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Discourse Analysis of Attitude in Selected Suicide Notes

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Abstract

The current study examines some selected genuine suicide notes using the Appraisal System as a comprehensive framework. Accordingly, the present study attempts to specify the attitude categories used to represent their mental and emotional statements. The study aims at recognising the emotional motives of suicide through discourse and the significance of language in representing those emotional motives. Moreover, the study aims to identify the most frequent types of emotions used in suicide notes, figuring out the grammatical and lexical differences in the use of 'judgement, and specifying the most common patterns of 'appreciation' used in suicide notes. In association with the aims, the study sets out three hypotheses: First, feelings of anger (dissatisfaction) and (insecurity) are the most dominant emotional motives that motivate suicidal people to end their lives. Second, affect categories are the most frequent categories of attitude used in the selected suicidal notes. Finally, the appraisal categories are significant in disclosing emotional states and how suicidal people view the world. To achieve the aims and verify these hypotheses, the study adopts the Appraisal System of Martin and White (2005) to analyse 16 suicide notes in a qualitative driven method supported by quantitative analysis. Depending on the results of the analysis, the study derived some conclusions. One significant conclusion is that unhappiness and insecurity are the apparent emotional motives that motivate suicidal people related to the selected data to commit suicide.

Secondly, Affect categories are the most frequent categories of attitude used in the selected suicidal notes." Furthermore, the study showed that the appraisal system is of remarkable comprehensiveness in representing the inner feelings, conflicts, and desires of suicidal people.

Keywords

Discourse Analysis, Systemic Functional Linguistics, Appraisal Theory, Suicide Notes.

1. Introduction

There are alarming numbers of suicides reported around the world. Understanding how suicidal persons view their mental and emotional conditions is a fundamental open scientific problem. Durkheim makes one of the first effective attempts to explain suicide. He asserts that "the term suicide is applied to all cases of death resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim himself, which he knows will produce this result" (Durkheim, 1951, p.44). It is Durkheim's definition that is taken into consideration in the present study.

Suicide notes are a network representation of suicidal thoughts based on cognitive network research, psycholinguistics, and semantic frame theory. The knowledge structure of such notes reveals links between concepts and emotional states of persons who committed suicide. Particularly in linguistics, this view is termed as 'evaluation' or how people appraise, evaluate, and view the world in their minds. However, the problem is that the mental representations may differ linguistically according to different circumstantial, mental, and psychological states of suicidal persons.

The current study concentrates on the attitudinal linguistic choices made by suicidal persons to view the world from their viewpoints by employing the Appraisal System, which is grounded in Systemic Functional Linguistics as a comprehensive tool for discourse analysis. Systemic Functional Linguistics (henceforth SFL) is a theory initiated by the British linguist Michael Halliday. Halliday's primary focus is on the social system and the linguistic network within the social semiotics theory. Based on SFL, the Appraisal System provides a writer or a speaker with a range of alternatives from which to choose. The Appraisal model has three interacting components: Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation. (Martin & White, 2005, pp. 35–9).

2. Review of related literature

2.1 Discourse and Discourse Analysis

The term "discourse" was first used in the fourteenth century. The word 'discursus' comes from Latin, which means 'conversation' (Mc Arthur, 1996). Currently, the discourse has a wide range of uses, but it still has something to do with language and defines it in some manner.

To initiate with, discourse is merely described as "a serious speech or piece of writing about a particular subject" in which it combines both the spoken and written methods (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 2001; Ozer & Akbas, 2020).

Van Dijk (2009) mentions that discourse is now considered a complicated multimodal event of contact and communication and it is not restricted to a verbal aspect of language only, but also extends to the non-verbal aspects which could include intonation, gestures, and facework. Besides, semiotic aspects such as sounds, music, images, and film are also included in the study of discourse (Paripurna & Subandi, 2021).

After introducing the meaning of the term "discourse", it is time to know the meaning of the term "**discourse analysis**". DA as discourse has numerous meanings in diverse viewpoints. Misbah (2010, p.41) assures that discourse analysis, "is any sequence of language in written or spoken form which is longer than a sentence".

McCarthy (1991, P.5) states that DA "is concerned with the study of the relationship between language and the contexts in which it is used". It arouses from research conducted in linguistics, semiotics, psychology, anthropology, and sociology in the 1960s and early 1970s.

"Discourse analysis seeks patterns in linguistic data. Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) offers a means of exploring meaning in language and of relating language use to social contexts to contribute to our understanding of language in social life" (Gee et al., 2012; Patalinghug et al., 2021).

2.2 Systemic Functional Linguistics

SFL theory focuses on the functions of language, as its name indicates. The system part of the word refers to the organisation of these functions. Michael Halliday first proposed the SFL hypothesis in the late 1950s and early 1960s (Fontaine, 2013).

Schleppegrell (2012, p.21) states that "SFL recognises the powerful role language plays in our lives and sees meaning-making as a process through which language shapes, and is shaped by, the contexts in which it is used" (Schleppegrell, 2012; (Bomfim et al., 2021).

Language, according to Halliday, is organised systematically and serves as a resource for speakers to construct meaning. Language is thought to be organised as a 36-choice system. Speakers can build meaning by selecting the proper alternatives. Because it is depicted as "the external shape adopted by systemic decisions, not as the fundamental quality of language," the language structure plays a less role in SFL (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 23; Fontaine, 2013, p. 5). To put it another way, the function is the fundamental motive, but the structure is essential to communicating function (Fontaine, 2013; (Abeche et al., 2021).

SFL is a point of view that may be used to portray language both externally as a social and cultural phenomenon and internally as a formal method for conveying meaning (Young, 2011). "Language should not just be described as serving external functions but that the functions language has to serve to shape the language and give it the specific features that it has" (Simon-Vandenberg, 2014; (Akçay & Akçay, 2020).

2.3 Appraisal Theory

Appraisal Theory is a system of discourse analysis that Martin and White have suggested (1992, 1995, 2003, 2005). Bock (2007) states that an appraisal is an evaluation of "*the kinds of attitudes that are negotiated in a text, the strength of the feelings involved and how values are sourced, and readers are aligned*" (p.74). White (2001) defines an appraisal as concerned with the linguistic strategies

that texts/speakers use to convey, negotiate, and finally naturalise certain inter-subjective and ideological positions. Appraisal Theory is designated by Martin and White (2005, p. 14) as the "*subjective presence of writers/speakers in texts as they adopt positions towards both the material they present and those with whom they communicate*". Appraisal Theory consists of categories and subcategories that will be mentioned in the following:

2.3.1 Attitude

Painter (2003, p. 184) exemplifies attitude as "a domain concerned with the linguistic expression of positive and negative attitudes". Read and Carroll (2010, p.424) believe that "the sub-system of attitude is a framework for three areas of personal feeling: emotion, ethics, and aesthetics. All types of attitude can also be analysed according to their polarity, be it positive or negative".

As Martin and White assure that attitude has to do with evaluating "our feelings, including emotional reactions, judgements of behaviour and evaluation of things" (Martin & White, 2005 p. 35). The evaluation is more intense, less intense, or exaggerated. The writer's attitude might be attributed to himself or someone else (Martin & Rose, 2007).

according to Martin and White (2005), has three semantic areas: emotions (affect), which is concerned with the expression of positive and negative feelings; ethics (judgement), which is concerned with attitudes toward behaviour (to admire or to criticise, to praise or to condemn); and aesthetics (appreciation), which is concerned with evaluations of semiotic and natural phenomena. The following sub-sections will introduce the affect, judgment, and appreciation devices.

A) Affect

According to Martin & White (2005, p. 42), affect is an attitude. "*concerned with registering positive and negative feelings*" (e.g. happiness, sadness, anxiety, interest, or boredom). Martin & White (2015) represent affect as *dealing "with resources for construing emotional reactions."* Such responses expose the solidarity between speakers and recipients. Affect is divided into three sub-branches of happiness, security, and satisfaction, with each of these having a positive or negative polar.

Martin and White (2005, p. 7) called readers' attention to two questions that need to be considered when categorising affect. These questions are:

- Are the feelings positive or negative?

1- Positive affect: "*the captain was **happy***".

2- Negative affect: "*the captain was **sad***".

- Do you have emotions of un/happiness, in/security, or dis/satisfaction? Un/happiness encompasses emotions such as love, hatred, sadness, and happiness; in/security encompasses feelings such as anxiety, fear, confidence, and trust; and dis/satisfaction involves emotions such as dissatisfaction, curiosity, respect, and pleasure. (Martin & Rose, p.66)

3 - Un/happiness: "*We felt **sad/happy***".

4 - In/security: "*We felt **anxious/confident***".

5 - Dis/satisfaction: "*We felt **fed up/absorbed***".

B) Judgement

According to Martin and White (2005), the judgement system allows speakers to convey their evaluations of other people's conduct and character. Social esteem (personal judgement) and social sanction (moral judgement) are two forms of judgement. There are positive and negative manifestations of each group. The subcategories of social esteem include "normality," which emphasizes how unique someone is, "tenacity," which emphasizes how trustworthy someone is, and "capacity," which emphasises one's ability. Positive and negative manifestations of social esteem are associated with actions of appreciation and criticism, respectively. Sub-categories of social sanction, according to Martin and White, include "veracity," which emphasises how honest someone is, and "propriety," which emphasises how much beyond reproach someone is. Social sanctions can take the form of positive or negative manifestations, and they are therefore related to actions of appraisal and condemnation.

On the one hand, negative social esteem values will therefore be regarded as strange or unsuitable, but not as sins or crimes (White, 2001, p.11). Consider the following example:

6- "*His father told him that he should not be so **sardonic***". (Judgement: **social esteem**").

On the other hand, positive social esteem has many positive expressions like, lucky, fortunate, charmed, normal, fashionable, etc...consider the following examples:

7-. *Her teacher told her that she should be **avant-garde***.

The social sanction, in the other words, is frequently provided in writing. It is standard practice to record the expressions in numerous rules, regulations, and laws governing daily life that are acceptable to a person's actions (Martin & White, 2005, White, 2001). It covers issues of law as well as morality. It will be regarded as a crime from a legal point of view. Opening of social sanctions is considered a sin from a religious standpoint. As a result, breaking a social censure carries the possibility of legal or religious repercussions (White, 2001, p.11). Consider the following example:

8. "*My manager is **corrupt and unjust***". (Judgement: **social sanction**)

Judgements of esteem are correctly connected with such aspects as "normality" (stressing how unusual a person is, and the extent of their usual behaviour), "capacity" (dealing with how capable someone is), and "tenacity" (showing how dependable someone is). Judgements of sanction loop around both "veracity" (demonstrating how truthful somebody is) and "propriety" (bringing to the fore the real aspect of someone and someone's behaviour) (Martin & White, 2005, p.52; White, 2001, p. 11).

C) Appreciation

The system of appreciation is concerned with our attitudes and evaluations of things. Appreciation is divided into our "reactions" to things (do they catch our

attention? do they please us?), their "composition" (balance and complexity), and their "value" (how authentic, timely, innovative, etc...). Grammatically, we might consider "reaction", "composition" and "valuation" as related to mental processes. In other words, how we regard things. 'Reaction' is associated with affection (emotive- "it grabs me", "I want it"); "composition" is associated with perception (our view of order), and "valuation" is associated with cognition (our considered opinions) (Martin & white, 2005, p. 57). As an example,

9. "She has **a beautiful** relationship with all people"

(expressing attitude by interpreting an aesthetic view of the relationship as an object).

Appreciation values, like affect and judgment, may be positive or negative (e.g. **beautiful** versus **ugly**). They can also be found on the cline of low to high force/intensity (for example, **beautiful, wonderful, exquisite**) (Martin & White, 2005, p.56). The current study is interested in investigating suicidal people's attitudes towards the world. Thus, attitude system rather than engagement or graduation system is selected as a framework for the analysis.

2.3.2 Engagement

The second appraisal system for linguistic resources is engagement, in which speakers or authors take a stand on the important attitudes mentioned in the text. This dialogistic point of view demonstrates the nature of the relationship that the speaker or writer presents as engaging (Martin & White, 2005).

Read and Carroll (2010) illustrate that engagement is the linguistic phenomenon through which authors justify their views and the tools they use to take stances against the viewpoints of other authors, this presupposes that every piece of writing represents a point of view in some form and responds to other people's views in both direct and indirect ways. Furthermore, these reactions might be retroactive (responding to previously expressed ideas) or prospective (anticipating audience response and including counter-responses)

According to Martin and Rose (2007), engagement is a sub-system of appraisal theory that is used to introduce new voices into a text. In this sub-system, the sources of attitudes are explored, i.e., where do the evaluations come from? Either one voice (monogloss) or many voices (heterogloss). They note that "heteroglossia" is a term that refers to several voices in which the source of the attitude is not the writer or speaker. In contrast, monogloss refers to a single voice in which the author is the source of attitude.

On the one side, Monoglossic is an utterance that can be monoglossic (bare assertions) with "no reference to other voices and viewpoints" (Martin & White, 2005, p. 99). On the other side, **Heteroglossic** is an utterance that can also be heteroglossic, in the sense that they "invoke or allow for dialogistic alternatives" (Martin & White, 2005, p.100).

2.3.3 Graduation

In the same respect (White,2001) demarcates that the third component of appraisal is graduation. It has to do with the values that scale the meanings, as well as two different frames. It can rank the meanings on a scale of low to high intensity, or from the core to the periphery of a category's membership.

As Martin and Rose (2007, p.42) point out, attitudes may be graded. That is, the adjectives we choose to describe objects or people might convey our strong feelings about them. Some options are at the very top of the grading scale, while others are at the very bottom. To put it another way, people at the top of the scale are highly gradable, while those at the bottom are not.

Graduation operates on two "axes of scalability," as a result. People and objects are classified by "sharpening" or "softening" in the first kind. Words like exactly, sort of, kind of, and so on can be used to accomplish this. The first type is for "focus," while the second is for "volume up or down." The term "force" refers to these types of graduations. (Martin & Rose, 2007) talk about two different kinds of graduation "**force**" and "**focus**." Force can either set the volume up or down, and it may use intensifiers like **very/extremely/really/quite/sharply**, etc. Also included in force are language terms with varying degrees of intensity, such as **happy/delighted/ecstatic**. Attitudinal lexis is the term for this. Focus is the second form of graduation, which entails "sharpening" or "softening" groupings of people or objects. It consists of words like **real/sort of / kind of**, etc. Focus brands are characteristically non-gradable.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The current study employs a quantitative analyses support to the qualitative one, which has shown to be the preferable option since it offers a holistic perspective of the researched topic (Kielmann et al., 2012). The integrated research analysis is regarded as an appropriate and accessible method.

On the one side, quantitative research is defined by Bryman and Bell (2007, p.26) as the use of numbers and percentages to represent and interpret the data collected".

On the other side, qualitative research is defined as the "study of things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.2).

The researchers must combine the elements of quantitative and qualitative research (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, and inference techniques) to improve the validity of the study and make it more comprehensive, as well as to gain a deeper understanding of the data and results (Burke et al., 2007, p.23). This type is known as mixed-method research.

The qualitative part of this research is denoted by Discourse Analysis examining the concept of Appraisal Theory in selected Suicide Notes. Meanwhile, the quantitative portion of the study involves utilising the Statistical results manually calculated to enhance the study's findings, assist the researcher's interpretation, and eliminate bias or subjectivity.

3.2 3.2 Data Description and Selection

Essentially, the data involved genuine suicide notes from online website incidents around the world. Firstly, all these notes are collected from English suicidal persons. Secondly, the suicide events happened in the period between (2010-2022). Thirdly, the researcher collects suicide notes randomly for the gender and the ages of suicidal persons, these notes are available in the appendices at the end of the research. The three suicide notes selected for the analysis in the current study are from different websites. Each suicide note has its source websites attached to it in the appendices. For the current study, three excerpts are analysed in detail to illustrate the qualitative analysis.

3.3 Suicide Notes

Durkheim makes one of the first effective attempts to explain suicide. He asserts that "the term suicide is applied to all cases of death resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim himself, which he knows will produce this result" (Durkheim, 1951, p.44). It is Durkheim's definition that is taken into consideration in the present study.

A suicide note, also known as a death note, is a message left behind by someone who has committed suicide or intends to commit suicide. The most prevalent reasons that persons contemplating suicide choose to write a suicide note, according to Lenora Olsen, a professor at the University of Utah School of Medicine, are one or more of the following:

- To alleviate the suffering of the victim's friends and family by striving to dispel guilt.
- To raise the pain of fighters by attempting to make guilt.
- To move off the cause(s) for suicide.
- To express feelings and thoughts that the person senses unable to express in life.
- To stretch instructions for removal of the remains.
- Infrequently, to admit acts of murder or some other crime (Shapero, 2011).

3.4 Model of Analysis

The linguistic theory employed for language evaluation to investigate the linguistic choices manifesting the suicidal people's attitudes is Martin and White's (2005) theory of attitude. The evaluation theory is divided into three categories: attitudes, engagement, and graduation. Attitude is separated into effect, judgment, and appreciation. The researcher tackles the appraisal theory by Martin and white (2005) with its attitude category and three subcategories.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Qualitative Analysis

Illustrative Excerpt 1

"This time it **shocked me** to realise what could have happened to me. I realised how much **I had hurt my friends and family**, which I didn't think about before. I started **wondering if people could trust me. It upset my life a lot** – it threw everything backwards. Jonathan flew in from California. He **said the scariest part was worrying** about having to decide **what to do if my body kept living but I had no brain response**. When I first woke up I didn't think **there would be anything wrong with me**. And then **it hit me** that **I couldn't move. I was embarrassed** that people had to see me like that.

Once you're out of the hospital a lot of institutions **won't hire you. You can't get health insurance. You have to lie on your job applications. People look at you like you're dangerous. It's really scary** for some of my friends – they think they're responsible. Trying to convince people that I was OK was **the hardest thing**. That they didn't have to watch over me, that I wasn't going to try it again." (Appendix, p. i)

The underlying appraisal system in excerpt 1 is illustrated as follows:

1- The Attitude System

Sandra was 27 years old lady who worked as a clerk before she committed a failed attempt to end her life in 2010. The attitude underlying her suicide note of Sandra is totally negative with negative emotional assertions about her suicide attempt. Table 4 elaborates on the linguistic resources manifesting her attitude with the graduation devices she uses to sharpen or soften her attitude.

Table 1 The Attitude System in Excerpt No. 1

Appraisal Item	The Appraised	Aff	Jud	App
it shocked me	<i>The danger to her life</i>	-Sec		
I had hurt my friends	<i>Sandra</i>	-Sat		
wondering if people could trust me	<i>Sandra</i>	-Sec		
It upset my life a lot	<i>Suicide</i>	-Hap		
the scariest part was worrying	<i>Her mental condition</i>	-Sec		
what to do if my body kept living but I had no brain response	<i>Sandra</i>	-Sec		
it hit me that I couldn't move	<i>Sandra</i>	-Sec	-Se	
I was embarrassed	<i>Sandra</i>		-Se	
institutions won't hire you	<i>Suicidal people</i>		-Se	
You can't get health insurance.	<i>Suicidal people</i>		-Se	
You have to lie on your job applications.	<i>Suicidal people</i>		-Ss	
you're dangerous .	<i>Suicidal people</i>		-Se	
It's real scary	<i>Sandra's friends</i>	-Sec		
the hardest thing	<i>Dealing with society</i>			-Rec

Table 1 demonstrates that Sandra reports her negative attitude towards suicide and advises the readers of its consequences. In terms of **affect**, Sandra expresses the negative feelings of insecurity caused by suicide **"He said the scariest part was worrying about having to decide what to do if my body kept living but I had no brain response."** Dissatisfaction appears in Sandra's attitude when she describes how her suicide hurts her friends and that she blames herself for their worry and sadness **"I realised how much I had hurt my friends and family, which I didn't think about before." Unhappiness is also clear in "It upset my life a lot – it threw everything backwards."**

In terms of judgements that reflect the negative attitude, they consist of negative social esteem devices where Sandra mirrors her negative view of her characteristics. Negative social esteem of capacity appears in **"Once you're out of the hospital a lot of institutions won't hire you. You can't get health insurance... People look at you like you're dangerous."** Here, the person who attempts to commit suicide will not be employed and regarded as 'dangerous' as having negative normality. Moreover, Sandra uses negative social sanction of veracity when she describes suicidal people as 'liars' because they have to lie for a job in **"You have to lie on your job applications."**

Concerning appreciation, Sandra evaluates the phenomenon of convincing people that the suicidal person deserves a second chance using a negative reaction **'the hardest thing'** in **"Trying to convince people that I was OK was the hardest thing. That they didn't have to watch over me, that I wasn't going to try it again."**

Illustrative Excerpt 2

"I know you will grieve over me for having **taken my life...** My dear, dear mother, **oh, how sorry** I am to **hurt you**, as I know this act will do. **But, oh,** mother, **I cannot**, I will not consent to go to the asylum, as you are evidently planning to have me go. I know that **this means perpetual imprisonment** all my long life, unless I either recant my religious beliefs or **else hypocritically pretend to do so**. I cannot bring myself to consent to any of these three alternatives. I **maintain my right to die** as I have lived, **a free woman, not cowed into silence** by any other human being. If, on the other hand, the prison to which Judge Thomas evidently proposes to send me were to be **my destined lot** (you know very well that **he wishes and means to lock me up** for a long, long term, which is practically **my death warrant**), **my work is ended** so far as this world is concerned. My books have been given a start, and approved by physicians and other reputable citizens, **but the world is not yet ready** for all **the beautiful teachings** which I have to give it...Some day **you'll be proud of me.**" (Appendix, p. iii)

Excerpt 2 represents the sorrowful state of the suicidal person who writes these notes for her mother. The Appraisal System manifesting in this excerpt is explained as follows:

1- The Attitude System

The attitude shown in this excerpt is mostly negative as elaborated in Table 2:

Table 2 The Attitude System in Excerpt 2

Appraisal Item	The Appraised	Aff	Jud	App
"I know you will grieve"	<i>The mother</i>	-hap		
"taken my life"	<i>The suicidal person</i>	-hap		
"Oh, how sorry"	<i>The suicidal person</i>	-hap		
"hurt you"	<i>The mother</i>	-hap		
"I cannot, I will not consent to go to the asylum"	<i>The suicidal person</i>		-cap	
"hypocritically pretend to do so"	<i>The suicidal person</i>		-ver	
"my right to die"	<i>The suicidal person</i>	-hap		
"a free woman"	<i>The suicidal person</i>		+nor	
not cowed into silence"	<i>The suicidal person</i>		+ten	
"he wishes and means to lock me up"	<i>The suicidal person</i>		-cap	
"my death warrant"	<i>The suicidal person</i>	-hap		
"My work is ended"	<i>The suicidal person</i>		-cap	
"but the world is not yet ready"	<i>The suicidal person</i>	-sec		
"the beautiful teachings"	<i>The suicidal person's experience</i>			+rec
"you'll be proud of me"	<i>The mother</i>		+pro	

In this excerpt, as shown in the table above, the attitude is negative with negative affect represented by negative happiness and negative security. The negative happiness is represented by the processes **'will grieve, to die, taken life'**, and the negative security is represented by the adjective **'not yet ready'**. The negative attitude is also represented by negative veracity using **'hypocrite', capacity** as unemployed **'my work is ended'**. However, two positive judgements show the positive normality and tenacity of the suicidal person. The suicidal person asserts her positive character and that she was a good person to be a source of pride, as in **"you'll be proud of me."** using an adjective.

Illustrative Excerpt 3

"Dear Church of Euthanasia,

'Greetings! **We who are about to die to salute you. I am making my final exit** in a few minutes, after I post this letter and finish my suicide note. **I guess the thing I** most wanted to say is that **it doesn't have to be unpleasant or sad**, it can be a **peaceful, happy leave-taking**. While it's not for everyone, **I really want to encourage those who want to, but are letting fear hold them**

back. 'Here goes!' is my attitude. I expect pain very likely to outweigh happiness and satisfaction in my life. I believe this is true for the majority though not for all. The survival instinct is not concerned with whether I personally would be better off dead. It seeks to keep me alive and procreating. It is not my friend. If life were more a positive experience than a negative, I would stick around until infirmity set in.

Wills wrote this note to the Church on 21/10/2011 encouraging those who want to end their lives. The Appraisal system representing this excerpt is explained as follows:

1- The Attitude System

In contrast to the previous excerpts, this excerpt shows a positive attitude toward suicide to encourage others to take their life when they want. The following devices in Table 3 represent the attitude:

Table 3 The Attitude System in Excerpt 3

Appraisal Item	The Appraised	Aff	Jud	App
"We who are about to die salute you"	<i>M. Wills</i>	<i>-hap</i>		
"I am making my final exit"	<i>M. Wills</i>	<i>+hap</i>		
"it doesn't have to be unpleasant or sad"	<i>Suicide</i>			<i>+rec</i>
"peaceful, happy leave-taking."	<i>Suicide</i>			<i>+rec</i>
"I really want to encourage those who want to"	<i>M. Wills</i>		<i>+ten</i>	
"but are letting fear hold them back"	<i>Other people who want to commit suicide</i>	<i>-sec</i>		
"Here goes!" is my attitude"			<i>+ten</i>	
"I expect pain very likely to outweigh happiness"	<i>Pain</i>	<i>+hap</i>		
satisfaction"	<i>Pain</i>	<i>+sat</i>		
"I personally would be better off dead".	<i>M. Wills</i>		<i>+nor</i>	
"It seeks to keep me alive and procreating"	<i>The survival instinct</i>	<i>+cap</i>		
"If life were more a positive"	<i>life</i>			<i>-rec</i>

Table 3 shows that the attitude of M. Wills toward death and suicide is totally positive, while life is described negatively. A positive attitude includes positive emotions or affect like positive happiness and satisfaction in **"I expect pain very likely to outweigh happiness and satisfaction"** wherein he evaluates pain as equal to happiness and satisfaction using nominals. Positive judgement involves positive tenacity toward suicidal people as courageous people in **"Here goes!" is my attitude.** Positive appreciation shows the positive reaction using adjectives such as in **"it doesn't have to be unpleasant or sad, it can be a peaceful, happy leave-taking."**

4.2 The Quantitative Analysis

Following a demonstration of a qualitative analysis of the relevant data, a quantitative analysis is used to support the accuracy of the qualitative analysis and respond to the research hypothesis posed in the introduction. For quantitative analysis, the results of analysing the whole data (16 suicide notes) are stated.

4.2.1 The Attitude System Analysis

The attitude system consists of three categories: affect, judgement, and appreciation. Each of those categories has its subcategories. Thus, each category will be discussed separately first for a more comprehensive view.

4.2.2 Affect

The affect category denotes the emotional appraisal of the suicidal person. These emotions might represent the motive aspect of suicide. The affect subcategory of each suicide note is illustrated in Table 4 and then calculated to represent the whole three notes as a single corpus.

Table 4 The Affect Category in the Selected Suicide Notes

Affect Cat. Notes	+hap		-hap		+sec		-sec		+sat		-sat		Total of categories
	Fr.		Fr.		Fr.		Fr.		Fr.		Fr.		
<i>Suicide Note 1</i>	5		4		-		13		-		-		
<i>Suicide Note 2</i>	1		1		-		1		1		-		
<i>Suicide Note 3</i>	-		3		-		2		-		2		
<i>Suicide Note 4</i>	5		15		-		9		-		-		
<i>Suicide Note 5</i>	-		2		-		1		1		-		
<i>Suicide Note 6</i>	4		2		1		-		1		-		
<i>Suicide Note 7</i>	2		2		-		4		-		3		
<i>Suicide Note 8</i>	3		1		3		6		-		-		
<i>Suicide Note 9</i>	5		13		-		8		-		-		
<i>Suicide Note 10</i>	4		9		-		9		-		2		
<i>Suicide Note 11</i>	-		13		-		6		-		2		
<i>Suicide Note 12</i>	4		7		-		2		2		-		
<i>Suicide Note 13</i>	1		5		-		3		-		-		
<i>Suicide Note 14</i>	4		12		-		6		-		4		
<i>Suicide Note 15</i>	1		9		-		10		1		4		
<i>Suicide Note 16</i>	5		3		-		5		2		-		
<i>Total</i>	44		98		4		85		8		17		256
<i>Percentages</i>	17.19%		38.28%		1.56%		33.20%		3.12%		6.64%		100%

Table 4 summarises the occurrences of the affect subcategories, which represent the emotional aspect of the appraisal system. The table demonstrates

the dominance of negative happiness over other subcategories of affect. The negative happiness has **38.28%**, with **98** occurrences. Negative security comes in second place with **85** occurrences and **33.20%**.

In response to the first question of the current study, the most dominant emotional motives of suicide realised by the suicidal notes appear to be **negative happiness** (sadness) and **negative security** (insecurity). The suicidal people use lexico-grammatical devices that show their inner emotions indicating feelings of sadness and insecurity. Through the qualitative analysis, these feelings motivate their desires to end their lives which lack security and happiness. Thus, the first question reads, ***"By examining the appraisal system underlying the elected suicide notes, what are the most dominant emotional motives and beliefs that motivate suicidal people to end their lives?"***

This result comes from many studies and a wide literature that links suicide to unhappiness and insecurity (fear and anxiety). Misra and Srivastava (2021, para. 10) assert, ***"Suicide has been regarded as an act of extreme unhappiness. It has been seen that generally, people who commit suicide are very unhappy."*** Moreover, when the American Retreat Behavioral Health institution considers depression as the second motive for suicide, Carrie Steckl, in his article ***"The Intricate Ties between Depression and Insecurity"***, confirms the link between depression (intense sadness) and insecurity. Steckl reports, ***"Feeling insecure in a relationship creates anxiety over being abandoned and the feeling that every day is uncertain. It's no wonder that those times when I felt insecurely attached were also accompanied by intense sadness."*** (Steckl, n.d). From a discourse viewpoint, the harmonised percentages of unhappiness and insecurity attitudes represented in the discourse support the medical literature on suicide motives by showing that unhappiness is the most dominant attitudinal characteristic integrated into a relatively high feeling of insecurity. The suicidal people in the selected suicide notes narrate and express their path toward suicide. They express their emotions, beliefs, crises, and desires. Most of their propositions show great sadness and fear of continuing to live with the same sadness. This sadness and insecurity do not emerge for similar reasons but from various internal or external factors which are not the focus of the current study.

Positive happiness represents the third rate on the scale, with **17.19%** and **44** occurrences. With a relatively good percentage, positive happiness is still not related to suicidal people's lives. Lexico-grammatical devices of positive happiness represent the happiness they feel towards ending their lives and getting rid of their burdens. The suicidal people in the selected suicide notes view death as a rest, a survival step, and a final turn for the many turns they have been through.

In the third rate on the scale, **negative satisfaction** (dissatisfaction) occupies **6.64%**, with **17** occurrences. Dissatisfaction, yet of a low rate, indicates the disappointment and anger felt by suicidal people toward themselves or the circumstances around them. This result denotes that anger and dissatisfaction do not relate directly to the motives pushing the suicidal people in question toward committing suicide.

After negative satisfaction, **positive satisfaction** represents the fourth category in rate with **3.12%** and eight occurrences. Positive satisfaction in the selected suicide notes mirrors the satisfaction of the suicidal people toward their friends and families who supported them in difficult conditions. In addition, satisfaction has sometimes reflected the suicidal people's evaluation of their past lives and acts that they are satisfied with their personalities and actions. The last and the lowest percentage is the positive security which registers at **1.56%**, with only **4** occurrences through the data analysed. Positive security used indicates the safety felt towards death more than life. The low percentage of positive security confirms and naturally equalises the negative security of suicidal people. Suicidal people in the selected suicide note lack the feeling of security in life but search for it in death.

4.2.3 Judgement

Judgement is the second category of attitude that involves other five subcategories to appraise people and actions. The selected suicide notes show the following numerical results representing each subcategory's frequency. Table 5 displays these results:

Table 25 Judgement Categories in the Selected Suicide Notes

Jud. Cat. Notes	+ver	-ver	+pro	-pro	+cap	-cap	+ten	-ten	+nor	-nor	Total of categories
	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.	
Suicide Note 1		2	1	-	-	11	-	-	4	4	
Suicide Note 2	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	1	
Suicide Note 3	-	3	-	3		1		1	2	3	
Suicide Note 4	-	1	-	-	1	5	-	-	-	1	
Suicide Note 5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Suicide Note 6	-	-	3	-	-	-	1		4	-	
Suicide Note 7	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	5	
Suicide Note 8	-	1	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	2	
Suicide Note 9	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	5	3	
Suicide Note 10	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	
Suicide Note 11	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	
Suicide Note 12	-	2	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	8	
Suicide Note 13	-	1	-	3	-	-	-	-	3	-	
Suicide Note 14	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	3	1	
Suicide Note 15	-	1	-	-	-	3	3		5	3	
Suicide Note 16	-	-	1	-	-	3		1	1	3	
Total		11	7	10	1	34	10	2	27	37	139
Percentages		7.91%	5.03%	7.19%	0.719%	24.46%	7.19%	1.43%	19.42%	26.62%	100%

Table 5 summarises the results of the judgement categories and their frequencies in the data selected. As highlighted, negative normality is the most dominant category regarding frequency and percentage. **Negative normality** registers **26.62%** by **37** occurrences. This result implies that suicidal people who wrote the notes under examination are negatively evaluated for their nature and negatively evaluating other people and actions. They portray themselves as different, empty, and of no use to the world.

Negative normality and negative capability are both categories of social esteem markers. **Negative capability** comes in second place by having **34** occurrences and **24.46%**. This result indicates the high rate of disability felt by those suicidal people to face life, challenges, and the world. Hence, it is evident that the suicidal people relevant to the current study have relatively weak social esteem of themselves.

Positive normality follows negative capability in rate with **19.42%** and **27** occurrences. This frequent positive representation relates to the families and friends of suicidal people. The suicidal people evaluate their families and friends positively for the latter's support in times of difficulties before the suicide and even after suicide.

Negative veracity comes fourth with **11** occurrences and **7.91%**. The suicidal people employ negative veracity resources to evaluate and show their negative attitudes towards untruthful people, fake acts, and untruthful parties who make damaging false claims that contribute to their negative social esteem.

Positive tenacity comes in the fifth rate with **7.19%** and **10** times frequency. This number supports and confirms the positive attitude that suicidal people have toward their families and friends for their support. Moreover, positive tenacity denotes the bravery of suicidal people related to committing suicide and ending their suffering

Like positive tenacity, **negative propriety** has **7.19%** and **10** times frequency. However, negative propriety displays negative social esteem toward some people and actors in suicidal people's lives. These impropriety people and acts can lead to negative attitudes toward life.

Like positive tenacity and normality, **positive propriety** manifests the positive social esteem of suicidal people toward their families and friends. Positive propriety occupies **5.03%** with **seven** occurrences.

Negative tenacity is the least frequent, with **1.43%** and only **2** occurrences. This low frequency denotes that suicide has nothing to do with perseverance and bravery. Suicide emerges from emotions of sadness and fear instead.

4.2.4 Appreciation

The appreciation system is mainly concerned with evaluating things and abstract phenomena. Table 6 demonstrates the occurrences of appreciation categories in the data selected.

Table 6 Appreciation Categories in the Suicide Notes

App. Cat. Notes	+rec	-rec	+com	-com	+val	-val	Total of categories
	<i>Fr.</i>	<i>Fr.</i>	<i>Fr.</i>	<i>Fr.</i>	<i>Fr.</i>	<i>Fr.</i>	
<i>Suicide Note 1</i>	-	3	-	-	-	-	
<i>Suicide Note 2</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	
<i>Suicide Note 3</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	
<i>Suicide Note 4</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	
<i>Suicide Note 5</i>	11	-	-	-	-	-	
<i>Suicide Note 6</i>	4	2	-	-	-	-	
<i>Suicide Note 7</i>	-	1	-	-	-	1	
<i>Suicide Note 8</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	
<i>Suicide Note 9</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	
<i>Suicide Note 10</i>	3	1	-	-	-	-	
<i>Suicide Note 11</i>	-	3	-	-	-	-	
<i>Suicide Note 12</i>	2	2	-	-	1	-	
<i>Suicide Note 13</i>	-	-	-	-	1	-	
<i>Suicide Note 14</i>	-	-	-	-	-	1	
<i>Suicide Note 15</i>	-	1	-	-	-	-	
<i>Suicide Note 16</i>		1	-	-	-	-	
<i>Total</i>	20	14	-	-	2	2	38
<i>Percentages</i>	52.63%	36.85%	0%	0%	5.26%	5.26%	100%

Regarding appreciation, suicidal people show no importance in evaluating things or phenomena. This insignificance is denoted by the shallow frequency of the appreciation categories compared to other attitude categories. The major appreciation category used is the positive reaction with **52.63%- and 20-times** frequency. The positive reaction is employed to evaluate suicide and death as positive ends and solutions.

Negative reaction, on the contrary, represents the suicidal people's attitude toward life, medicine, and suffering. The negative reaction comes in the second rate, with **36.85%** and **14** occurrences.

The **positive** and **negative valuation** shows equal frequency and percentages occupying **5.26%** and **2** occurrences for each category. Positive valuation is devoted to death, while negative valuation is devoted to life.

The category of **composition** is totally absent, and this absence explains the unnecessary of suicidal people to evaluate the composition of things and phenomena around them since these are not important axes.

4.2.5 An Overall Attitudinal Analysis

Tables 4, 5, and 6 give a detailed numerical analysis of the three attitude categories individually. However, the affect category dominates the attitude manifested in the selected suicide notes when compared and calculated as in the following table:

Table 7 Attitude Categories in the Suicide Notes

Attitude Category	Fr.	Pr.
Affect	256	59.13%
Judgement	139	32.10%
Appreciation	38	8.77%
Total	433	100.00%

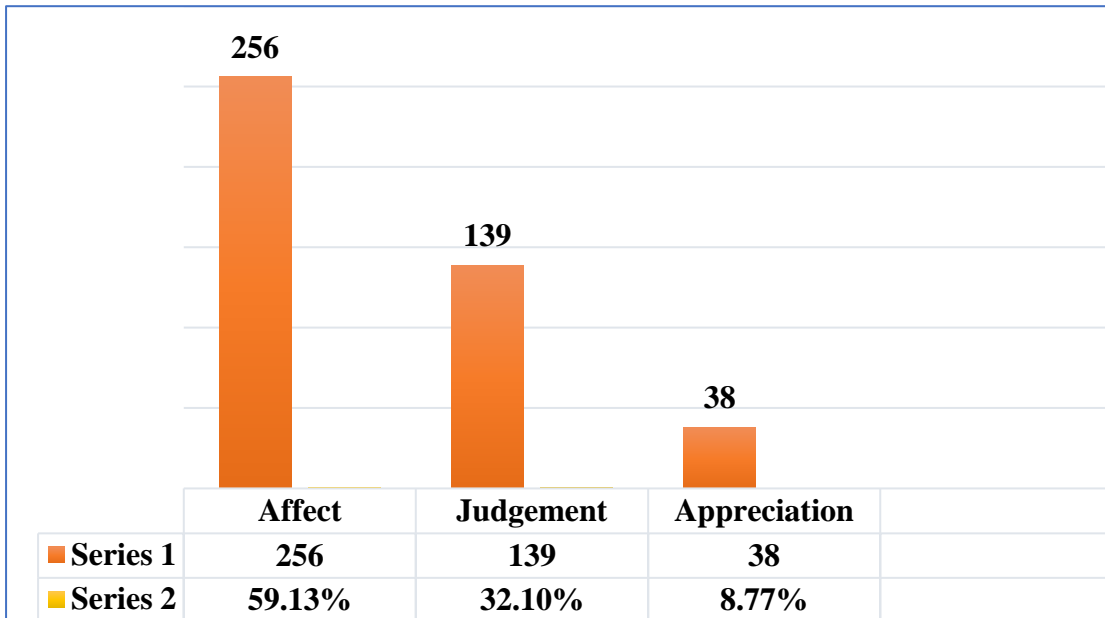


Figure 1 Attitude Categories in the Suicide Notes

Table 7 and Figure 1 demonstrate that the affect category is the dominant attitude category in the suicide notes analysed, with **59.13%** and **256** occurrences. After affect, the category of judgement occupies **32.10%**, with **139** occurrences. This variation in rates indicates the prominence of emotions in the representation of suicidal people in their life and final moments. Nevertheless, the appreciation category seems to be the least employed to manifest suicidal people's attitudes. This regression denotes the significance of emotions and people and their actions in the status of those people rather than things and abstract phenomena. More explicitly, inner emotions and people's actions play a major role in suicide acts.

In response to the second research question that reads, **“What categories of attitude are the most frequently used in the selected suicidal notes?”** It is evident now that the category of **affect** is the most used to realise the attitudes of suicidal people in their suicide notes that have been analysed.

5.1 Conclusions

The study has drawn the following conclusions as a result of the qualitative and quantitative evaluations of the chosen data, Additionally, the study's quantitative analysis hypotheses are confirmed. These findings are:

1- The feelings of negative happiness (unhappiness/sadness) and negative security (insecurity) are the most apparent emotional motives that motivate suicidal people to end their lives. Thus, hypothesis **NO.1** which reads, **"The feelings of anger (dissatisfaction) and (insecurity) are the most dominant emotional motives that motivate suicidal people to end their lives."** is refuted since negative satisfaction feelings have registered the lowest frequency among affect categories.

2- Affect is the dominant category that realises the attitude underlying the selected suicide notes. Therefore, hypothesis No.2 which reads, "Affect categories are the most frequent categories of attitude used in the selected suicidal notes." is confirmed.

3- The appraisal system is of great comprehensiveness in representing the inner feelings, conflicts, and desires of suicidal people. The comprehensive representation of those aspects via discourse contributes greatly to following those people's motives and sufferings. The discovery of the attitudes (positive or negative views), their sources and degrees of intensity and commitment enables diagnosing many issues with those people and their life choices. As a result, hypothesis No.3 **"The appraisal categories are significant in disclosing emotional states and how suicidal people view the world."** is confirmed.

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<https://suicide--notes.tumblr.com/post/11746660995/ida-craddocks-letter-to-her-mother-on-the-day-of>

<https://suicide--notes.tumblr.com/post/11735039478/church-of-euthenasia>