



AN INVESTIGATION INTO VIETNAMESE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' REFLECTIONS ON USING EVALUATIVE LANGUAGE IN WRITING ENGLISH PARAGRAPHS

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Abstract. The article explores high school students' capacity in writing English evaluative paragraphs about three given topics: the Internet, a favorite movie, and a teacher. Data collection tools include a 3-topic paragraph writing test and a 13-item questionnaire given to 40 participants. The findings were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The analysis of students' writings was based on the three dimensions of the Appraisal Theory namely, affect, judgement, and appreciation. The results show that although the students did not prepare carefully for evaluative writing in terms of knowledge and practice, they could produce evaluative paragraphs using words and sentences to show affect, judgement, and appreciation to the three topics. From the findings, suggestions were made for effective teaching and writing paragraphs in English.

Keywords: *evaluative writing, attitudinal means, affect, judgement, appreciation*

1. Introduction

Writing is not only describing entities "*within a rhetorical framework which highlights objective detachment and minimizes authorial intrusion...and achieved through careful lexical, grammatical and discursal choices*" (Coffin and Hewings, 2004, p. 169) but also expressing the writer's attitudes, stances, interpersonal positioning to the entities mentioned in the text utilizing evaluative language resources. This skill of evaluative writing combined with argumentative, persuasive writing is of really great necessity to native writers and even non-native students who have been learning and practicing academic writing in a foreign language at the university level. However, in reality, not all non-native students, Vietnamese, for example, can integrate evaluation into a description in their writing easily. As a preliminary effort to increase researches on non-native student writing and prepare a critical baseline for building up the skill of evaluative writing for Vietnamese university-level students of English, a research study was conducted to understand Vietnamese high school students' potential capacity in writing evaluative para-

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graphs with a focus on their exploitation of, their reflections on using attitudinal language in writing paragraphs in English, and to raise some suggestions for effective teaching and writing paragraphs in English through three research questions (1) *How did Vietnamese students show their attitude to the entities in their English writing for each topic?*, (2) *What are students' reflections on using attitudinal means in their writing?*, (3) *What should students do to prepare better for their evaluative writing?*

2. Literature review

2.1. Previous studies

The interest in improving the non-native university student writers' skill of expressing their subjective voices and interpersonal positioning to mentioned events, people, things, entities expressed in text types in international writing tests, scientific texts, parts of research papers, even in spoken communication was not much attracted to researchers in the world and Vietnam. Some Chinese, Iranian, Vietnamese and English researchers made preliminary valuable contributions to this issue through their works. Taylor and Tingguan (1991) compared the introductions to papers written by three groups of physical scientists belonging to Anglo-Americans writing in English, Chinese writing in English and Chinese writing in Chinese and found that in spite of an underlying rhetorical structure common to all language groups and disciplines, there are systematic variations characterizing the discipline rather than the language or nationality of the writers, that indicate the futility of broad generalizations about the connections between text structure and "*culturo-linguistic systems*". Following the same comparative approach, Xinghua and Thompson (2009) investigated the use of evaluative language in Chinese EFL students' argumentative writings in both Chinese and English based on Appraisal Theory and explored similarities and differences in the distribution of attitudinal values. Through their study, they concluded that the students' English essays had contained a variety of attitudinal items with Judgement in the top rank, Appreciation in the second and Affect in the third rank. This kind of differences in the use of attitudinal values might be due to the level of language proficiency and the differences in the tradition of the western and traditional Chinese writing rhetoric. Recently, Sahragard, Ahmadi and Zadeh (2016) compared native (English) and non-native (Persian) writers' use of hedging strategies (as evaluative means) when writing their research articles in English to help their teachers of writing provide better instruction to their non-native English students accordingly based on understanding the different hedging strategies preferred by their students. Luckily, the research findings showed that non-native students/writers used the hedged assertions as commonly as native speakers did and the Iranian authors claimed that pedagogical EFL programs should be focused on making EFL students familiar to the necessity and significance of hedging (as an evaluative means) in their re-

search articles and aware of distinguishing the observed facts and interpretations in scientific text types. Coffin and Hewings (2004) approached the issue to another aspect. They examined what is considered appropriate university-level writing by focusing on textual meaning using Theme and interpersonal meaning expressing evaluation employing language resources of appraisal. Their findings revealed an excess of authorial intrusion, the writers' subjective voices through many evaluative resources not found in habitual argumentative writings. As a result, they doubted whether they should choose the non-native writers on the basis of their mother tongue for preparation for tertiary writing due to their homogeneous cultural background. Ngo and Unsworth (2015) drew attention to additional refinements of evaluative resources in spoken discourse by students in English and Vietnamese within small group discussions about topics related to everyday lives. Their study has been practical for Vietnamese students living and studying in English speaking countries. In fact, how to be able to participate effectively in everyday conversations, express stance to lecturers in class, express feelings as well as attitudes to friends, evaluate other's opinions, etc. play an essential role for students whose English is not their mother tongue.

The above-mentioned researches and others just reviewed to some extent some aspects of using evaluative language means in academic writing and other genres chiefly by Chinese and Iranian university students of English and these works left the gap for investigating into Vietnamese students' evaluative writing in English. This article based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)'s Appraisal framework (Theory of the Language of Evaluation) by Martin and White (2005) can be seen as an academic attempt to fill in the partial gap in the literature of Vietnamese students' using attitudinal language in English writing.

2.2. Theoretical background

2.2.1. Language of evaluation

Evaluation generally is *"the broad cover term for the expression of the speaker's or writer's attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about. That attitude may relate to certainty or obligation or desirability or any of a number of sets of values* (Hunston and Thompson, 2000, p. 5). *Evaluation* was investigated in different approaches with various terms such as *evidentiality, affect, emotion, evaluation/ modality, stance, opinions, status/value* (Martin and White, 2005, p. 39) but *evaluation* in this article is based on Appraisal theory developing interpersonal function or meaning within the theoretical framework of Halliday's SFL (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, 2014). Appraisal *"is concerned with evaluation: the kind of attitudes that are negotiated in a text, the strength of the feelings involved and the ways in which values as sourced and readers aligned"* (Martin and Rose, 2003, p. 16). Appraisal is related *"with the interpersonal in language, with the subjective presence of writers/speakers in texts as they adopt stances towards both the material they present and those with whom they communicate"* (Martin and White,

2005, p. 1). According to Butt, et al. (2012), the appraisal system is used to highlight the ways speakers or writers position their audience by expressing their emotions (affect), their judgements of people's behavior and their appreciation of phenomena in the world through the choice of phonological and lexico-grammatical patterns of evaluative language (pp. 153–154).

Evaluative language is described as indexing an act of evaluation or stance taking and it may be analyzed lexically, grammatically and textually (Hunston and Thompson, 2000). As mentioned by Martin and Rose (2003, p. 16, pp. 22–23) and Martin and White (2005, pp. 35–36), three interacting semantic domains of interpersonal meanings realized by the choices of evaluative language are *Attitude*, *Graduation*, and *Engagement*.

Attitude is realized into three subdomains of people's emotional reactions (Affect subdivided into *Un/happiness*, *In/security*, *Dis/satisfaction* and *Dis/inclination*); judgements of people's character and behavior (Judgement subdivided into *Social Esteem* representing *Normality*, *Capacity*, *Tenacity*; *Social Sanction* including *Veracity and Propriety*) and evaluation of things (Appreciation representing *Reaction – Impact*, *Reaction – Quality*, *Composition – Balance*, *Composition – Complexity* and *Valuation*).

People's attitudinal evaluations can be gradable depending on how intense such evaluations are (Focus realized by *Sharpening* and *Softening*) or how strong people's reactions are (Force realized by *Intensification* including *Up/Down scaling*, *Maximization* and *Lexicalization*; and *Quantification* including *Number*, *Mass*, and *Extent*), that is Graduation.

Engagement shows the sources of attitudes, that is, the attitude may be the writer's or speaker's own (Monogloss) or it may be attributed to some other source (Heterogloss subdivided into *Dialogic Contraction* including *Disclaim* realized by *Denial* and *Counter* and *Proclaim* realized by *Concur*, *Pronounce* and *Endorse* and *Dialogic Expansion* including *Entertain*, *Attribute – Acknowledge* and *Distance*) (Martin and White, 2005, pp. 42–160).

Martin and White (2005) also mentioned the language resources or the phonological and lexico-grammatical means or realizations for three semantic domains through the choices of loudness, pitch movement, voice quality (phonology) and evaluative lexis, modal verbs, modal adjuncts, polarity, pre/numeration, intensification, repetition, manner; extent, logico-semantics, vocation (lexico-grammar) for appraisal (p. 34). This article just focuses on the students' uses of lexico-grammatical realizations of Attitude such as types of words or word classes, phrases and clauses or sentences.

In addition, when people use the language resources of appraisal for negotiating their social relationships, they can choose two general ways, devices or orientations to tell their listeners or readers about their attitudes. Firstly, their attitude can be positive or negative, that is, they can express good or bad attitudes. Hence, a division of four evaluative meanings of Affect

based on this orientation is (i) *Un/Happiness*, (ii) *In/Security*, (iii) *Dis/Satisfaction* and (iv) *Dis/Inclination* (or *Non/Desire* by [1], [12]; Positive/Negative of Judgement, and Appreciation (Martin and White, 2005, pp. 51, 53, 56). Secondly, the strategies of their attitude choice can be inscribed or invoked in discourse through the use of attitudinal lexis, that is, they can represent directly, explicitly or indirectly, implicitly their positive or negative feelings, judgements about people and evaluations of things, or we can infer how they are evaluating indirectly from their behavior (Martin and Rose, 2003, pp. 25–26), (Martin and White, 2005, pp. 42, 67).

The illustrative summary of Martin and White’s Appraisal system of three semantic domains and their subdomains of types (Martin and White, 2005) can be shown in Figure 1.

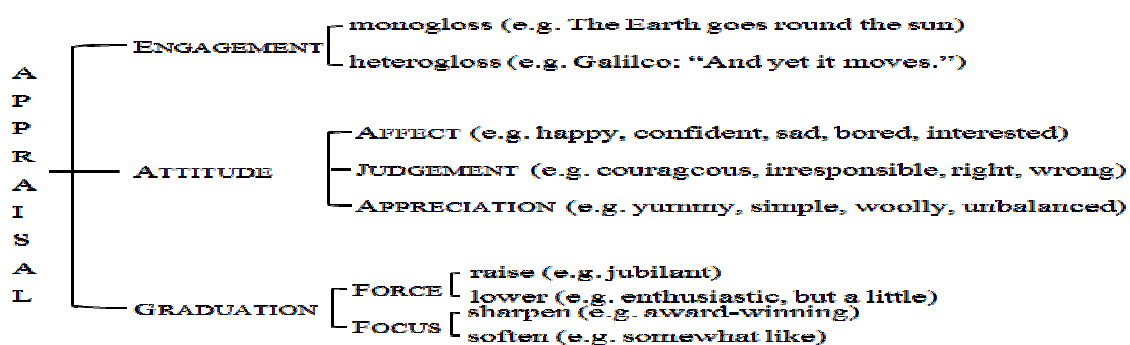


Figure 1. Summary of Appraisal network (Martin and White, 2005)

2.2.2. Evaluative writing

Volosinov (1973) stated that every utterance is above all an evaluative orientation; therefore, each element in a living utterance not only has a meaning but also has a value. Additionally, academic discourse in general and academic writing particularly traditionally was created with scientific objectivity and neutral, detachedly descriptive stances, but, since the publications of Hunston (1994) and Hunston and Thompson’s definition of evaluation as “*expression of the speaker or writer’s attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about*” (Hunston and Thompson, 2000, p. 5), it has taken a new form to itself and it is like a persuasive struggle to create an effective interaction between writers and readers (Hyland, 2005a).

Evaluative writing was traditionally thought of as a type of writing or a genre of writing among persuasive or argumentative writing where the writer makes judgments about people, ideas, and possible actions based on certain criteria that they develop, and where the writer will state their evaluation or recommendation and then support it by referring to their criteria. Therefore, criteria, judgement, and evidence are three key parts of an evaluative paragraph. Criteria means establishing the ideal for the topic. The judgement is the establishment of whether or not the criterion is met. The evidence is the detail offered to support the judgement.

For example, in order to write a paragraph evaluating a restaurant, the writer needs to establish criteria, like service, atmosphere, food quality, taste, price, etc. and then decides the best criteria for your evaluation. After the best criteria are chosen, the writer evaluates the restaurant which the writer has chosen to see how well it matches those criteria, giving specific examples and evidence (Reinking and von der Osten, 2017, pp. 274–275). Evaluative paragraph or writing in this article is considered as a type of writing where the Vietnamese high school student writers (who are prepared for their future university level) make uses of attitudinal means to show their affect, judgement and appreciation (Martin and White, 2005) to the Internet (topic 1), a movie (topic 2) and a teacher (topic 3) for their English paragraph writings.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The article presents a small-scale study carried out using both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze the data collected from the results of writing tests and questionnaires.

3.2. Data collection methods

3.2.1. Participants

Forty Vietnamese high school students were involved in the research through 2 stages: (i) writing 3 paragraphs including evaluative means and (ii) reflecting what they did through a questionnaire.

3.2.2. Instruments

(1) Writing tests: Each student was asked to write 3 paragraphs about 3 following topics:

Topic 1: *Some people say that the Internet provides people with a lot of information and much convenience. Others think access to so much information creates problems and brings potential troubles. What is your opinion?*

Topic 2: *Write a paragraph about 200 words to evaluate your favorite movie. Say the reasons and how much you like it.*

Topic 3: *Write a paragraph about 200 words to tell about the teacher you admired most. Say the reasons for your admiration and how much you and your classmates enjoy him/ her.*

The researcher's purpose is to find out if they can present the user's positive and negative behavior to the effect of the Internet (judgement), show their attitude to the composition of the film, characters' appearances (appreciation) and focus their feelings and emotions on the teacher (affect).

(2) Questionnaire: A questionnaire for students consists of 13 items mentioning their reflections on the necessity of evaluation in writing (items 1–2), their identification of language

units used for affect, judgement and appreciation in each topic (items 3–12), their comments on easiness or difficulty in writing evaluative paragraphs (item 13).

3.2.3. Data collection procedure

Step 1: Writing paragraphs including evaluative means

Firstly, before doing writing tests, the researcher explained to students and illustrated briefly what evaluation is (according to Martin and White, 2005's theory of language of evaluation), what a paragraph including evaluative means is, what evaluative means are, etc. Later, three topics were given to 40 students at three different times in three weeks. Each topic was done in 60 minutes without referring to any materials. Lastly, 120 paragraphs were collected for the researcher's analysis. To facilitate data analysis, attitudinal means were highlighted using three different colors, namely marine for affect, red for judgement, green for appreciation. Sentences containing attitudinal means for the three topics were coded and illustrated by paragraphs of each topic and number for each student writer in brackets, for example, (student paragraph 1/15) was decoded as example extracted from student paragraph for topic 1 by student 15.

Step 2: Answering the questionnaire

Firstly, a piloted questionnaire in English including 13 items was given to 40 students and modified more carefully. Later, the students answered the questionnaire while referring to their own written paragraphs. Lastly, the students' questionnaire was collected for the researcher's analysis.

3.3. Data analysis methods

3.3.1. The data collected from paragraph writing tests were analyzed qualitatively in terms of three domains of attitude together with lexico-grammatical means used in students' writings and clarified quantitatively to know how frequently they occurred in their writings. The result of the analysis answered the first research question *"How did Vietnamese students show their attitude to the entities in their English writing for each topic?"* Due to the scope of the research, only evaluative units were collected and mistakes in various types were ignored.

3.3.2. The students' feedbacks to 13 items in the questionnaire were described qualitatively and quantitatively in terms of their reflections on which attitudinal means they used in their writings together with some illustratively quantitative analysis to answer the second research question *"What are students' reflections on using attitudinal means in their writing?"*

3.3.3. The answer to the third research question *"What should students do to prepare better for their evaluative writing?"* was the researcher's suggestions from the findings.

4. Findings and discussions

Question 1: How did Vietnamese students show their attitude to the entities in their English writing for each topic?

Table 1. Attitudinal distribution in 3 topics

Attitude	Positive Negative	Topic 1 (Internet)				Topic 2 (Movie)				Topic 3 (Teacher)			
		6	4	%	%	52	44	%	%	73	65	%	%
Affect	Positive			4.1	2.7			35.1	29.7			34.1	30.4
	Negative		2		1.4		8		5.4		8		3.7
Judgement	Positive	11	6	7.5	4.1	33	25	22.3	16.9	83	72	38.7	33.6
	Negative		5		3.4		8		5.4		11		5.1
Appreciation	Positive	130	98	88.4	66.6	63	57	42.6	38.5	58	52	27.2	24.3
	Negative		32		21.8		6		4.1		6		2.8
Total		147		100		148		100		214		100	

Table 1 shows 40 Vietnamese students made uses of English 509 attitudinal means to realize 3 positive and negative domains of affect (131), judgement (127) and appreciation (251) realized by words, phrases in 120 paragraphs (approximately 24.000 words) of 3 given topics.

In Topic 1, Table 1 shows appreciation accounts for the highest percentage, which is 88.4%. This finding explains that students used appreciation as their main tool to present their negative/positive attitude towards using the Internet rather than expressing emotion (affect) and evaluating people’s behaviour (judgement) on this topic. For example:

Ex.1: *It can’t deny that Internet plays an **important** role [+ appreciation: valuation] in our life.*

(student’s paragraph 1/20)

Ex.2: *Sitting too much in front of the Internet leads to **serious** consequences [- appreciation:valuation]*

(student’s paragraph 1/11)

Ex. 3: *In my opinion, Internet provides us with a lot of **valuable** [+ appreciation: valuation] information rather than **harmful** problems. [- appreciation: valuation]*

(student’s paragraph 1/17)

Ex. 4: *Internet helps people do many things like: relax, calculate, communicate with friends and relatives.*

(student’s paragraph 1/35)

We can clearly see from examples that appreciation is predominantly encoded as valuation, and values are explicitly expressed through positive words like *important, valuable* to

emphasize the significance of the Internet. Also, drawbacks of the Internet are explicitly conveyed by negative phrases like *serious* (consequences), *harmful* (problems). Moreover, the respondents also employed their appreciation values implicitly (see example 3). In this example, the phrase *harmful problems* expressed a negative evaluation, however, putting it into a sentence like that, the writer would like to highlight a positive evaluation of the Internet. Another remarkable point of the appreciation subsystem is that even though words do not express evaluative meaning, readers also can realize the writer's appreciation values (see example 4). Through example 4, its writer wants to highlight the advantages of the Internet.

Seven and a half percent of the students employed attitude system of judgement. Their judgement is explicitly expressed in terms of negative veracity through words and phrases like *hackers*, *heroes* (keyboard), *bad* (guys). Next, judgement values can be seen as positive capacity values. The student writers also employed the normality subsystem of judgement to mention bad effects on the Internet to people. This consequence effects badly to children's behavior. Normality values are encoded negatively and explicitly through the adjectives "*violent*", "*lazy*", "*passive*" in Example 5.

Ex.5: *Internet makes children become **violent, lazy, and passive** [-judgement: normality]*

(student's paragraph 1/4)

There are six occurrences of affect values accounting for 4.1%. They are constructed by the use of the words *exhausted*, *believe*, *comfortable*, *depressed*, etc. In a word, the writers expressed their emotions through mental verbs *believe* in example 6 and through mental adjectives *exhausted*, *comfortable* in examples 7, 8 to express their negative or positive feelings to the use of the Internet. Moreover, the writers make full use of affectual resources to interact with other attitudinal resources, such as appreciation in Example 6.

Ex.6: *As far as I'm concerned I **believe** [+affect: security] that the Internet definitely provides us with a lot of **valuable** [+appreciation: valuation] information.*

(student's paragraph 1/17)

Ex.7: *Internet makes people feel **exhausted** [-affect: dissatisfaction] because of sitting in front of it too long.*

(student's paragraph 1/25)

Ex.8: *I feel **comfortable** [+affect: security] when relaxing by sitting in front of it after hard worktime.*

(student's paragraph 1/40)

In Topic 2: *Write a paragraph about 200 to evaluate your favourite movie. Say the reasons why you like and how much you enjoy it*, Table 1 shows there is not many differences of percentages among three subdomains of attitude, namely affect, judgement, and appreciation. Table 1

shows that appreciation is the highest frequency sub-system (42,6%). Some examples below are for illustration.

Ex.9: *The film has **attracted** [+appreciation: reaction] many people.*

(student's paragraph 2/13)

Ex.10: *This is the most **interesting** film [+ appreciation: reaction] I have ever watched.*

(student's paragraph 2/40)

Ex.11: *The film is considered as the **best** work [+ appreciation: reaction] in the world for not only **arresting** [+appreciation: reaction]content but also **talented** [+ judgement: capacity] actors and actresses.*

(student's paragraph 2/4)

Ex.12: *The film has a **mournful** [- appreciation: reaction] ending.* *(student's paragraph 2/6)*

We can clearly see from the examples that appreciation is predominantly encoded as a reaction. Clearly, the student writers used an appreciation subtype to stress the value of the film which they want to evaluate. One more thing, in appreciation, writers wished to "inform about the extent to" the film "caught their attention" and "pleased", satisfied them in a positive way or dissatisfied in a positive one. Appreciation is realized through words like *mournful* to present a negative evaluation about ending of the film in Example 12 or words like *interesting*, *good* combined with superlative forms (representing graduation) in Examples 10, 11 to present and emphasize positive appreciation. Especially, the writers not only used appreciation values to evaluate a film in a positive way but they also combine other attitudinal resources such as judgement to support their own evaluation in Example 11. Finally, appreciation values also were realized through verbs such as *attract* representing the mental process in Example 9.

Affect is the second-highest subsystem (35.1%) the student writers utilized in this topic in some illustrative examples:

Ex. 13: *This animation gives me much **joy**. [+ affect:happiness].*

(student's paragraph 2/1)

Ex.14: *I really **like** [+ affect:happiness]this film.*

(student's paragraph 2/2)

Ex.15: *This film makes me feel **comfortable** [+ affect: security]after **stressful** [- appreciation: reaction] and **exhausting** [- appreciation: reaction] hours.*

(student's paragraph 2/3)

Through these examples, we can see that affect values are indicated through nominalisation *joy* to realize happiness in Example 13, verbs such as *like* representing a mental process to realize happiness in Example 14, and through mental adjectives *comfortable* in Example 15 to express security about their favourite film. The student writers one more time combined affect values with other attitudinal values such as appreciation realized by mental

adjectives such as *stressful*, *exhausting* in example 15. Hence, a strong sense of persuasion is achieved.

Judgement is the lowest frequency subsystem (22.3%) the student writers employed through some examples in this topic.

Ex.16: *The actors played very **well**.* [+judgement: capacity] (student's paragraph 2/5)

Ex.17: *Two main actors had **good** [+judgement:capacity] performance* (student's paragraph 2/7)

Ex.18: *Film makers are really **excellent**[+judgement: capacity]* (student's paragraph 2/8)

Ex.19: *Main actress is a **bad-tempered** [-judgement: normality]girl.* (student's paragraph 2/9)

Table 1 shows that positive judgement values were coded explicitly through adverbs *well* in example 16, adjectives *good*, *excellent* in examples 17, 18 to evaluate people's capacity and negative judgement represented by adjectives *bad-tempered* in example 19 to evaluate people's normality.

In Topic 3: *Write a paragraph about 200 words to tell about the teacher you admired most. Say the reasons for your admiration and how much you enjoy him/her.* Table 1 reveals among the three subsystems of attitude, the student writers employed many more judgement and affect subsystems than appreciation (judgement: 38.7%, affect 34.1%, appreciation: 27.1%). Also, the attitudinal values tend to be encoded more in a positive way rather than a negative way (88.3% for positive, 11.7% for negative).

Judgement was the highest frequency subsystem (38.7%) the student writers utilized through some examples in this topic.

Ex.20 : *She was an **experienced** [+ judgement: capacity] teacher.* (student's paragraph 3/2)

Ex.21: *She teaches very **well**.* [+ judgement: capacity] (student's paragraph 3/1)

Ex.22: *She always explained **hard** [- appreciation:composition] problems in the **easiest** [+appreciation: composition] way.* (student's paragraph 3/8).

Ex.23: *He was willing to explain all the **hard** [- appreciation: composition] exercises.*

(student's paragraph 3/22)

Through the examples above, we can see Judgement values are coded explicitly through adjectives *experienced* in Example 20, adverbs *well* in Example 21 to evaluate the teacher's capacity. Among 5 sub-domains of judgement: normality, capacity, tenacity, veracity, and propriety, the writers focused chiefly on assessing the teacher's ability or capacity. Besides using explicit words to present judgement, the writers also evaluated teacher's teaching ability or skills implicitly in Examples 22, 23. We can easily realize two words *hard* and *easiest* in

Examples 22 and 23 representing appreciation explicitly but imply judgement of teacher's professional competence in teaching (Example 22), behaviour, and enthusiasm (Example 23).

Affect is the second-highest subsystem (34.1%) the student writers utilized in this topic. Some examples below are for illustration.

Ex.24: *Tears* [-affect: unhappiness] ran down my cheek. (student's paragraph 3/4)

Ex.25: *She will be always in my memory.* (student's paragraph 3/6)

Ex.26: *I like* [+affect: happiness] him very much. (student's paragraph 3/30)

Through these examples, we can see negative and positive affect values indicated explicitly through nominalisation *tear* in Example 24, verbs of mental process *like* in Example 26 to express strong emotions, feeling about a person they want to talk about. Moreover, affect values are coded implicitly in Example 25.

Appreciation is the lowest frequency sub-system (27.1%) of attitude in this topic. Some following examples are for illustration.

Ex. 27: *She seemed to be still young* [+appreciation: reaction] at the age of forties. (student's paragraph 3/30)

Ex.28: *His teaching method was easy* to understand [+appreciation: composition] (student's paragraph 3/40)

Ex.29: *Teaching is a hard* [-appreciation: composition] work but she always finished it well [+judgement: capacity] (student's paragraph 3/39)

We can see from examples that the students tend to present the appreciation subdomain as a reaction and composition explicitly through words or phrases to evaluate the appearance and teaching method in Examples 27, 28. In Example 29, "hard" presents a negative appreciation, but students combined a negative appreciation with other attitudinal resources, namely judgement to have a positive appreciation in Example 29.

From the result of analyzing what students did in these topics, we can generalize that in spite of being Vietnamese high school students who have not yet mastered sufficiently the use of English attitudinal resources in academic writing, they proved that they understood rather basically how to use evaluative means to express their attitudes to the entities mentioned in the paragraphs discussing 3 topics. However, instead of satisfying the researcher's expectations in the frequency of using attitudinal means in each topic, namely more judgement in Topic 1 (the Internet), more appreciation in Topic 2 (a favorite film), and more affect in Topic 3 (a teacher), students seemed to focus on different angles due to their habitual thoughts or their individual

styles by a limited number of repeated attitudinal vocabulary (shared by Coffin and Hewings, 2004; Xinghua and Thompson 2009).

Question 2: *What are students' reflections on using attitudinal means in their writing?*

This question is answered by the students' feedbacks to the items (1–13) in the questionnaire.

Item 1: In your opinion, what is an evaluative paragraph?

Table 2. Students' reflections on an evaluative paragraph

Responses	Number of respondents (N = 40)	Percentage, %
Expressing your attitude, feelings, making judgements about people, human behaviour, ideas, and possible actions.	37	92.5
Writing about what a person, place, or thing is like.	0	0
Writing about the similarities or differences between two or more people, ideas, things, or places.	3	7.5
Explaining how or why something happens or has happened.	0	0

Table 2 shows that 37 out of 40 respondents, accounting for 92,5%, stated that *"an evaluative paragraph is one which expresses of attitude, feelings, making judgements about people, human behaviour, ideas, and possible actions"*. Only a very small rate of respondents (7.5%) said that an evaluative paragraph is one to write about the similarities or differences between two or more people, ideas, things, or places. Meanwhile, none of the respondents agreed that an evaluative paragraph is the one which writes about what a person, place or thing like or explains how or why something happens or has happened. From the result, it can be concluded that most of the students were rather well aware of what evaluation is and matched some previous ideas (Hunston, & Thompson (Eds.), 2000, Hyland, 2005a, Reinking & von der Osten, 2017....)

Item 2: As a student, is it necessary to present your evaluation in writing?

Table 3. Students' reflections on the necessity of present evaluation in writing

Responses	Number of respondents (N = 40)	Percentage, %
Very necessary	12	30
Necessary	26	65
Little necessary	1	2.5
Not necessary	1	2.5

Table 3 states that 26 out of 40 respondents or equivalent to 65% of respondents affirmed that it is necessary for them to present evaluation in writing. The percentage for the numbers of the respondents who chose “*very necessary*” is a little lower (30%). And 2.5% is the percentage for the numbers of the respondents choosing “*little necessary*” and “*not necessary*”. From this result, it can be inferred that respondents totally perceived that presenting evaluation in writing is important and necessary and this perception was shared by Volosinov ([1929], 1973).

Item 3: What language units did you use more frequently for evaluation?

Table 4. Students’ frequent choices of language units for evaluation

Responses	Number of respondents (N = 40)	Percentage, %
Words	35	87.5
Phrases	30	75
Sentences	20	50

Table 4 indicates that 87.5% of students chose *words*, 75% chose phrases and 50% chose *sentences* among 3 language elements. The fact that students chose more words than sentences was consistent with Martin and Rose, 2007a , p. 38, 46] whose theory of evaluation (appraisal) was chiefly realized by lexis (including words of various word classes, phrases, metaphors, nominalizations) and some affective mental and behavioral processes in context. However, the problem is whether types of lexis and sentences for evaluation were identified exactly or not.

Item 4: Which language units did you use for affect in Topic 1?

Table 5. Use of words for affect in Topic 1 (Internet)

Words	Number of respondents (N = 40)	Percentage, %
Comfortable (adjective (adj.))	28	70
Believe (verb (v.))	15	45
Exhausted (adj.)	30	60
Depressed (adj.)	30	60

Table 5 shows that student writers used correctly words expressing their positive affect. 70% of students felt positively *comfortable*, 45% felt positively secure (*believe*) to the use of the Internet although 60% felt negatively *exhausted* and 60% felt *depressed* to the Internet. This result can reflect the exact choice of words for affect and the positive trend of the Vietnamese youth to the contribution of the Internet in their daily life although the distribution of their feedback was not concentrated due to their misunderstanding the requirement of answering the item or their non-understanding of evaluative meanings of words.

Table 6. Use of phrases for affect in Topic 1 (Internet)

Phrases	Number of respondents (N = 40)	Percentage, %
Very fast (Adv.P)	12	30
Very useful (Adj.P)	6	15
A source of entertainment (NP)	0	0

Table 6 shows all students chose incorrectly phrases for affect to evaluate the user's feelings to the Internet because all of these words not phrases *fast*, *useful* and *entertainment* realized appreciation. It is true that due to limited knowledge of vocabulary for affect, and their wrong identification of words and phrases, students chose these words for affect.

Table 7. Use of sentences for affect in Topic 1 (Internet)

Sentences	Number of respondents (N = 40)	Percentage, %
As far as I'm concerned, I believe that the Internet definitely provides us with a lot of valuable information.	18	45
I feel comfortable when relaxing by sitting in front of it after hard work time.	16	40
The Internet makes people feel exhausted because of wasting of time on it.	6	15
I feel depressed after spending too much time on Internet.	6	15

Table 7 shows 45% of students shared the same ideas to choose the sentence *As far as I'm concerned, I believe that the Internet definitely provides us with a lot of valuable information* and 40% chose the sentence *I feel comfortable when relaxing by sitting in front of it after hard work* to realize positive affect whereas 15% chose the sentence *The Internet makes people feel exhausted because of wasting of time on it* and 15% chose the sentence *"I feel depressed after spending too much time on Internet"* to represent negative affect. The use of sentences containing verbs and verb phrases *believe*, *feel comfortable*, *feel exhausted*, *feel depressed* realizing mental, affective processes proved students could employ sentences for explicit affect. However, comparing with words for affect in Table 4.5, students seemed not to distinguish words from sentences when filling the feedback slot with the same affect means in both language units words and sentences.

Item 5: Which language units did you use for judgement in Topic 1?

Table 8. Use of words for judgement in Topic 1 (Internet)

Words	Number of respondents (N = 40)	Percentage, %
Hackers (noun)	29	72.5
Good (information) (adj.)	14	35

Table 8 indicates 72.5% of students chose words *hackers* to present negative judgement and 35% chose noun phrase *good information* to realize positive judgement of the Internet. Students misunderstood evaluative meaning of *good* as judgement instead of appreciation.

Table 9. Use of phrases for judgement in Topic 1 (Internet)

Phrases	Number of respondents (N = 40)	Percentage, %
Bad guys (noun phrase (NP))	14	35
Heroes keyboard (NP)	11	27.5

Table 9 shows all students did not distinguish words from phrases for judgement. In this case, no phrases but words *bad*, *heroes* were used to evaluate the behavior of the user of the Internet.

Table 10. Use of sentences for judgement in Topic 1 (Internet)

Sentences	Number of respondents (N = 40)	Percentage, %
We can send and receive photos and documents immediately	28	70
People can talk with each other any time and any place with Internet.	26	65
Internet makes children become lazy and passive.	7	17.5
People who spend too much time sitting in front of Internet can easily get ill.	5	12.5

Table 10 reveals 70% of students used the sentence *we can send and receive photos and documents immediately* for implicit positive judgement; 65% used the sentence *People can talk with each other any time and any place with Internet* also for implicit positive judgement whereas 17.5% used the sentence *Internet makes children become lazy and passive* and 12.5% used the sentence *People who spend too much time sitting in front of Internet can easily get ill* for explicit negative judgement. However, 17.5% of students and 12.5% were not correct when categorizing the language units for explicit negative judgement as sentences because really only words, adjectives *lazy*, *passive*, *ill* realized explicit negative judgement.

Item 6: Which language units did you use for appreciation in Topic 1?

Table 11. Use of words for appreciation in Topic 1 (Internet)

Words	Number of respondents (N = 40)	Percentage, %
Valuable (adj.)	40	100
Important (adj.)	20	50
Disadvantaged (adj.)	12	30
Harmful (adj.)	11	27.5

Table 11 shows that all students chose words, adjectives *valuable* and 50% used adjectives *important* for positive appreciation whereas 30% chose words, adjectives *disadvantaged* and 27.5% used adjectives *harmful* for negative appreciation. In this case, students seemed to understand the evaluative meaning of appreciation although the distribution of their feedback was not focused due to their non-understanding of evaluative meaning.

Table 12. Use of phrases for appreciation in Topic 1 (Internet)

Phrases	Number of respondents (N = 40)	Percentage, %
A lot of advantages (NP)	30	75
As a source of enormous information (PreP)	15	37.5
Potential problems (NP)	25	62.5
Harmful to eyes and spine (Adj. P)	25	62.5

Table 12 indicates that 75% of students used NPs *a lot of advantages* and 37.5% used PreP *as a source of enormous information* for explicit positive appreciation whereas 62.5% used NPs *potential problems* and 62.5% chose AdjPs *harmful to eyes and spine* for explicit negative appreciation. Exactly, students were not correct when identifying words such as nouns *advantages*, adjectives *enormous*, *potential*, *harmful* as phrases for appreciation. *A lot of*, a means for graduation can be combined with *advantages*. Only these nouns and adjectives realize the evaluative meaning of appreciation.

Table 13. Use of sentences for appreciation in Topic 1 (Internet)

Sentences	Number of respondents (N = 40)	Percentage, %
Internet helps people do many things like: relax, study online, and communicate.	30	75
In my opinion, Internet provides us with a lot of valuable information rather than harmful problems	15	37.5
Sitting too much in front of Internet leads to serious consequences	10	25
It can't deny that Internet plays an important role in our life.	10	25

Table 13 reveals 75% of students chose the sentence *Internet helps people do many things like relax, study online, and communicate*; 37.5% used the sentence *In my opinion, Internet provides us with a lot of valuable information rather than harmful problems* and 25% chose the sentence *It can't deny that Internet plays an important role in our life* for positive appreciation whereas 25% used the sentence *Sitting too much in front of the Internet leads to serious consequences* for negative appreciation. In reality, 75% seemed to be correct if they thought the whole sentence the *Internet*

helps people do many things like relax, study online, and communicate implies positive appreciation. Others did not understand it is words *valuable, harmful, serious, important* that realize appreciation rather than sentences containing these words.

Item 7: Which language units did you use for affect in Topic 2?

Table 14. Use of words for affect in Topic 2 (Movie)

Words	Number of respondents (N = 40)	Percentage, %
Like (v.)	40	100
Love (v.)	40	100
Cry (v.)	25	62.5
Sad (adj.)	20	50

Table 14 indicates 100% of students used words such as mental verbs *like*, 100% used mental verbs *love* to realize positive affect to characters in their favorite movie whereas 62.5% used mental verbs *cry* and 50% used adjectives *sad* to represent negative affect. In this case, students seemed to understand the evaluative meaning of affect although the distribution of their feedback was not concentrated due to their misunderstanding the requirement of answering the item or non-understanding of evaluative meaning.

Table 15. Use of phrases for affect in Topic 2 (Movie)

Phrases	Number of respondents (N = 40)	Percentage, %
Like best (VP)	30	75
Really like (VP)	30	75
Cry very much (VP)	20	50
Very like (VP)	20	50

Table 15 shows all students misdistinguished words from phrases for affect through their choices. Normally, means of graduation *best, really, very* and *very much* often combined with attitudinal means for affect such as *like, cry*; therefore, if they thought the whole phrases graduation and affect as real phrases for affect, they were truly incorrect.

Table 16. Use of sentences for affect in Topic 2 (Movie)

Sentences	Number of respondents (N = 40)	Percentage, %
The film makes me feel comfortable after stressful and exhausting hours.	40	100
I really like this film.	40	100
This animation gives me much joy.	30	75
I cried very much when watching this film.	20	50

Table 16 indicates 100% of students understood the use of sentences representing mental processes such as *The film makes me feel comfortable after stressful and exhausting hours, I really like this film*, 75% chose *This animation gives me much joy* and 50% used sentences representing behavioral processes such as *I cried very much when watching this film* to realize affect. However, some students did not learn evaluative meaning carefully so they did not choose all sentences.

Item 8: Which language units did you use for judgement in Topic 2?

Table 17. Use of words for judgement in Topic 2 (Movie)

Words	Number of respondents (N = 40)	Percentage, %
Generous (adj.)	40	100
Helpful (adj.)	35	87.5
Humorous (adj.)	35	87.5
Bad-tempered (adj.)	40	100

Table 17 shows all of the students used words, adjectives for positive (*helpful* (100%), *generous* (87.5%), *humorous* (87.5%)) and negative (*bad-tempered* (100%)) judgement although the distribution of their choices was not similar perhaps due to their incomplete understanding of evaluative meaning of judgement.

Table 18. Use of phrases for judgement in Topic 2 (Movie)

Phrases	Number of respondents (N = 40)	Percentage, %
Extremely kind (Adj.P)	27	67.5
Richest and the most powerful boys (NP)	23	57.5
Talented lawyer (NP)	20	50
Superficial mind (NP)	20	50

Table 18 shows half of students' misdistinguishing between phrases for judgement and phrases containing words for positive (*kind, talented*) and negative (*superficial*) judgement (similar to Tables 6, 9, 12, 15). In the case of *richest and powerful*, it can be listed in the phrase *the richest and the most powerful boys*. Seemingly, students did not understand the combination of means of graduation *extremely, -est, the most* and words of judgement (*kind, rich*) to intensify degrees of judgement (similar to some examples in Tables 6, 12, 15).

Table 19. Use of sentences for judgement in Topic 2 (Movie)

Sentences	Number of respondents (N = 40)	Percentage, %
The actors played very well.	27	67.5
Two main actors had a good performance.	25	62.5
Film makers were really excellent.	23	57.5
Main actress was a bad-tempered girl.	20	50

Table 19 proves that half of the students misdistinguished the use of the whole sentences implying judgement from the use of words for judgement in the context of sentences. In this case, no sentences given above belonged to sentences for judgement (similar to Tables 10, 13). The students lacked knowledge of evaluative sentences for judgement.

Item 9: Which language units did you use for appreciation in Topic 2?

Table 20. Use of words for appreciation in Topic 2 (Movie)

Words	Number of respondents (N = 40)	Percentage, %
Great (adj.)	40	100
Famous (adj.)	40	100
Meaningful (adj.)	35	87.5
Mournful (adj.)	34	85

Table 20 shows all of the students used correctly words, adjectives *great*, *famous*, *meaningful*, *mournful* for appreciation in spite of 5–6 students' non-choices perhaps due to their unclear understanding of the evaluative meaning of appreciation to a movie.

Table 21. Use of phrases for appreciation in Topic 2 (Movie)

Phrases	Number of respondents (N = 40)	Percentage, %
Excellent content	35	87.5
Make a good impression to viewers	30	75
A great film	30	75
Bad comments	34	85

Table 21 indicates most of the students' misdistinguishing words from phrases for appreciation (similar to Tables 6, 9, 12, 15, 18). Only adjectives *good*, *excellent*, *great* in the phrases represent the appreciation of a movie, but the adjective *bad* in *bad comments* could imply judgement instead of appreciation.

Table 22. Use of sentences for appreciation in Topic 2 (Movie)

Sentences	Number of respondents (N = 40)	Percentage, %
This is the most interesting film I have ever watched.	33	82.5
The film has attracted many people.	20	50
The film had a mournful ending.	18	45
The film is considered as the best work in the world for not only attracting content but also talented actors.	16	40

Table 22 reveals most of students' wrong uses of sentences for appreciation. Similar to Tables 10, 13, 19, only words, adjectives *interesting*, *mournful*, *best*, *attracting*, *attracted* in the given sentences not the whole sentences in the table showed positive and negative appreciation. However, if students' knowledge of evaluation was deep, based on the context, these whole sentences implied evaluative meaning of affect to movie.

Item 10: Which language units did you use for affect in Topic 3?

Table 23. Use of words for affect in Topic 3 (Teacher)

Words	Number of respondents (N = 40)	Percentage, %
Love (v)	40	100
Admire (v)	35	87.5
Dislike (v)	40	100

Table 23 proves that most of the students understood the evaluative meaning of positive and negative affect realized by mental verbs *love*, *admire* and *dislike* in spite of the fact that 5 students did not understand clearly the meaning of *admire*.

Table 24. Use of phrases for affect in Topic 3 (Teacher)

Phrases	Number of respondents (N = 40)	Percentage, %
Really enjoyable (Adj. P)	40	100
Extremely admire (VP)	33	82.5
Fond of (Adj. P)	40	100
Never forget him (VP)	35	87.5

Table 24 reveals that most of the students did not distinguish words *enjoyable*, *admire*, *forget* from phrases for positive affect; words, adverbs for graduation *really*, *extremely*, *never* combined with words, adjectives *enjoyable*, verbs *admire* for affect to intensify evaluation (similar to some examples in Tables 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21). Besides, pronoun *him* was outside the scope of evaluation in the example *never forget him*. The case of *fond of* was often considered as a phrasal adjective rather than an adjective phrase.

Table 25. Use of sentences for affect in Topic 3 (Teacher)

Sentences	Number of respondents (N = 40)	Percentage, %
Tears ran down my cheek.	40	100
I like her very much.	38	95
I cried on the day when she was away from me.	38	95
He will be in my memory.	34	85

Table 25 shows most students used correctly mental sentences *I like her very much* (95%), behavioral sentences *I cried on the day when she was away from me* (95%), *Tears ran down my cheek* (100%) realizing positive and negative affect. Besides, the relational sentence *He will be in my memory* (85%) also implied positive affect although 6 students did not use it perhaps due to their non-understanding of implied evaluative meaning.

Item 11: Which language units did you use for judgement in Topic 3?

Table 26. Use of words for judgement in Topic 3 (Teacher)

Words	Number of respondents (N = 40)	Percentage, %
Talented (adj.)	40	100
Humorous (adj.)	40	100
Strict (adj.)	35	87.5
Friendly (adj.)	35	87.5

Table 26 shows that most of the students understood the evaluative meaning of words, adjectives *talented*, *humorous*, *strict*, *friendly* realizing positive affect although 5 of them did not confirm their uses to *strict* and *friendly*. Perhaps they did not understand clearly their evaluative meaning.

Table 27. Use of phrases for judgement in Topic 3 (Teacher)

Phrases	Number of respondents (N = 40)	Percentage, %
Have sense of humour (VP)	40	100
Have deep knowledge (VP)	35	87.5
Be willing to give advice (VP)	35	87.5
Never lose patience (VP)	35	87.5

Table 27 reveals that most of the students could understand correctly the evaluative meaning of the VPs containing the verb *have* + NPs such as *have sense of humour* = *humorous*, *have deep knowledge* = *know deeply* implying capacity; the verb *give* + NPs such as *give advice* = *advise*, *be willing to give advice* implying capacity; the verb *lose* + NPs such as *lose patience* = *impatience*, *never lose patience* meaning *patiently*, implying tenacity.

Table 28. Use of sentences for judgement in Topic 3 (Teacher)

Sentences	Number of respondents (N = 40)	Percentage, %
He was a strict teacher.	38	95
She was kind to her colleagues.	38	95
She taught very well.	35	87.5
She was an experienced teacher.	35	87.5

Table 28 shows most of the students did not distinguish sentences from words, adjectives and adverbs *strict, kind, well, experienced* for judgement in these sentences (similar to examples in Tables 10, 13, 19, 22).

Item 12: Which language units did you use for appreciation in Topic 3?

Table 29. Use of words for appreciation in Topic 3 (Teacher)

Words	Number of respondents ($N = 40$)	Percentage, %
Interesting (adj.)	40	100
Beautiful (adj.)	40	100
Handsome (adj.)	40	100

Table 29 shows all of the students used exactly words, adjectives *interesting, beautiful* and *handsome* for positive appreciation (reaction) to the teacher. It is clear that students could understand the use of words to evaluate things.

Table 30. Use of phrases for appreciation in Topic 3 (Teacher)

Phrases	Number of respondents ($N = 40$)	Percentage, %
Be easy to understand	33	82.5
Hard lessons	35	87.5

Table 30 reveals that most of the students misdistinguished phrases from words, adjectives *easy, hard* for positive and negative appreciation in phrases (similar to some examples in Tables 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24).

Table 31. Use of sentences for appreciation in Topic 3 (Teacher)

Sentences	Number of respondents ($N = 40$)	Percentage, %
She seemed to be still young at the age of forties.	33	82.5
His teaching method was easy to understand.	35	87.5
Teaching is a hard job but he always finished it.	34	85
Her hair is black and long, which is suitable to her oval face.	38	95

Table 31 also indicates that most of the students did not distinguish sentences from words, adjectives *young, easy, hard, suitable* for appreciation in these sentences (similar to examples in Tables 10, 13, 19, 22).

Item 13: How easy or difficult did you find to write evaluative paragraphs and Why?

Table 32. Students' reasons for easiness or difficulty in writing evaluative paragraphs

Responses	Number of respondents (N = 40)	Percentage, %
Very difficult due to lack of evaluative vocabulary	40	100%
Difficult due to lack of model evaluative paragraphs	38	95
Difficult because of being unaccustomed to writing evaluative paragraphs in Vietnamese	35	87.5
Very difficult because of no clear ideas of affect, judgement, appreciation...	40	100
Difficult due to no distinction among evaluative words, phrases and sentences	35	87.5

Table 32 shows most of the students found it difficult and very difficult to write evaluative paragraphs. Their main and noticeable reasons were *lack of evaluative vocabulary* (100%), *no clear ideas of attitudinal sub-domains of affect, judgement and appreciation* (100%), *lack of model evaluative paragraphs* (95%), *no distinction among evaluative words, phrases and sentences* (87.5%) and more strikingly, *being unaccustomed to writing evaluative paragraphs in Vietnamese* (87.5%). Vietnamese high school students' explanations for their difficulties in writing English evaluative paragraphs were rather easy to understand because even if students wrote evaluative paragraphs in Vietnamese they could fall into similar difficulties due to lack of careful preparation for evaluative ideas before writing.

From the students' feedbacks to 13 items in the questionnaire, we can compare with the results showed in Table 1. Clearly, they reflected rather exactly what they did in their writings. They understood rather basically what evaluation was, they found the necessity of presenting evaluation in writing and they could identify attitudinal means especially words and even mental and behavioral sentences for affect, judgement and appreciation. However, their unsure and incorrect knowledge of attitudinal means, especially phrases and sentences for affect, judgement and appreciation was confirmed in their feedbacks to Item 4, Table 6; Item 5, Table 9, 10; Item 6, Table 12, 13; Item 7, Table 15; Item 8, Table 18, 19; Item 9, Table 21, 22; Item 10, Table 24; Item 11, Table 28; Item 12, Table 30, 31. Their difficulties due to lack of evaluative vocabulary, lack of evaluative model paragraphs, lack of practice in writing evaluative paragraphs even in Vietnamese and non-distinction among attitudinal domains of affect, judgement, and appreciation were recognized through their writings by themselves. Some of these findings are rather similar to those shown by some previous researchers (Taylor & Tingguan (1991), Hyland (2005a), Xinghua and Thompson (2009)).

Question 3: *What should students do to prepare better for their evaluative writing?*

From the students' reflections on what they did (items 1–12), especially what difficulties they encountered (item 13), we recommend some suggestions to the Vietnamese high school students who are prepared for their study of English at the university in the future and to their Vietnamese teachers of writing in English.

As for students, self-preparation before writing evaluative paragraphs in English are of great importance. Firstly, they should take advantage of information technology to search for model evaluative paragraphs about the given topics in English reading texts and reading them very carefully. While reading, they should identify evaluative means in these model paragraphs and find out their meanings from available English-Vietnamese or Vietnamese-English bilingual dictionaries. Later, they should try to memorize more evaluative vocabulary and their synonyms evaluating people, behavior, things from the bilingual dictionaries. Lastly, most importantly, they should practice using the evaluative means about the given topics in writing paragraphs in Vietnamese and English.

As for teachers, it is very supportive if the Vietnamese teachers of English's methods or techniques can help prepare better for their Vietnamese high-school students to write evaluative paragraphs in English more effectively. Firstly, they should explain more carefully the differences between descriptive and evaluative writings by model writings because clearly, not all of the Vietnamese high school students know the differences even in writing Vietnamese paragraphs. Later, they should clarify the necessity of making uses of evaluative words, phrases, sentences while describing and evaluating things, people, events...and motivate the whole class to suggest evaluative language means in each given topic before writing individually. Lastly, brainstorming techniques should be applied before asking the students to write.

5. Conclusion

The article presented the critical analysis of 40 Vietnamese high school students' uses of attitudinal means for affect, judgement, and appreciation through their 120 paragraphs about three topics, namely the Internet, a favorite movie and a teacher and their reflections through a 13-item questionnaire. Although Vietnamese high school students had no sufficient time allocated for writing unit in English textbooks and their teachers did not prepare well for their writing paragraphs, especially evaluative writings, the results of the analysis showed that students could use rather successfully evaluative means, especially words and some types of mental and behavioral sentences to show their feelings to the teacher (affect), their stances to the effect of the Internet (judgement) and their attitudes to the composition, reaction of the favorite movie (appreciation). If our suggestions to overcome difficulties in writing evaluative paragraphs about not only given topics but also any various topics in the future were seriously concerned

by their teachers and students, surely they could gain more achievements in their knowledge of evaluation and practices in writing at high school and even when they enter the university.

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