

# An Attitudinal Analysis of English Song Discourse from the Perspective of Appraisal Theory

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**Abstract**—Appraisal theory is a new development of the interpersonal meaning in systematic functional linguistics. In recent years, the appraisal theory has been widely used in different genres to study whether and how slightly different appraisal methods are used in them. However, analysis of English song discourse with the appraisal theory is rare. Therefore, based on the attitude meaning in the appraisal theory the author analyzes several English song discourses. Through analysis of characteristics of the distribution of attitude resources in the English discourse it aims to find language feature in the English song discourse so as to make readers understand the emotion expressed by the author of the song discourse and the importance of the attitude meaning of the appraisal theory in building interpersonal relations between the author of the song discourse and readers.

**Index Terms**—appraisal theory, attitude meaning, English song discourse, interpersonal relations

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Introduction of the Appraisal Theory

Appraisal theory is developed by Martin in the theoretical basis of interpersonal systems of Halliday. It concerns a variety of negotiate attitude in discourse. They define the appraise as judgment of evaluation and it is the type of negotiated attitude in the discourse, involved the strength of feeling, the source of value, and approach of classification of the reader. Appraisal theory is defined by Martin that appraisal theory is about the evaluation, the type of attitude in discourse, the strength of emotion, traceable manners of value, and ways of coordinating readers. Overall, the appraisal system is to use the language to express resources of attitude including a large master system: attitude, engagement and graduation.

### B. Introduction of the Attitude System in the Appraisal Theory

We focus on attitude resources in the appraisal theory. The attitude refers to the judgment and appreciation to the human behavior, the text or process and the phenomenon after psychological attitude is influenced. The attitude resource is divided into three subsystems: emotional expression to the human, namely the affect system; human assessment of the human's character and behavior, that is the judgment system; evaluation of the value of things, that is the appreciation system. The center component of the attitude system is the affect system, and the judgment system and the appreciation system are based on the affect system. Affect system is the psychological reaction to the behavior, the text or process, and the phenomenon; the judgment system is based on ethics and moral criteria to evaluate the behavior of language users; the appreciation system is the evaluation of the text or process, and the phenomenon. More simply, the whole attitude system the evaluation of human's character or. Among the whole attitude system the affect system and the judgment system are resources of of human's character, while the affect system and the appreciation system are resources of the evaluation of the value of matter. After the appraisal theory put forward, it has been widely applied to literature, academic, media and other different discourse analysis to help readers better understand the speaker or writer's position, outlook and attitudes.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many previous scholars make a study about appraisal theory. Wang Zhenhua in his paper "Appraisal System and Its Operation" (Wang, 2001) gives a systematical introduction of the background, and demonstrates the framework and operation of AS and predicts its outlook. Later, in his doctoral dissertation (Wang, 2003), he makes a detailed explanation of the Engagement system and gives an analysis of the Engagement rules of language users in both Chinese and English discourses and attempts to build a model for the engagement. Yang Xinzhang (Yang, 2003) tries to probe into the ways the speaker/ author shows his/ her Attitude and Judgment towards events and entities in the world. He holds that the sum of evaluative devices in a text can note the degree of the speaker/author's desire to show his/ her personal attitude, judgment and idea. Peng Xuanwei (Peng, 2004) makes a study of "Appraisal System in modern Chinese words". Later, Peng (Peng, 2010) systematically analyses the Engagement and Graduation resources in Chinese

discourses, conducts a deep research on the Gradual phenomena realized in the Attitudes resources, and summarizes a model for the Gradual Attitude. Tang Liping(Tang, 2004) studies rhetorical strategies and textual strategies towards academic reviews. Li Zhanzi (Li, 2004) summarizes the application of AS (appraisal system) in genres such as historical discourses, commercial discourses and investigation problems: interpersonal nature of attitudes, contextual elements in favor of distinguishing the Appraisal resources, division of ideational and interpersonal meaning, and the relationship between evaluation and genres. Liu Shizhu and Han Jinlong (Liu&Han, 2004) discuss AS and its features in news discourse, meanwhile they recommend a new way of reading news discourses: evaluative reading. With the help of 10 English and Chinese editorials, Chen Xiaoyan (Chen, 2007) makes a contrastive analysis of attitudinal realization. She intends to unveil the distribution of attitudinal resources and find similarities and differences between English and Chinese editorials. All the above studies demonstrate that AS has been applied in many fields. but still there is no attempts to probe into features of the English song lyrics within AS, and how the interpersonal relationship is constructed between authors and readers.

### III. THEORETICAL REVIEW

Attitude is concerned with people's feelings and their character and evaluation of things. As the central part of the Appraisal System, Attitude, which attends to gradable resources for construing evaluation, and it can be divided into three sub-systems: Affect, Judgment and Appreciation. Affect deals with registering positive and negative feelings: people feel happy or sad, confident or anxious, interested or bored. Judgment is concerned with people's attitudes towards behavior, which people admire or criticize, praise or condemn. Appreciation deals with evaluations of natural phenomena, according to the ways in which they are valued not in a given field (Martin & Rose, 2008).

### IV. THE PRESENT STUDY

Application of attitude meaning contains a very rich pragmatic content and artistic charming. This is particularly prominent in the literature. In this thesis through the analysis of attitude meaning in some English song lyrics the author explores the effects of attitude meaning and the highlights of the expression of emotion and interpersonal relationship between authors and reads produced by the analysis of the realization and distribution of the attitude meaning in the appraisal theory. The present study attempts to examine the features of attitude meaning within English song lyrics.

#### A. Research Design

##### *Sampling*

Four research examples will be randomly selected from the English song internet. These examples will be used as data for the analysis.

##### *Instrument and rationale*

This thesis stresses the analysis of actual linguistic data in English song lyrics. It attempts to analyze the attitude meaning from perspective of appraisal theory in English song lyrics. Accordingly, the primary approach for the present study is inductive rather than deductive. Several examples are drawn from English song discourse as evidence for the subject under discussion. In every following English song discourse the attitudinal resources are indicated by the striking black words. The table is used to indicate the distribution of the attitude resource.

#### B. Data Analysis

Following English song lyrics will be made a detailed analysis under the attitude meaning within appraisal theory. Something important in this domain should be emphasized. Through the attitudinal analysis of following English song lyrics under three perspectives of affect, judgment, and appreciation. We will attempt to find out how it demonstrates the emotion of authors and how it constructs interpersonal relationship between authors and reads through the analysis of the realization and distribution of the attitude meaning within appraisal theory.

##### *An Attitude Analysis of the English Song **Let's talk about love** (Celine dion,1997)*

Everywhere i go, all the places that i've been. Every smile is a **new** horizon ,on a land i never see there're people around the world, **different** faces **different** names. But there's **true** emotion that reminds me we're **the same**. Let's talk about **love**. From the **laughter** of a child , to the **tears** of a **grown** man. There's a thread that runs right through us all help us understand. As **subtle** as breeze that fans a flicker to a flame. From **the very first sweet** melody, to **the very last** refrain. Let's talk about **love**. let's talk about us. let's talk about life. let's talk about **trust**. let's talk about **love**. It's the king of **all who live** and the queen of **good hearts**. It's the ace **you may keep up your sleeve**, till the name is **all but lost**. As **deep as any sea with the rage of storm**, but as **gentle as a falling leaf on an autumn moon**. let's talk about **love**. let's talk about us. let's talk about **trust**. let's talk about love. It's all **we're needing** (let's talk about us). It's the air **we're breathing** (let's talk about life). I wanna know you (let's talk about trust). And i wanna show you (let's talk about love) (Celine dion, 1997)

TABLE I.  
THE DISTRIBUTION OF ATTITUDE RESOURCES IN ABOVE SONG LYRICS

Attitude	Features	Amount	Frequencies
Affect (8, 32%)	Happiness	2	8%
	Securities	2	8%
	Satisfaction	4	16%
Judgment (1, 4%)	Normality	0	0%
	Capacity	0	0%
	Tenacity	0	0%
	Veracity	1	4%
	Propriety	0	0%
Appreciation(16, 64% )	Reaction	4	16%
	Composition	8	32%
	Valuation	4	16%
Total Amount		25	100%

From above table we can see that it reveals the general and remarkable tendency of attitude resources in this English lyrics. The frequency of Judgment is the lowest (4%), followed by affect (32%) and appreciation is the highest (64%). The linguistic devices of judgment are far outnumbered by affect and appreciation. The reasons may be as following: affect deals with people’s emotional states and reactions, while judgment attends to the normative assessments of people’s behavior. Values of appreciation are properties, which relates to the phenomenon under evaluation rather than the participant who does the evaluation. Therefore, such appreciation resource as “subtle” in the sentence “as subtle as breeze that fans a flicker to a flame”, “deep” in the sentence as deep as any sea with the rage of storm, and “gentle” in as gentle as a falling leaf on an autumn moon.(Celine dion,1997). Under these appreciation resources the author gives the feature of figurative objects through three figurative sentences. He explains his understanding of love profoundly and gives love implications. Further it narrows the distance with the reader so that make the meaning of love richer and more active again on the basis of the literal meaning. In this condition readers not only feel the implication of love and explore the author’s inner world but also make the reader to engage in dialogue with the author’s soul. The appreciation resources such as “the very first” “the very last” in the sentence “from the very first sweet melody, to the very last refrain, through these two resources the author wants to explain that love is a complete process and it has not only a beginning but also an end. The process is not going well, we have to not only experience the happiness but also experience the sadness and it is like melodies, which not only has a sweet melody but a sad melody. The another understanding of love is explained though these two resources, which can make readers to have strong emotion.

*An Attitude Analysis of the English Song I get lonely* (Janet Jackson, 1998)

I get so **lonely** can't let just anybody hold me. You are the one that lives in me my dear. Want no one but you. I get so **lonely** can't let just anybody hold me. You are the one that lives in me my dear. Want no one but you. Sitting' here with my **tears**. All **alone** with my **fears** I'm wondering if I have to do without challenge. But there's no reason why I feel asleep late last night. Crying' like a **newborn** child. Holding' myself **close**. Pretending' my arms are yours. I want no one but you. I get so **lonely** can't let just anybody hold me. You are the one that lives in me my dear. Want no one but you. I get so **lonely** can't let just anybody hold me. You are the one that lives in me my dear. Want no one but you. I still remember to the day. In fact is was a 3rd Monday. You came along to be the one for me. And now I'm so all **alone**. I'm sitting here by the phone. Called that say that your okay. So that I have the chance to beg you to stay. I want no one but you. I get so **lonely** can't let just anybody hold me. You are the one that lives in me my dear. Want no one but you. I get so **lonely** can't let just anybody hold me. You are the one that lives in me my dear. Want no one but you. I get so **lonely** can't let just anybody hold me. You are the one that lives in me my dear. Want no one but you. I get so **lonely** can't let just anybody hold me. You are the one that lives in me my dear. Want no one but you. Gonna break it down break it down break it down. Gonna break it down break it down break it down. You know that I know that I get so **lonely** thinking of you. I get so **lonely** can't let just anybody hold me. You are the one that lives in me my dear. (Janet Jackson, 1998)

TABLE II.  
THE DISTRIBUTION OF ATTITUDE RESOURCES IN ABOVE SONG LYRICS

Attitude	Features	Amount	Frequencies
Affect(14,87.5%)	Happiness	13	81.25%
	Securities	1	6.25%
	Satisfaction	0	0%
Judgment (0, 0%)	Normality	0	0%
	Capacity	0	0%
	Tenacity	0	0%
	Veracity	0	0%
	Propriety	0	0%
Appreciation(2, 12.5% )	Reaction	1	6.25%
	Composition	1	6.25%
	Valuation	0	0%
Total Amount		16	100%

From above table we can see that there is no frequency of judgment. Affect is the highest (87,5%), followed by appreciation(12,5%). The linguistic device of appreciation is far outnumbered by affect. From the whole song discourse the emotion of lonely is throughout the whole discourse. The affect resources such as the word “**lonely**” appears eleven times in this song discourse, and the author aims to express the emotion of lonely through the high frequency use of the word “**lonely**”. Besides the affect resources “**alone**” in the sentence all **alone** with my fears, and “alone” in the sentence and now I'm so all **alone**. Through these words the author also expresses the emotion of lonely. Because affect deals with people's emotional states and reactions. The readers can understand the author's emotional states of lonely well and it can arouse the reader's sympathy.

*An Attitude Analysis of the English Song Lemon Tree* (Fool's Garden, 1995)

When I was just a lad of ten, my father said to me, "Come here and take a lesson from the **lovely** lemon tree. Don't put your faith in **love**, my boy." My father said to me, "I **fear** you'll find that love is like the **lovely** lemon tree." Lemon tree very **pretty**, and the lemon flower is **sweet**, but the fruit of the **poor** lemon is impossible to eat. Lemon tree very **pretty**, and the lemon flower is **sweet**, but the fruit of the **poor** lemon is impossible to eat. One day beneath the lemon tree my love and I did lie. A girl so **sweet** that when she smiled, the stars rose in the sky. We passed that summer lost in love beneath the lemon tree. The music of her **laughter** hid my father's words from me. One day she left without a word, she took away the sun. And in the dark she'd left behind, I knew what she had done. She left me for another; it's a common tale but **true**. A **sadder** man but **wiser** now, I sing these words to you. (Fool's Garden, 1995)

TABLE III.  
THE DISTRIBUTION OF ATTITUDE RESOURCES IN ABOVE SONG LYRICS

Attitude	Features	Amount	Frequencies
Affect( $4, \frac{4}{15}$ )	Happiness	2	$\frac{2}{15}$
	Securities	1	$\frac{1}{15}$
	Satisfaction	1	$\frac{1}{15}$
Judgment ( $2, \frac{2}{15}$ )	Normality	0	0%
	Capacity	1	$\frac{1}{15}$
	Tenacity	1	$\frac{1}{15}$
	Veracity	0	0%
	Propriety	0	0%
Appreciation( $9, \frac{9}{15}$ )	Reaction	7	$\frac{7}{15}$
	Composition	0	0%
	Valuation	2	$\frac{2}{15}$
Total Amount		15	100%

We can see that in this song discourse the attitude resource appreciation is in high frequency, which is the highest ( $\frac{9}{15}$ ), followed by affect( $\frac{4}{15}$ ) and judgment( $\frac{2}{15}$ ). The linguistic device of judgment is far numbered by affect and appreciation. In this song discourse on the one hand the author wants to express his own feeling, on the other hand the author wants to do the evaluation to Lemon Tree so as to express his good feelings to Lemon Tree. Appreciation is properties, which relates to the phenomenon under evaluation rather than the participant who does the evaluation. In this song discourse the most important is that the author further expresses his own views of value to love. Therefore, such appreciation resource as the word lovely, pretty, and sweet. These three appreciation resource are positive, which demonstrates the the author's yearning for love and a pertinent suggestion of love for young people. The linguistic device of appreciation and affect are used more to make the distance of the author and the reader closer. It establishes a interpersonal relationship between the author and the reader.

*An Attitude Analysis of the English Song Yesterday Once More* (The Carpenters, 1973)

When I was **young**, I'd listen to the radio, waiting for my **favorite** songs. When they played I'd sing along. It made me **smile**. Those were such **happy** times, and not so long ago. How I wondered where they'd gone. But they're back again, just like a **long-lost** friend. All the songs I loved so **well**. Every sha-la-la-la, every wo-wo still shines. Every shing-a-ling -a-ling, that they're starting to sing, so **fine**. When they get to the part where he's breaking her heart, it can really make me **cry**. Just like before, it's yesterday once more. (Shoo-bee-do-lang -lang, shoo-bee-do-Lang-Lang) Looking back on how it was in years gone by, and the good time that I had, makes today seem rather **sad**; so much has changed. It was songs of **love** that I would sing to them, and I'd memorize each word. Those

**old** melodies still sound so **good** to me, as they melt the years away. All my best memories come back clearly to me; some can even make me **cry**. Just like before, it's yesterday once more. (The Carpenters, 1973)

TABLE IV.  
THE DISTRIBUTION OF ATTITUDE RESOURCES IN ABOVE SONG LYRICS

Attitude	Features	Amount	Frequencies
Affect( $\frac{5}{13}$ )	Happiness	5	$\frac{5}{13}$
	Securities	0	0%
Judgment (0, 0%)	Satisfaction	0	0%
	Normality	0	0%
	Capacity	0	0%
	Tenacity	0	0%
	Veracity	0	0%
	Propriety	0	0%
Appreciation( $\frac{8}{13}$ )	Reaction	5	$\frac{5}{13}$
	Composition	1	$\frac{1}{13}$
	Valuation	2	$\frac{2}{13}$
Total Amount		13	100%

From above table we can see that the frequency of appreciation is the highest ( $\frac{8}{13}$ ), followed by affect( $\frac{5}{13}$ ). There is no linguistic device judgment. Through the song the author expresses his memory to the old scenes in which he listened to the favorite songs when sitting on radio in childhood. The author remembers his good days before, but it makes him feel sad now. In this song discourse there are feelings of happiness and sorrow mixed. The attitude resource of affect and appreciation is frequently used to emphasize this emotion in author's deep heart. The frequent use of linguistic devices of affect and appreciation not only aims to express the author's feeling but also create a harmonious atmosphere between the author and the listener.

C. Discussion of Features of the Attitude Resource in English Song Discourse

Through the analysis of the linguistic data above we can see that in the four English song discourses the attitude resources affect and appreciation are frequently used to demonstrate the emotion of the author and the interpersonal relationship between the author and the listener. English culture is more focused on personality, so the thought and emotion of human basis is deep-rooted in English culture. Under the influence of English culture the attitude resource affect and appreciation are mostly used in the English song discourse to emphasize not only the author's intense emotion but also the author's role as a behavior subject. In the long-term development English-speaking peoples have formed a national spirit of independent personality, love of freedom, respect for the individual value. Of course the national spirit is also reflected in the English song discourse. As an important symbol of expression of personal emotion and views of value the attitude resource affect and appreciation are frequently used in the English song discourse to make the personal emotion sufficiently demonstrated, and also make the emotion understood by listeners better.

V. CONCLUSION

This thesis presents the features of the distribution of attitude resources in the English song discourse, that is, the attitude resources affect and appreciation are frequently used in the English song discourse. In order to make listeners understand the English song better, the mastery of features of the distribution of attitude resources in the English song discourse is quite necessary. From the perspective of appraisal theory the use of the attitude resources affect and appreciation is an indispensable ingredient in English song discourse. The frequent use of the attitude resources affect and appreciation in the English song discourse reflects the Western humanistic thought. Of course, there are also some disadvantages in this study, such as the selection of the corpus is small, so in an objective way, further study can enlarge the data. The limitation calls for more efforts in establishing a more comprehensive appraisal framework based on English song discourses. Because the realizations of emotion and interpersonal meaning are multi-level, the study should shed light on the emotion and interpersonal meaning in English song lyrics in consideration of other attitude resource as engagement and graduation. Therefore, a more objective research based on larger data is another orientation for the further study.

APPENDIX. FOUR ENGLISH SONG DISCOURSE IN THIS PAPER

A. The Lyrics of English Song *Let's Talk about Love* (Celine Dion, 1997) <<Falling into You>>

Everywhere i go, all the places that i've been. Every smile is a **new** horizon ,on a land i never see there're people around the world, **different** faces **different** names. But there's **true** emotion that reminds me we're **the same**. Let's talk about **love**. From the **laughter** of a child, to the **tears** of a **grown** man. There's a thread that runs right through us all help us understand. As **subtle** as breeze that fans a flicker to a flame. From **the very first sweet** melody, to **the very last** refrain. Let's talk about **love**. let's talk about us. let's talk about life. let's talk about **trust**. let's talk about **love**. It's the king of **all who live** and the queen of **good hearts**. It's the ace **you may keep up your sleeve**, till the name is **all but lost**. **As deep as any sea with the rage of storm**, but **as gentle as a falling leaf on an autumn moon**. let's talk about **love**. let's talk about us. let's talk about **trust**. let's talk about love. It's all **we're needing** (let's talk about us). It's the air **we're breathing** (let's talk about life). I wanna know you (let's talk about trust). And i wanna show you (let's talk about love) (Celine dion, 1997)

*B. The Lyrics of English Song I Get Lonely (Janet Jackson, 1998)<<The Velvet Rope-Virgin>>*

I get so **lonely** can't let just anybody hold me. You are the one that lives in me my dear. Want no one but you. I get so **lonely** can't let just anybody hold me. You are the one that lives in me my dear. Want no one but you. Sitting' here with my **tears**. All **alone** with my **fears** I'm wondering if I have to do without challenge. But there's no reason why I feel asleep late last night. Crying' like a **newborn** child. Holding' myself **close**. Pretending' my arms are yours. I want no one but you. I get so **lonely** can't let just anybody hold me. You are the one that lives in me my dear. Want no one but you. I get so **lonely** can't let just anybody hold me. You are the one that lives in me my dear. Want no one but you. I still remember to the day. In fact is was a 3rd Monday. You came along to be the one for me. And now I'm so all **alone**. I'm sitting here by the phone. Called that say that your okay. So that I have the chance to beg you to stay. I want no one but you. I get so **lonely** can't let just anybody hold me. You are the one that lives in me my dear. Want no one but you. I get so **lonely** can't let just anybody hold me. You are the one that lives in me my dear. Want no one but you. I get so **lonely** can't let just anybody hold me. You are the one that lives in me my dear. Want no one but you. I get so **lonely** can't let just anybody hold me. You are the one that lives in me my dear. Want no one but you. Gonna break it down break it down break it down. Gonna break it down break it down break it down. You know that I know that I get so **lonely** thinking of you. I get so **lonely** can't let just anybody hold me. You are the one that lives in me my dear. (Janet Jackson, 1998)

*C. The Lyrics of English Song Lemon Tree (1995, Fool's Garden) <<Dish of the Day>>*

When I was just a lad of ten, my father said to me, "Come here and take a lesson from the **lovely** lemon tree. Don't put your faith in **love**, my boy." My father said to me, "**I fear** you'll find that love is like the **lovely** lemon tree." Lemon tree very **pretty**, and the lemon flower is **sweet**, but the fruit of the **poor** lemon is impossible to eat. Lemon tree very **pretty**, and the lemon flower is **sweet**, but the fruit of the **poor** lemon is impossible to eat. One day beneath the lemon tree my love and I did lie. A girl so **sweet** that when she smiled, the stars rose in the sky. We passed that summer lost in love beneath the lemon tree. The music of her **laughter** hid my father's words from me. One day she left without a word, she took away the sun. And in the dark she'd left behind, I knew what she had done. She left me for another; it's a common tale but **true**. A **sadder** man but **wiser** now, I sing these words to you. (1995, Fool's Garden)

*D. The Lyrics of English Song Yesterday Once More (The Carpenters, 1973) <<Now&Then>>*

When I was **young**, I'd listen to the radio, waiting for my **favorite** songs. When they played I'd sing along. It made me **smile**. Those were such **happy** times, and not so long ago. How I wondered where they'd gone. But they're back again, just like a **long-lost** friend. All the songs I loved so **well**. Every sha-la-la-la, every wo-wo still shines. Every shing-a-ling -a-ling, that they're starting to sing, so **fine**. When they get to the part where he's breaking her heart, it can really make me **cry just like** before, it's yesterday once more. (Shoo-bee-do-lang-lang, shoo-bee-do-Lang-Lang) Looking back on how it was in years gone by, and the good time that I had, makes today seem rather **sad**; so much has changed. It was songs of **love** that I would sing to them, and I'd memorize each word. Those **old** melodies still sound so **good** to me, as they melt the years away. All my best memories come back clearly to me; some can even make me **cry**. Just like before, it's yesterday once more. (The Carpenters, 1973)

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