2000). Beyond Exchange: APPRAISAL Systems in English. In Hunston, S., and Thompson, G. (Eds.). Evaluation in Text: Authorial Stance and the Construction of Discourse, (pp. 142-175). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[13] Martin, J. R., and White, P. R. (2005). The Language of Evaluation: Appraisal in English. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

[14] Marwick, A. E., and Boyd, D. (2010). 'I Tweet Honestly, I Tweet Passionately: Twitter Users, Context Collapse, and the Imagined Audience'. New Media and Society, 13(1), pp. 114-133.

[15] Mocini, R. (2013). 'The Promotional Functionality of Evaluative Language in Tourism Discourse'. Lingue e Linguaggi, (9), pp.157-172.

[16] Page, R. E. (2003). 'An Analysis of APPRAISAL in Childbirth Narratives with Special Consideration of Gender and Storytelling Style'. Text and Talk, 23(2), pp. 211-237.

[17] Page, R. E. (2012). Stories and Social Media: Identities and Interaction. London: Routledge.

[18] Shaw, P. (2006). Evaluative Language in Evaluative and Promotional Genres. In Del Lungo, G., Dossena, M., and Crawford, B. B. (Eds). Variation in Business and Economics Discourse: Diachronic and Genre Perspectives, (pp.152-165). Rome: Officina Edizioni.

[19] Thompson, G., and Hunston, S. (2000). Evaluation: An Introduction. In Hunston, S., and Thompson, G. (Eds). Evaluation in Text: Authorial Stance and the Construction of Discourse, (pp.1-27). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[20] Van Leeuwen, T. (2008). Discourse and Practice: New Tools for Critical Discourse Analysis. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[21] Vásquez, C. (2014). The Discourse of Online Consumer Reviews. London: Bloomsbury.

[22] White, P. R. R. (2001). The Language of Attitude, Arguability and Interpersonal Positioning: The Appraisal Website, https://www.grammatics.com/appraisal/appraisalkeyreferences. html.

[23] Wu, G. (2018). 'Official Websites as a Tourism Marketing Medium: A Contrastive Analysis from the Perspective of Appraisal Theory'. Journal of Destination Marketing and Management, 10, pp. 164-171.

tasnim-lb.org/index.php   tasnim.ijhs@gmail.com

[24] Wu, H. B. (2013). 'Appraisal Perspective on Attitudinal Analysis of Public Service Advertising Discourse'. English Language and Literature Studies, 3(1), pp. 55-66.

Data Collection Resources:
Car Magazine: *WHAT CAR?*
Car Review Website: http://www.roadtestreports.co.uk
Chanel Cosmetics Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/chanel.cosmetics
Chanel Facebook Page: https://en-gb.facebook.com/chanel
Cosmetics Review Website: http://www.reviewcentre.com/
Fashion Magazine: *ELLE* UK
Fiat Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/FiatUK
L'Oréal Paris Facebook Page: https://en-gb.facebook.com/LOrealParisUK
Max Factor Facebook Page: https://en-gb.facebook.com/MaxFactorUK
Mercedes-Benz Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/MercedesBenzUk
Toyota Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/toyotauk