Bringing the Attitudinal System of Affect to the EFL/ESL Classroom as a Way of Further Critical Education and Reflection: An Analysis of Affectual Language in Two American Presidents' Inauguration Speeches

Yaser Hadidi, Golsa Khodadadi*

Department of English Language and Literature, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran

Corresponding author: Golsa Khodadadi, E-mail: only_god7210@yahoo.com

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Appraisal/Evaluation within Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a rather new framework for the analysis of evaluative language, focusing on how human beings reveal their emotions directly or indirectly, how they take stances, and how they align or dis-align themselves with social subjects. Through an attitudinal analysis of the system of Affect in lucid and teacher-friendly ways, this paper aims to smoothly invite ESL/EFL teachers into possible employment of this model in classes of intermediate levels and above, to align themselves with and avoid losing sight of the constant need to maintain a critical pedagogical atmosphere in foreign language literacy and education. To this end, we provide a simple analysis of the affectual language of two inauguration speeches delivered by two American presidential candidates, geared to equipping teachers with some quick tools of reflective and critical pedagogy and use the exploration and display of different categories of Affect in the classroom to engage students in critical reflection on the world and everyday events.

Key words: Systemic Functional Linguistics, Appraisal/Evaluation, Affect, ESL/EFL Teachers, Reflective Critical Pedagogy

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The increasingly rapid development and change of the English language entail constantly equipped analytic eyes by way of deeper understandings of its textual and linguistic operations, among which the choices in evaluation figure prominently.

There is general agreement in the literature that one prominent aspect of discourse is the language of evaluation, also known as evaluative discourse, discourse of evaluation, and even critical discourse, used by some as the overarching umbrella term covering all sorts of evaluative discourse. It follows that there have been many models and approaches (for example; conversation analysis, ethnography, interactional sociolinguistics, variation theory, speech act theory, pragmatics, Birmingham school, systemic functional linguistics, critical discourse analysis) proposed by or derived from different theories to look at the discourse used by speakers, in different genres, to consciously and unconsciously show their worldview, evaluative stance, ideology, modality, etc.

Through all that, one of the guises in which one can look at such evaluative discourse is derived from Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics. According to Halliday, language is a social phenomenon that is functionally organized, and is sensitive to every context. To know a language is, then, to be able to select appropriate choices from systemic resources of meaning-making to do various tasks from a set of choice networks available, emphasizing the existence of paradigmatic relations; the choice made is significant and meaningful against the background of the choices that could have been made from the same network (or system, or adjacent systems) but are not finally made in actual text.

The actual 'visible' choice made is 'motivated' most strongly, over and above the invisible, absent choices not made, by contextual parameters. Thus choosing one linguistic item over another (in the network/paradigm) is never free of any intentions. This, of course, is a principal tenet of Critical Discourse Analysis as well (Fairclough, 1995).

Halliday's theoretical views give rise to and find solid practical manifestation within Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which "is a perspective for describing language both externally as a social and cultural phenomenon and internally as a formal system for expressing meaning" (Young, 2011, p. 627). The three functions or more specifically meta-functions that underlie SFL are ideational, interpersonal, and textual. "Informed by a model of this kind, discourse analysis involves shunting back and forth between linguistic and social categories, exploring how one realizes the other" (Martin, 2004, p. 323).

Appraisal is an attempt at a rich extension of the interpersonal layer of meaning from a systemic perspective, af-

fording the analyst with yet another systemic functional tool to analyze and explain the motivations behind interpersonal choices not just in terms of the system of mood, but to go beyond it and attach interpersonal 'meaning' to every 'moment of choice' (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

Appraisal/Evaluation within Systemic Functional Linguistics (see for example, Halliday 1994, Martin 1992; 2000; 2003, Matthiessen 1995,) is a rather new framework for the analysis of language of evaluation. "Appraisal is a linguistic theory of subjectivity" (Taboada & Grieve, 2004, p. 2) which focuses on how human beings reveal their emotions directly or indirectly, how they take stances, and how they align or dis-align themselves with social subjects (Martin & White, 2005). "It is even argued that language itself should be recognized as founded upon affectual beginnings and that the earliest 'protolanguage' phase can be construed as a system of semioticized affect" (Painter, 2003, p. 183).

This is an important claim made by Claire Painter, one that rises above the critical discursive claim of inherent intentionality, ideology and stance in every utterance, proffering ontogenetic status to the affectual nature of every moment of choice. The insight she shares comes in the wake of long years of research into child language using SF tools, tenets and beliefs.

> In order to classify emotions we adopted the strategy of mapping out the terrain as systems of oppositions. It is not clear to us, having been trained as grammarians, how to motivate a lexis-oriented classification of this kind; nor have we been able to find relevant strategies of argumentation in the field of lexicography or corpus linguistics. Thus our maps of feeling (for affect, judgment and appreciation) have to be treated at this stage as hypotheses about the organization of the relevant meanings – offered as a challenge to those concerned with developing appropriate reasoning, as a reference point for those with alternative classifications and as a tool for those who need something to manage the analysis of evaluation in discourse. (Martin & White, 2005, p.46)

Figure 1 shows the general classification of appraisal resources, but for the purposes of the moment, we only focus on the sub-category of Affect.
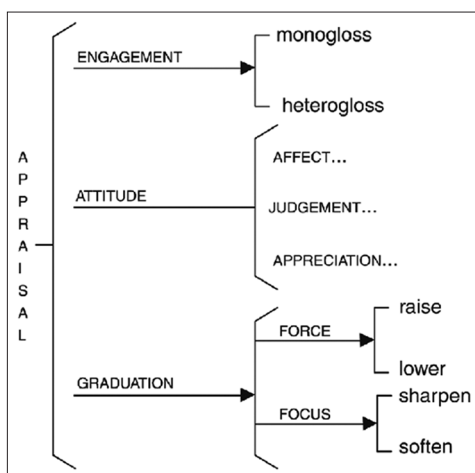

Figure 1: An overview of appraisal resources (Martin and White, 2005: 38)

In considering Attitude, we are concerned with those utterances which can be interpreted as indicating that some person, thing, situation, action event or state of affairs is to be viewed either positively or negatively. That is to say, we classify as attitudinal any utterance which either conveys a negative or positive assessment or which can be interpreted as inviting the reader to supply their own positive or negative assessments. (*Appraisal : An Overview Introduction : the origins of the Appraisal framework*, 1998, p. 10)

According to Martin (1997, 2000), Martin and Rose (2003), and Martin and White (2005), attitudinal meanings can be realized either directly (inscribed) or indirectly (evoked). In direct or inscribed mode of activation, individual words carry positive or negative attitude. In indirect or evoked mode, the reader or listener interprets the word to be positive or negative. (cited in de Souza, 2006, p. 533)

According to Martin and White (2005), the affect subcategory groups emotions into three major sets having to do with un/happiness, in/security and dis/satisfaction. The un/happiness variable covers emotions concerned with 'affairs of the heart' – sadness, hate, happiness and love; the in/security variable covers emotions concerned with ecosocial well-being – anxiety, fear, confidence and trust; the dis/satisfaction variable covers emotions concerned with telos (the pursuit of goals) – ennui, displeasure, curiosity, respect. (p. 49)

These are exemplified below in actual text (examples are taken from: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-21134156):

un/happiness:

> This is your **celebration**; I will **never, ever let you down;** pursuit of **happiness;** we remember the lessons of our past, when **twilight years** were spent in poverty; if we are truly created equal, then surely the **love** we commit to one another must be equal as well.

in/security:

> There should be **no fear** - we are **protected**, and we will always be **protected**; the oath I have sworn before you today, like the one recited by others who serve in this Capitol, was an oath to God and country, not party or faction; We will show the **courage** to try and resolve our differences with other nations **peacefully**--not because we are naïve about the dangers we face, but because engagement can more durably lift **suspicion and fear**.

dis/satisfaction:

> We are **grateful** to President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama for their gracious aid throughout this transition; But for too many of our citizens, a different reality exists: Mothers and children trapped in poverty in our inner cities; The time for empty talk is over; My oath is not so different from the pledge we all make to the flag that waves above and that fills our hearts with **pride.**

Critical/reflective pedagogy:

> Critical pedagogy was developed by Friere to help the poor and the working class to interpret reality in a way geared to improving their lives (Crookes, 2012) one way or another. He distinguishes between "banking

education", on the one hand, in which students are bare receivers of knowledge and are not allowed to question that knowledge, and "problem posing education", on the other, which has to do with uncovering reality, striving for the emergence of consciousness and critical intervention in reality (Aliakbari and Faraji, 2011, p. 78). In fact, "critical pedagogy is a teaching approach which attempts to help students question and challenge domination, and the beliefs and practices that dominate them. It tries to help students become critically conscious" (Winton, 2006).

Of course, in order to be critically conscious, students have to understand language because "language deals with words and words trigger reflection and action" (Rahimi & Sajed, 2014, p. 41). According to Pennycook (1990) "the nature of second language education requires us to understand our educational practice in broader social, cultural and political terms" (cited in Rahimi & Sajed, 2014, p. 42). Without doubt, the choice of every word over the other is not inadvertent, having certain motivations and purposes behind them that need to be discovered. In this spirit, "critical practitioners aim at learners' awareness and endeavor to enable them to read critically and be sensitive about vocabulary choice and sentence form and meaning" (Rahimi & Sajed, 2014, p. 44). This cannot be the case unless schools train teachers who are critically conscious and provide a setting for acting on these agendas. Thus, "critical pedagogy criticizes the conservative discourse on education and demands schools to be sites for cultural production" (p. 44) to resist imperialism and prevent economic, political, sociological and cultural lethargy.

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND EDUCATION

Nowadays there is an increasing interest in critical pedagogy. This comprises a research agenda that captures "education as situated within an analysis of ideological and structural power" (Ledwith, 2011, p. 53), a type of education that endeavors to nurture active participants who aren't passive receivers of bare knowledge. Discourse analysis is one such field of study that provides a linguistic approach to an understanding of the relationship between language, knowledge, ideology and power (Lupton, 1992).

It is to this end that the appraisal framework leads readers to dig out the real standing of the words in the relevant context of their uses, freeing them from readily accepting shallow meanings and ready and surface interpretations, thus opening up otherwise unattainable critical views in every reader.

PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE

It has been established that using materials related to students' everyday life where they can discuss every aspect with a practiced and familiar feel is, critically speaking, one of the crucial features of critical/reflective pedagogy. Similarly, inaugural speeches of important politicians are important issues followed up on by millions of people, including students. To avoid emotional reactions and receiving words at their surface value only, educationists should help students critically

understand the issues at hand, when it comes to these kinds of politically colored discourses that the public consider to be of life-altering ramifications for their immediate social and economic existence. One of the many lenses through which this can be undertaken is the Appraisal/Evaluation framework.

Using SFL as the informing theory, and Appraisal/Evaluation as the framework for the analysis of evaluative political discourse in two inauguration speeches by two American presidential candidates, this study aimed to see what type of affectual evaluations are deployed in Barack Obama's and Donald Trump's inaugural speeches, and how it can feed into and inform a critical/reflective pedagogy.

Another parallel objective here is to make qualitative attempts at bringing out and discussing the contributions the affectual choices made by the two presidential candidates have on the reader, while comparing and contrasting the two speeches in terms of affectual evaluative deployments; all this falls in line with the goal of presenting a simplified model on how such a framework can afford broadened views towards unembellished, unsophisticated, practical and hands-on critical pedagogy immediately translatable to reflective/critical action in the classroom.

CORPUS AND METHOD

The corpus of analysis was two inauguration presidential speeches by two presidential candidates figuring prominently on the US and world political scene. The idea is that the discourse of such inauguration speeches delivered by two American presidential candidates – in the sensitive affairs the candidates, their countries and the world at large are faced with – would have far-reaching textual and intertextual impacts both on the non-verbal context and the verbal one. In terms of the non-verbal extra-linguistic context, this means that, taking a powerful and super-order helm, these two leaders would communicate vital messages, stances and overtones in their inauguration speeches, listened to by hundreds of millions of people all over the world, and altering lives, economies and international relations even as they utter the words, in profound and shockingly fast ways.

It was in this spirit that we decided to analyze these two impactful discourses using a reliable, and more textually and interpersonally oriented, tool of evaluative discourse analysis. And it was due to scope reasons that the whole system of attitude was not analyzed, but only the system of Affect, expected to play out importantly in the rather intense emotional appeal American Presidential candidates always extend to their people and audience. Looking into Judgment and Appreciation of such a discourse, within other studies, can certainly reveal further interesting insights.

In design, this study is mostly an exploratory and qualitative one which aims to quantify the qualitative process in order to add to its credibility and comprehensiveness and help towards a better understanding of the emerging findings and patterns. The quantifying process is also useful in that it may contribute to detecting some underlying pattern or trend in the discourse, which could then trigger attempts at interpreting their discursive and contextual forces and motivations.

Transcriptions of Barack Obama's inaugural speech delivered in January 21, 2013 and Donald Trump's inaugural speech delivered in January 23, 2017 were first analyzed manually with respect to different categories of Affect. This was followed by the frequencies of each category inserted into excel worksheet. The percentages were obtained, in order to pave the way for interpretation and comparison.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The focus of analysis involved finding different categories of Affect. i.e. un/happiness, in/security, and dis/satisfaction. Figure 2 shows the result of the analysis of Barack Obama's inaugural speech at a glance.
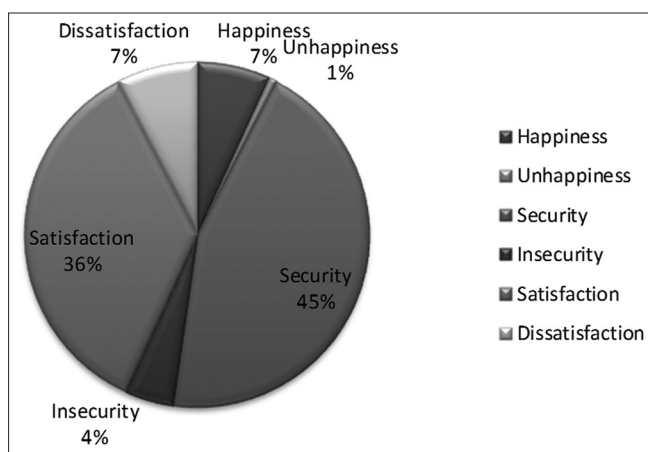

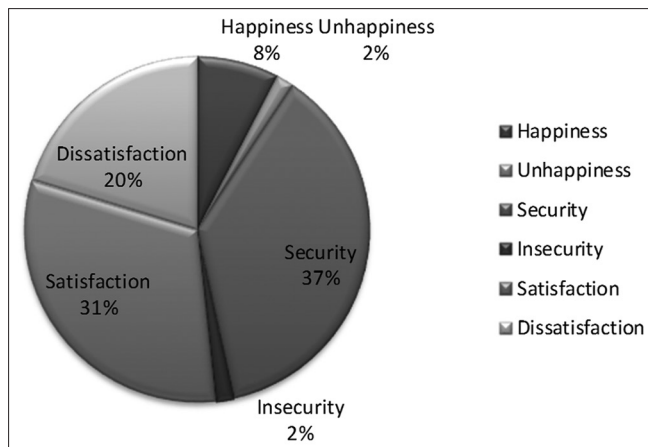**Figure 2:** Percentage of affect type in obama's inaugural speech

Figure 3: Percentage of affect types in trump's inaugural speech

As can be seen, Security and Satisfaction, respectively, have the highest percentage among others, Unhappiness and Insecurity the lowest. Table 1 shows some textual examples from Obama's speech for purposes of clarification:

Figure 3 maps out the picture with the Affect choices in Trump's inaugural speech.

According to the percentages emerging, Security and Satisfaction are deployed with the highest frequency, while Unhappiness and Insecurity with the lowest. In order to make the results more tangible, here are some examples (Table 2):

As Figure 4 shows, the highest percentages of Affect are related to Security and Satisfaction and the lowest ones are related to insecurity and unhappiness. When pondering it with a critical eye, this result seems to be reasonably justifiable by recourse to the discourse situation and producers. The only eye-catching difference crops up with the category of Dissatisfaction, roughly about 2.5 times that of Trump's inaugural speech.

Also, according to the results, the strategy that has been favored by the two presidential candidates was invoked Affect rather than inscribed (Figures 5 and 6).

DISCUSSION OF THE DISCOURSE PATTERNS EMERGING

According to the results, the high frequency of Security and the low frequency of Insecurity, in both speeches, imply that the two presidential candidates had advance and conscious awareness of what their immediate audience needed to hear and how to tap into their emotional well-being. The speakers seemed to also know that a feeling of security is probably a paramount feeling their people would want to have in the rather dire political and economic prospects the audience are generally faced with. Judging by the challenges in life that the speakers know the audience face on a daily basis, and to the heart of which the candidates need obviously to speak, the audience would respond positively to commensurately reassuring Affect produced by the presidential candidates, something that the emerging patterns in this study attest to in general. What a text and content analysis brings out is, similarly, that the candidates did seem to be aware of the simple caveat that the people can be happy or sad, but they cannot tolerate insecurity, especially when they are listening, with every bit of attention, care, and concern, to potentially life-altering speeches by two American presidential candi-

Table 1. Some textual examples from obama's speech

Utterance	Affect type
For we remember the lessons of our past, when twilight years were spent in poverty and parents of a child with a disability had nowhere to turn.	Inscribed (direct) Unhappiness
Our journey is not complete until all our children, from the streets of Detroit to the hills of Appalachia, to the quiet lanes of Newtown, know that they are cared for and cherished and always safe from harm.	Invoked (indirect) Security
The patriots of 1776 did not fight to replace the tyranny of a king with the privileges of a few or the rule of a mob. They gave to us a republic, a government of, and by, and for the people, entrusting each generation to keep safe our founding creed.	Invoked (indirect) Satisfaction

Table 2. Some textual examples from trump's speech

| Utterance	Affect type
I will fight for you with every breath in my body - and I will never, ever let you down.	Inscribed (direct) Happiness
We will get our people off of welfare and back to work - rebuilding our country with American hands and American labour.	Invoked (indirect) Security
We will no longer accept politicians who are all talk and no action - constantly complaining but never doing anything about it.	Invoked (indirect) Dissatisfaction
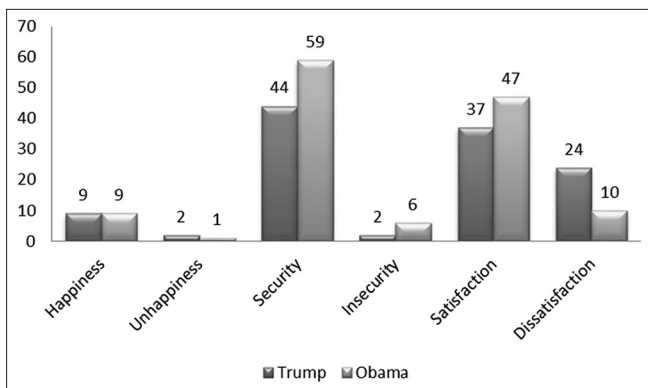
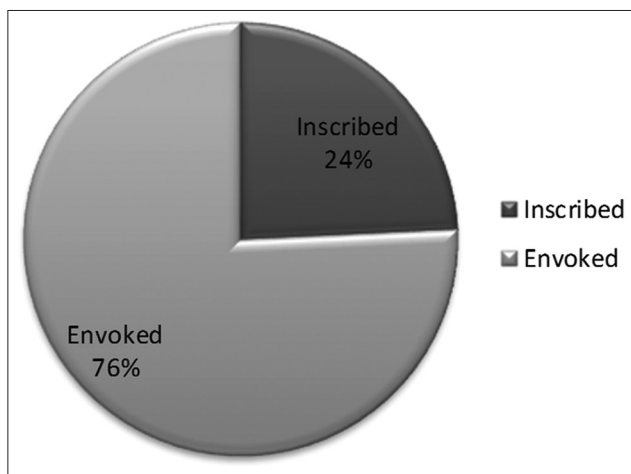**Figure 4:** Obama's vs. trump's affect employment comparison

Figure 5: Percentage of strategy in obama's inaugural speech

dates, which could contain determinants of at least some parts of their future lives.

In the same vein, the two presidential candidates' speeches displayed Satisfaction with what they promised to do for the people, as presidential candidates generally do, making discursively dexterous attempts to respect the people and talk about their wants and likes. In Critical Discourse Analysis, it is now established that talking implicitly about what the people like to hear in order to persuade them seems to be a kind of domination-preserving strategy that groups in power use in order to support the status quo and protect their privileges (for example: Fairclough 1989; Fairclough and Wodak 1997; Freire, 1970; van Dijk 1993).

The high frequency of Dissatisfaction in president Trump's speech is keyed up with the fact that he was mostly dissatisfied with what has gone before, and he tried to criticize the previous governments extensively and talk in

favor of his own. He was dissatisfied with politicians who were all talk and no action, with their not sharing the country's prosperity with the people, with their ignoring the people, and their failing to provide jobs on satisfactory scales. Using these strategies, he tries to come off as a good lecturer and a good Samaritan all in favor of the American people.

Hopefully, this concise study, and studies similar to it, will be a step or two in further familiarity with the underlying discursive and interpersonal processes discourse producers go through, to create meaning in line with the affectual templates of audiences, especially when it comes to speakers whose discursive delivery impacts in politically and socially life-altering ways on the lives of many. This also falls in line with one of the most well-established goals of critical pedagogy, to nurture learners who can reflectively and critically detect and respond to the implicit streaks in text, who can tailor their minds appropriately to the intended attitudinal alignments and stances adopted by speakers and writers.

As this study is qualitative in nature and the analyses have been conducted manually by a human researcher, the categorization of affectual types would necessarily involve some measure of subjectivity. Furthermore, the small amount of data implies that, in order to make this study generalizable, further research is needed to look at similar attitudinal patterns in other socially and politically impactful texts in other contexts. Cross-linguistic comparisons would also yield quite interesting insights into how speakers in power take attitudinal stances in other languages and what evaluative strategies they use to align or dis-align themselves with the addresses and the discursive positions they adopt in text.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR EFL/ESL TEACHERS

Having used the model to get at the affectual aspects of meaning in the choices made by the discourse speakers within the interpersonal system networks of choice (the paradigms) of Appraisal/Evaluation, we suggest, in line with what many now believe, that teachers need to understand and know the functions of, conceptualizations about and approaches to discourse and its analysis, that critical reflection is now commonly believed to be a necessary ingredient to nurturing good and autonomous learners, and that this is not possible unless ESL/EFL teachers first form some rough knowledge of the interpersonally oriented models of discourse analysis, one of the best of which is Appraisal/Evaluation, before they can proceed to applying it in the classroom by themselves, in teaching high-order and reflective/critical levels of reading and writing, for instance.
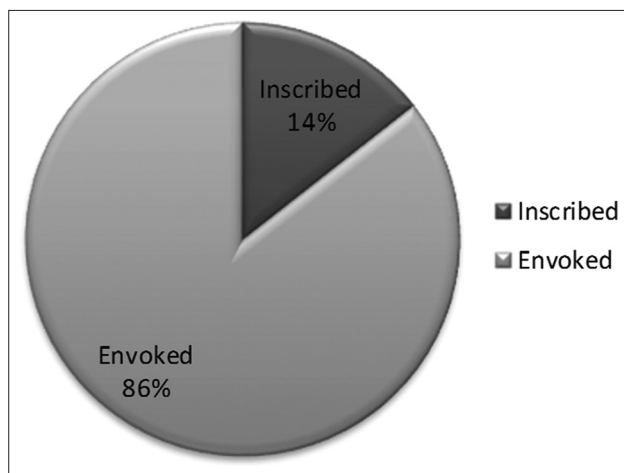
Figure 6: Percentage of strategy in trump's inaugural speech

What was presented here was a small and accessible analysis using the attitudinal machinery of Appraisal/Evaluation, to convey that many teachers of English as a foreign or second language entertain a certain inexplicable fear of the vastness of discourse analysis models and, generally, anything falling outside their immediate tangible profession of actual language instruction that they engage in on a daily basis. As attested by Applied Linguists now, this fear is both unfounded and a danger to a dedicated teacher's profession of teaching. It is through small-scale sample discourse analyses that they can quickly find themselves spared the hassle of entanglement in excessive mazes of discourse analysis theory, and understand reflective/critical discourse analysis using quicker ways than a veritable discourse analyst needs to, before they can translate that knowledge to effective reflective and critical practice in their classes with their students.

There are many benefits to critical pedagogy, which we didn't allude to, but they are rather taken for granted now. Apart from cognitive and autonomy-inducing dimensions, for instance, students will not be motivated learners unless the teacher takes some time equipping herself with the means to increase learner motivation through introducing tasks involving critical reflection and understanding. Appraisal/Evaluation is a solid model that can be a candidate for more accessible and quicker ways to understand interpersonal semantics, critical issues in the world, ideology in texts, and teacher/student reflection on and engagement with textual stances and voices.

REFERENCES

Appraisal : An Overview Introduction : the origins of the Appraisal framework. (1998). Retrieved from http://www.grammatics.com/appraisal

Aliakbari, M., & Faraji, E. (2011). Basic principles of critical pedagogy. In *2nd International Conference on Humanities, Historical and Social Sciences IPEDR* (Vol. 17, pp. 78-85).

Crookes, G. (2012). Critical pedagogy in language teaching. *The encyclopedia of applied linguistics*.

Fairclough, N. (1989) Language and Power, London: Longman.

Fairclough, N. (1995) Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language, London: Longman.

Fairclough, N. and Wodak, R. (1997) 'Critical discourse analysis', in T. A. van Dijk (ed.) Discourse as Social Interaction, London: Sage.

Freire, P. (1970) Pedagogy of the Oppressed, New York: Herder and Herder.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1994). Spoken and written modes of meaning. *Media texts: Authors and readers*, 51 73.

Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2014). *Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203431269

Ledwith, M. (2011). *Community development: A critical approach*. Policy Press.

Lupton, D. (1992). Discourse analysis: A new methodology for understanding the ideologies of health and illness. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, *16*(2), 145-150.

Martin, J. R. (1992). *English text: System and structure*. John Benjamins Publishing.

Martin, J. R. (1997). Analysing genre: functional parameters. In: F. Christie & J. R. Martin. Eds. Genre and Institutions: social processes in the workplace and school. London: Cassell.

Martin, J. R. (2000). Beyond exchange: appraisal systems in English. In: S. Hunston & G. Thompson. Eds. Evaluation in Text: authorial stance and the construction of discourse. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 142–175.

Martin, J. (2003). Introduction, Special issue on Appraisal. *Text 23*(2):171–181.

Martin, J. R. (2004). Mourning: How we get aligned. *Discourse and Society*, *15*(2–3), 321–344. https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926504041022

Martin, J. R. & D. Rose. 2003. Working with Discourse: meaning beyond the clause. London: Continuum.

Martin, J. R., & White, P. R. R. (2005). *The Language of Evaluation*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230511910

Matthiessen, C. (1995). *Lexicogrammatical cartography: English systems*. Internet. Language Sciences Publ.

Painter, C. (2003). Developing attitude: An ontogenetic perspective on APPRAISAL. *Text - Interdisciplinary Journal for the Study of Discourse*, *23*(2), 183–209. https://doi.org/10.1515/text.2003.008

Rahimi, A., & Sajed, M. A. (2014). The interplay between critical pedagogy and critical thinking: Theoretical ties and practicalities. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *136*, 41-45.

De Souza, A. A. (2006). The construal of interpersonal meanings in the discourse of national anthems: An appraisal analysis. In L. Barbara & T. B. Sardinha (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 33rd International Systemic Functional Congress* (pp. 531-550). Sao Paulo: Brazil.

Taboada, M., & Grieve, J. (2004). Analyzing Appraisal Automatically. *Proceedings of AAAI Spring Sympo-*

sium on Exploring Attitude and Affect in Text (AAAI Technical Re# Port SS# 04# 07), *2004*(March), 158–161.

Transcription of Obama's inaugural speech retrieved from: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-21134156

Transcription of Trump's inaugural speech retrieved from: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-21134156

van Dijk, T. (1993) 'Principles of critical discourse analysis', Discourse and Society 4(2): 249–83.

White, P. R. R. (2002). Appraisal: the language of evaluation and stance. ın verschueren j, östman jo, blommaert j, et al.(eds) the handbook of pragmatics (2011). Appraisal. *Discursive Pragmatics*, 14-37.

Winton, (2006). *What Is Critical Pedagogy.* Retrieved from https://www.slideshare.net/CAITLAH/critical-pedagogy-11769487

Young, L. (2011). Systemic Functional Linguistics, In Simpson, J. (Ed.). *The Routledge Handbook of Applied Linguistics* (pp. 625-637). New York: Taylor and Francis.