Principles for Applying Appraisal Theory

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Overview

1. Choosing texts for Appraisal analysis
   - Kinds of text
   - Texts, text collections
   - Text as exemplar/artefact, representativeness of text collections (& sampling)

2. Analysing for Appraisal
   - Manual, computer-assisted, automatic/computerised
     - Excursion: text vs. corpus as ways of ‘reading’ or ‘analysing’ (text-as-corpus; texts-as-corpus)
   - Inductive (text-driven, corpus-driven) and deductive (text-based, corpus-based) research
   - General research principles
     - Transparency (criteria for identifying Appraisal: frames, epithet-test, example lexis; corpus examples showing typical use/meaning potential)
     - Consistency (intra- and inter-rater; measurement; how to achieve),
     - Ockham’s Razor (application of Appraisal theory)
   - Counting (comparative analysis, text collections)

3. Interpreting Appraisal
   - Transtextuality
   - Triangulation

4. Ensuring impact of Appraisal analysis
   - Reach

Transparency – criteria

A different methodological issue involves the identification of evaluation. How can we determine that linguistic items are evaluative or not? In this book a combination of methods was used:

- previous (often corpus-based) research was surveyed to identify potential evaluative means;
- native speakers were questioned: when they gave contradictory responses (as was frequently the case) or when expressions were only identified as ‘a bit/slightly negative’, or ‘hard to say’ the linguistic expressions were excluded (as not unequivocally evaluative);
- the Bank of English (BoE, a general corpus of spoken and written English from Britain, the US, Canada and Australia, which stood at 450 million words at the time of the analysis) was the basis for extensive corpus research concerning the evaluative potential of individual linguistic devices. If this did not yield satisfying results (because there were not enough occurrences), WebCorp (a search engine for the internet which was designed for use by linguists; http://www2002.org/CDROM/poster/67/) was employed for the same purpose.
- a corpus-based dictionary was used to check the evaluative force of linguistic expressions (COBUILD, COBUILD 1995).

Thus, the manual analysis of my news story corpus is based both on ‘first level’ corpus research (Bank of English, WebCorp) and on the ‘second level use of corpora’ (Neale 2006) (corpus-based research such as Thompson 1994, COBUILD); in other words the discourse analysis is supported by what Louw (2005) calls ‘data-assisted reading’.

(Bednarek 2006a: 9-10)
References


