

The Language of Attitude in *I Am Sam* and *Big Daddy*: An Appraisal Analysis

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Abstract—Attitudinal language plays a crucial role in shaping narratives and character relationships in cinematic discourse, yet little research has explored its function in family-centered films. This study examines the attitudinal language in *I Am Sam* (2001) and *Big Daddy* (1999) through the Appraisal Framework (Martin & White, 2005), focusing on the distribution and lexico-grammatical realization of Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation. Using a corpus-assisted qualitative approach, the study analyses how emotional expressions, moral evaluations, and value assessments are embedded in cinematic dialogues. The findings reveal that Affect is the most dominant attitudinal resource, with desire-related expressions shaping the films' emotional intensity. Judgment is particularly prevalent in evaluations of capacity (competence), with *Big Daddy* featuring a higher proportion of negative judgments than *I Am Sam*. Appreciation primarily revolves around quality rather than structural or aesthetic assessments. Additionally, verbs and adjectives serve as primary linguistic carriers of evaluation, while rhetorical questions, repetition, and imperatives contribute to implicit attitudinal meanings. This study sheds light on the linguistic construction in family-focused film and expands the discourse on appraisal in media narratives and offers insights into how attitudinal language functions within cinematic storytelling.

Index Terms—Appraisal Framework, attitudinal language, emotional expressions, cinematic discourse, family talks

I. INTRODUCTION

Among a multitude of mass media, movies stand out as the dominant carrier of universal emotions, cultural values, and propaganda. One of the most effective vehicles for such messages lies in the role of characters' dialogues. The words spoken by characters in movies are especially important, since they help show emotions, relationships, and ideas. Through conversations, characters not only move the plot forward but also reflect the social and emotional world of the story. One key part of movie dialogue is attitudinal language, one that shows the way speakers express their feelings, judge others' actions, and talk about what they value. This kind of language helps build the audience's understanding of the characters' personalities, motives, and moral viewpoints. It also helps shape the overall message or theme of the film.

Many scholarly works have addressed themselves to attitudinal language; however, little precedence has been given to movie characters' use of this kind of language. On account of this, the present study is set out to analyze the attitudinal linguistic components within two films, *I Am Sam* (2001) and *Big Daddy* (1999), both of which revolve around the themes of fatherhood, emotional attachment, and societal expectations, thus providing a rich source of language of attitude.

To complement this study, the Attitude system within the Appraisal theory postulated by Martin and White (2005) is employed as the analytical lens. The system has been used widely in linguistic and applied linguistic studies, focusing on written language, such as newspapers (e.g., Jing & Lihuan, 2021; Luo et al., 2022), textbooks (e.g., Magfiroh et al., 2021), literary works (e.g., Behnam & Bahar, 2013), social media (e.g., Fadhillah, 2021; Yuliyanti, 2023), or public speeches (e.g., Le & Vo, 2025), without much scholarly attention to the analysis of movie dialogues. This gap is thus conducive to the birth of this work, which can be valuable in understanding how emotional bonds and moral evaluations are constructed in cinematic discourse.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. The Appraisal Theory

The Appraisal theory is focused on two primary linguistic resources: evaluation and stance (Martin & White, 2005). The Attitude system belongs to the resources of evaluation, which categorizes evaluative language into three sub-systems: Affect (expressions of emotions), Judgment (evaluations of people's character and morality), and Appreciation (evaluations of aesthetics and quality).

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Affect refers to the evaluative language of emotions and feelings, such as happiness, sadness, or fear, towards surrounding entities or ongoing actions, all of which are expressed through four dimensions: Un/happiness (e.g., The captain felt *happy/sad*.), Dis/satisfaction (e.g., The captain felt *absorbed/fed up*.), In/security (e.g., The captain felt *anxious/confident*.), and Un/desire (e.g., The captain *feared* leaving.).

Judgment refers to the evaluative language used to directly or indirectly express attitudes toward a person's character, behavior, or morality from an individual perspective. These evaluations can be either positive, such as praise and admiration, or negative, such as criticism and disapproval. Judgment is categorized into two main types: Social Esteem and Social Sanction. Social Esteem pertains to personal attributes that are independent of formal rules or societal norms and includes Normality, Capacity, and Tenacity. Normality refers to how typical or unusual a person is (e.g., He's often *naughty*.). Capacity evaluates an individual's ability or competence (e.g., He *can* sing.). Tenacity reflects determination or perseverance (e.g., I am *determined* to go.). On the other hand, Social Sanction involves judgments based on conventionalized or institutionalized norms and regulations. This category includes Veracity and Propriety. Veracity refers to truthfulness or honesty (e.g., He's *certainly* naughty.), while Propriety assesses moral and ethical conduct (e.g., You are *requested not* to open the door without the guidance of the flight attendant.).

Appreciation refers to the evaluative language used to directly or indirectly express attitudes toward values based on aesthetic standards and other value systems. It involves our evaluations of various products and performances, including television programs, films, books, and many more. It also includes our emotional responses to the essence of things, such as landscapes, sunrises, sunsets, or our relationships (Martin & Rose, 2007). Appreciation is categorized into three main subtypes: Reaction, Composition, and Valuation. Reaction assesses how an entity affects people emotionally or aesthetically. It includes Impact, which describes how engaging or striking something is (e.g., It was a *fascinating* innings.), and Quality, which evaluates overall excellence (e.g., It was a *splendid* innings.). Composition refers to the structural aspects of an entity. This includes Balance, which evaluates harmony or coherence (e.g., It was a *balanced* innings.), and Complexity, which describes intricacy or simplicity (e.g., It was an *economical* innings.). Valuation concerns the significance or worth of an entity. It includes Significance, which evaluates importance (e.g., It was an *invaluable* innings.), and Benefit, which measures usefulness or advantage (e.g., It was an *average* innings.).

B. Previous Studies in Appraisal and Cinematic Discourse

Studies on cinematic discourse have explored how attitudinal language functions in different film genres. Nafisah et al. (2020) conducted an analysis of *Aladdin* (2019), with a focus on the main character's dialogue to examine how attitude and language functions are realized. Their findings revealed that all three types of Attitude were present in Aladdin's speech, but positive Appreciation was the most dominant. This suggests that the character frequently used evaluative language to describe people, objects, and events in a favorable light. Similarly, Pradana (2022) examined attitudinal expressions in the animated film *Cars* (2006). He specifically focused on *Lightning McQueen's* dialogue. The study found that Appreciation was the most frequently occurring attitude, followed by Affect and Judgment. Hidayati (2017) analyzed Richard LaGravenese's *Freedom Writers* (2007) through an appraisal analysis of its script. The study demonstrated that a mix of Affect and Judgment was used to express resilience and social change, which reinforces the film's themes of personal and collective transformation. As a whole, these studies indicate that Appreciation is the dominant attitudinal resource in film narratives, with characters frequently evaluating their surroundings, experiences, and challenges. However, although these studies provide insights into individual characters, they do not examine how attitudinal language functions within broader family dynamics in cinematic discourse.

Apart from character dialogues, scholars have examined attitudinal language in movie reviews. Tingyu and Afzaal (2020) conducted an analysis of online movie reviews of Chinese animations. They investigated how foreign audiences perceived the films through attitudinal discourse. Their findings showed that Appreciation was the most dominant type of attitude, particularly in positive critiques, as reviewers frequently evaluated the artistic and technical aspects of the films. Similarly, Crystalia and Sunardi (2018) studied the appraisal system in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974) movie review by Roger Ebert and found that the critic used explicit attitudinal lexis to convey strong evaluative stances on the film's narrative, direction, and aesthetic impact. Li (2021) further expanded on this by conducting a critical discourse analysis of reviews of the Chinese animated film *Nezha*, with an analysis of audience reactions on platforms such as IMDb and Rotten Tomatoes. The study revealed that critics employed a mix of monoglossic and heteroglossic engagement strategies, which involve explicit attitudinal markers to convey strong opinions on the film's cultural significance. While these studies provide valuable insights into how films are perceived, they primarily focus on external evaluations by audiences and critics rather than how attitudinal language is constructed within the films themselves.

Other research has explored attitudinal language through translation studies and cross-linguistic comparisons, particularly in film subtitles and multilingual cinematic discourse. Jusry and Cahyono (2021) examined translation techniques in the Indonesian subtitles of *The Queen's Gambit: Exchanges* (2020). The study found that explicit attitude markers were more common in translation, as the Indonesian subtitles tended to clarify or amplify emotional expressions present in the original English script. Similarly, Khadafi and Santosa (2020) conducted a gendered analysis of evaluative language in *Atomic Blonde* (2017). The findings show how power dynamics and ideological identity influenced the character's use of attitudinal discourse. Gong (2020) examined cross-linguistic variations in attitudinal language within English and Chinese movie reviews of *The Wandering Earth* (2019), which show that English reviews placed greater emphasis on Capacity (competence) in their Judgments of directors and actors, while Chinese reviews focused more on

Tenacity (perseverance) when evaluating people in the films. These studies illustrate how attitudinal language can shift depending on linguistic, cultural, and translational contexts, yet they do not address how evaluative meanings function in original cinematic dialogue, particularly within family-centered narratives.

While the reviewed studies have provided valuable contributions to the understanding of attitudinal language in movies, reviews, and translations, they have largely left the attitudinal discourse in family-focused cinematic narratives unstudied. This study thus fills this gap by analyzing attitudinal expressions in cinematic representations of family life. By doing so, it offers insights into the linguistic construction of family-oriented cinematic discourse and contributes to the fields of discourse analysis, media studies, and applied linguistics.

To achieve this objective, the present study is guided by the following research questions:

- (1) What are the common patterns of attitudinal language used by the characters in *I Am Sam* (2001) and *Big Daddy* (1999)?
- (2) How is attitudinal language distributed across different interactions in these films?

III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative approach, with the assistance from a corpus tool, to investigate the use of attitudinal language within a self-built corpus of two movie dialogues. While traditional Systemic Functional Linguistics research primarily utilizes qualitative methods, it has often been criticized for subjectivity and a lack of generalizability. Corpus-assisted studies, in this sense, help enhance objectivity by allowing researchers to examine collocations, frequency patterns, and the social meanings of language use (Adamou, 2019).

A. Data Collection

In selecting movie scripts with thematically similar content, the researchers conducted a preliminary screening process by searching for family-centered films using relevant keywords. A list of potential films was compiled, followed by an initial content review to assess their thematic suitability. To minimize researchers' subjectivity, two university faculty members (one specializing in Literature and the other in Psychology) were invited to watch the films and discuss their alignment with the research focus. Based on the discussions, two films were selected: *I Am Sam* (2001) and *Big Daddy* (1999).

Accessing English-language movie scripts was relatively straightforward, since full scripts were publicly available on online platforms such as *Subscene* (<https://subscene.com/>) and *My Subs* (<https://my-subs.co/>). These sources provide accurate transcriptions of the original dialogues, thus ensuring the integrity of linguistic data. The corpus of the present study consists of the full dialogue transcriptions of *I Am Sam* and *Big Daddy*.

B. Data Processing Procedure

The data analysis follows a structured process using AntConc (Anthony, 2023) to extract attitudinal expressions based on the Appraisal Framework (Martin & White, 2005). A predefined wordlist of attitudinal markers was compiled from previous research, and the software identified relevant instances, with display of their frequency and location within the movie scripts. Since some evaluative expressions did not precisely match the predefined wordlist, a manual review was conducted to identify semantically related expressions. This involved reading the scripts in full, utilizing *Key Word in Context* analysis to examine contextual meanings, and cross-checking classifications against Martin and White's (2005) framework.

Once identified, attitudinal expressions were categorized into three subsystems: *Affect*, *Judgment*, and *Appreciation*, with their frequency quantified and compared across the two films. A qualitative discourse analysis was then performed to investigate how attitudinal language shapes character relationships and thematic representations. This includes analyzing how different characters use attitudinal markers, identifying patterns of emotional expression, and examining how these linguistic choices contribute to character development and narrative construction in each film.

C. Research Validity and Reliability

To ensure validity and reliability, the researchers, also acting as coders, strictly followed Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Framework when identifying and categorizing attitudinal expressions. Any discrepancies in classification were discussed and resolved through collaborative review and cross-referencing with previous studies on Appraisal Theory, ensuring consistency and accuracy in the analysis.

IV. RESULTS

A. The Distribution of Attitudinal Language

Among 739 attitudinal expressions found in *I Am Sam* and 481 in *Big Daddy*, Affect is the most dominant category in both films, followed by Judgment and then Appreciation. Positive expressions outnumber negative ones in both films, although *I Am Sam* shows a slightly higher proportion of positive instances (61.7%) compared to *Big Daddy* (57%). Table 1 presents the overall distribution of attitudinal language in *I Am Sam* and *Big Daddy* across the three subsystems of Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation.

TABLE 1
DISTRIBUTION OF ATTITUDE RESOURCES

Attitude System	<i>I Am Sam</i>			<i>Big Daddy</i>		
	Positive	Negative	Total	Positive	Negative	Total
Affect	250	123	373	142	80	222
Judgment	127	124	251	63	82	145
Appreciation	76	34	110	69	45	114
Total	453 (61.7%)	281 (38.3%)	734 (100%)	274 (57%)	207 (43%)	481 (100%)

In *I Am Sam*, Affect appears 373 times (50.8%), with 250 positive and 123 negative instances, while *Big Daddy* contains 222 affect-related expressions (46.2%), with 142 positive and 80 negative items. Judgment occurs 251 times (34.2%) in *I Am Sam*, with a nearly equal split between positive (127) and negative (124) instances, whereas *Big Daddy* has 145 Judgment expressions (30.1%), with a higher proportion of negative (82) than positive (63) items. Appreciation is the least frequent resource, with *I Am Sam* containing 110 instances (15%) and *Big Daddy* 114 (23.7%). Both films display a majority of positive Appreciation expressions, with *I Am Sam* having 76 positive and 34 negative items, while *Big Daddy* has 69 positive and 45 negative items.

The analysis of attitudinal language within the Affect subsystem in *I Am Sam* and *Big Daddy* shows patterns of emotional expression, as shown in Table 2. Both films exhibit a predominance of positive Affect, with *I Am Sam* containing 67% positive expressions and *Big Daddy* showing 64%. Negative Affect is also present, comprising 33% in *I Am Sam* and 36% in *Big Daddy*. These figures indicate that both films contain a mix of positive and negative emotional expressions, with *I Am Sam* having a slightly higher proportion of positive instances.

TABLE 2
DISTRIBUTION OF AFFECT RESOURCES

Affect Items	<i>I Am Sam</i>			<i>Big Daddy</i>		
	Positive	Negative	Total	Positive	Negative	Total
Happiness	35	30	65 (17%)	38	14	52 (24%)
Satisfaction	0	29	29 (8%)	2	38	40 (18%)
Security	4	33	37 (10%)	0	14	14 (6%)
Desire	211	31	242 (65%)	102	14	116 (52%)
Total	250 (67%)	123 (33%)	373 (100%)	142 (64%)	80 (36%)	222 (100%)

Happiness-related expressions appear in both films, though they differ in distribution. *I Am Sam* contains 65 instances (17%), with 35 positive and 30 negative items, while *Big Daddy* includes 52 instances (24%), with 38 positive and 14 negative items. The use of satisfaction-related Affect is more frequent in *Big Daddy*, with 40 occurrences (18%), of which 38 are negative. In *I Am Sam*, there are 29 instances (8%) of satisfaction-related expressions, all of which are negative.

Security-related Affect appears less frequently than other categories. *I Am Sam* contains 37 instances (10%), with 4 positive and 33 negative expressions, while *Big Daddy* includes 14 instances (6%), all of which are negative. Desire is the most frequent category in both films. In *I Am Sam*, desire-related Affect appears 242 times (65%), with 211 positive and 31 negative expressions. In *Big Daddy*, there are 116 instances of Desire (52%), including 102 positive and 14 negative expressions.

Affect resources are distributed differently across the two films. *I Am Sam* contains a greater number of security-related and negative satisfaction expressions, while *Big Daddy* features a higher frequency of happiness-related affect and fewer security-related expressions. Desire-related Affect occurs most frequently in both films, with positive expressions being more common than negative ones.

Table 3 presents the distribution of Judgment resources in *I Am Sam* and *Big Daddy*, with patterns across the subcategories of Social Esteem and Social Sanction. Overall, *I Am Sam* contains 251 instances of Judgment expressions, with 51% being positive and 49% negative. In contrast, *Big Daddy* has a total of 145 instances, with 43% positive and 57% negative.

TABLE 3
DISTRIBUTION OF JUDGEMENT RESOURCES

Judgment Items		<i>I Am Sam</i>			<i>Big Daddy</i>		
		Positive	Negative	Total	Positive	Negative	Total
Social Esteem	Normality	0	2	2 (1%)	1	0	1 (1%)
	Capacity	105	105	210 (84%)	41	58	99 (68%)
	Tenacity	0	0	0 (0%)	0	0	0 (0%)
Social Sanction	Veracity	1	5	6 (2%)	0	3	3 (2%)
	Propriety	21	12	33 (13%)	21	21	42 (29%)
Total		127 (51%)	124 (49%)	251 (100%)	63 (43%)	82 (57%)	145 (100%)

Within Social Esteem, Normality occurs infrequently in both films. *I Am Sam* has two instances (1%), both negative, while *Big Daddy* contains only one instance (1%), which is positive. Capacity is the most frequently occurring Judgment resource. *I Am Sam* contains 210 instances of Capacity (84%), evenly split between positive (105) and negative (105) expressions. In *Big Daddy*, Capacity appears 99 times (68%), with 41 positive and 58 negative instances. Tenacity does not appear in either film.

Within Social Sanction, Veracity is minimally present in both films. *I Am Sam* contains six instances (2%), with one positive and five negative, while *Big Daddy* contains three instances (2%), all of which are negative. Meanwhile, Propriety occurs more frequently. *I Am Sam* contains 33 instances (13%), including 21 positive and 12 negative expressions. *Big Daddy* has a higher total of 42 propriety-related judgments (29%), with an equal distribution of 21 positive and 21 negative instances.

The distribution of Judgment resources differs across the two films. *I Am Sam* features a greater number of capacity-related expressions compared to *Big Daddy*, while *Big Daddy* contains more propriety-related judgments. Negative and positive expressions of Judgment are relatively balanced in *I Am Sam*, whereas *Big Daddy* has a slightly higher proportion of negative judgments.

The distribution of Appreciation resources in *I Am Sam* and *Big Daddy* is detailed in Table 4. In *I Am Sam*, a total of 110 instances of Appreciation were identified, with 69% being positive and 31% negative. In *Big Daddy*, there were 114 instances, with 61% positive and 39% negative.

TABLE 4
DISTRIBUTION OF APPRECIATION RESOURCES

Appreciation Items		<i>I Am Sam</i>			<i>Big Daddy</i>		
		Positive	Negative	Total	Positive	Negative	Total
Reaction	Impact	4	3	7 (6%)	7	4	11 (10%)
	Quality	63	19	82 (75%)	57	40	97 (85%)
Composition	Balance	0	10	10 (9%)	2	0	2 (2%)
	Complexity	0	1	1 (1%)	0	0	0 (0%)
Valuation	Significance	2	1	3 (3%)	3	1	4 (3%)
	Benefit	7	0	7 (6%)	0	0	0 (0%)
Total		76 (69%)	34 (31%)	110 (100%)	69 (61%)	45 (39%)	114 (100%)

Under Reaction, impact-related expressions appeared in both films. *I Am Sam* contained 7 instances (6%), with 4 positive and 3 negative expressions, while *Big Daddy* had 11 instances (10%), with 7 positive and 4 negative expressions. Quality had the highest frequency in this category. In *I Am Sam*, there were 82 instances of quality-related Appreciation (75%), including 63 positive and 19 negative expressions. In *Big Daddy*, quality-related Appreciation was more frequent, with 97 instances (85%), consisting of 57 positive and 40 negative expressions.

Within Composition, balance-related Appreciation appeared more frequently in *I Am Sam*, with 10 negative instances (9%), while *Big Daddy* contained only 2 positive instances (2%). Complexity was minimally present, with only 1 negative instance (1%) in *I Am Sam* and none in *Big Daddy*.

In the Valuation category, significance-related Appreciation occurred 3 times (3%) in *I Am Sam* (2 positive, 1 negative) and 4 times (3%) in *Big Daddy* (1 negative and 3 positive items). Benefit-related Appreciation appeared only in *I Am Sam*, with 7 positive instances (6%), while *Big Daddy* contained no instances in this category.

The distribution of Appreciation resources differs across the two films. *I Am Sam* contains a higher proportion of balance-related negative expressions, while *Big Daddy* has a greater number of quality-related evaluations. Both films use Reaction more frequently than Composition or Valuation, with Quality being the most dominant Appreciation subcategory in both.

B. Appraisal Resources From the Lexico-Grammatical Perspective

As presented in Table 5, the analysis of appraisal resources from the lexico-grammatical perspective in *I Am Sam* and *Big Daddy* reveals differences in how attitudinal language is realized across grammatical categories. In *I Am Sam*, a total of 739 instances of appraisal-related expressions were identified, while *Big Daddy* contained 480 instances.

TABLE 5
APPRAISAL RESOURCES FROM THE LEXICO-GRAMMATICAL PERSPECTIVE

Appraisal Items from the Lexico-Grammatical Perspective	<i>I Am Sam</i>	<i>Big Daddy</i>
Noun	30 (4%)	20 (4%)
Verb	330 (45%)	204 (42%)
Adjective	185 (25%)	171 (36%)
Adverb	2 (0.2%)	5 (1%)
Discourse without attitudinal language	192 (26%)	81 (17%)
Total	739 (100%)	481 (100%)

Among lexical categories, verbs were the most frequently used appraisal resource in both films. *I Am Sam* contained 330 instances of verbs, accounting for 45% of all appraisal-related expressions, while *Big Daddy* included 204 instances, making up 42% of its total. Adjectives were the second most frequent category with *I Am Sam* containing 185 instances (25%) and *Big Daddy* having 171 instances (36%). Nouns were less frequently used, with 30 instances (4%) in *I Am Sam* and 20 instances (4%) in *Big Daddy*.

The presence of adverbs was minimal in both films. *I Am Sam* contained only 2 instances (0.2%), while *Big Daddy* had a slightly higher occurrence, with 5 instances (1%). Additionally, discourse without explicit attitudinal language occurred in both films, with *I Am Sam* containing 192 instances (26%) and *Big Daddy* having 81 instances (17%).

In *I Am Sam*, attitudes are frequently implicitly conveyed through questions and repetition, which allow characters to challenge, emphasize, or express emotional intensity without relying on explicit evaluative markers.

Many questions in the film serve as challenges, particularly in moments of confrontation, where one character forces another to defend themselves:

“What makes you think you have the ability to be a father?”

“What makes you think you can do that?”

“Don’t you in your heart of hearts secretly question yourself every day?”

“Was that a ‘yes’?”

Repetition is another key strategy for expressing frustration, insistence, or distress. It is often used when characters struggle to articulate themselves or when emotions overwhelm them. For example:

“I want to stop right now! Okay? I want to stop right now!”

“No more now, okay? No more now, okay?”

“This is it. This is it. This is it.”

In *Big Daddy*, some attitudes are also conveyed without explicit lexical markers. They appear within broader discourse structures, particularly through rhetorical strategies such as questions and imperative sentences.

In terms of questions, characters use interrogative structures to convey attitudes towards others, particularly in moments of dissatisfaction or disapproval. Common instances include:

Expressions of dissatisfaction towards Sonny:

“You sleep?”

“Found a job yet?”

“Where d’you work more than one day a week?”

Expressions of disbelief or challenge:

“What are you talking about?”

“You calling me a liar?”

“Are you allowed soda?”

Imperative sentences are another frequent strategy for expressing attitudes, particularly when conveying expectations or commands. Examples include:

Sonny expressing expectations while playing with Julian:

“Don’t be scared.”

“Don’t do that.”

Julian making a request to Layla:

“Please do this to me.”

The distribution of appraisal resources shows that both films predominantly use verbs and adjectives to express attitudes, with nouns and adverbs appearing less frequently. Additionally, both *I Am Sam* and *Big Daddy* demonstrate how attitudes can be conveyed implicitly through discourse structures rather than explicit evaluative markers. In *I Am Sam*, questions and repetition serve to challenge, emphasize, and express emotional intensity, while in *Big Daddy*, questions convey dissatisfaction or disbelief, and imperatives establish expectations and commands. These strategies highlight how the characters assert their power, express emotions, and navigate relationships without directly stating their attitudes.

V. DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study reveal patterns in how emotions, evaluations, and values are expressed in cinematic discourse. While both films predominantly use Affect to construct emotional connections, differences emerge in the subcategories of Desire, Security, and Satisfaction. Additionally, Judgment plays a crucial role in evaluating competence and morality, whereas Appreciation is used to assess qualities and reactions rather than structural or aesthetic aspects.

Regarding Affect, expressions related to Desire appear most frequently in both films, particularly in *I Am Sam*, where they constitute a larger proportion than in *Big Daddy*. This highlights the strong emphasis on aspirations, needs, and intentions within the characters’ interactions. Security-related Affect occurs more frequently in *I Am Sam*, whereas *Big Daddy* contains a lower proportion, suggesting differences in how reassurance, confidence, or vulnerability are expressed. Additionally, satisfaction-related Affect appears more prominently in *Big Daddy*, particularly in negative forms, which aligns with the film’s use of attitudinal language to express frustration or dissatisfaction.

For Judgment, Capacity is the most frequently occurring subcategory in both films, indicating that much of the evaluative discourse revolves around assessments of competence and ability. However, while *I Am Sam* shows a relatively balanced distribution of positive and negative capacity-related judgments, *Big Daddy* contains a higher proportion of negative instances, suggesting a more critical framing of ability and effectiveness. Propriety-related Judgment occurs in both films, but at a higher rate in *Big Daddy*, where it is evenly split between positive and negative evaluations, reflecting a focus on moral and ethical considerations in the discourse.

The Appreciation analysis shows that Quality is the dominant subcategory in both films, which reinforce the idea that evaluative language in cinematic discourse primarily centers on assessing people, actions, and situations rather than abstract or aesthetic features. Reaction-related Appreciation, which captures impact and emotional resonance, appears with similar frequency in both films, while composition-related Appreciation, such as assessments of balance and complexity, is rare. This suggests that the discourse in these films relies more on direct evaluations than structural or aesthetic judgments.

From a lexico-grammatical perspective, verbs and adjectives serve as the primary linguistic resources for encoding attitudinal meanings. Verbs account for the largest proportion of attitudinal expressions, showing that evaluations are often framed as actions or processes rather than static attributes. Adjectives, while slightly less frequent, still play a key role in expressing emotions, judgments, and values. Nouns appear less frequently, indicating that attitudinal meanings are more dynamically constructed through descriptions and actions rather than categorical labels. Additionally, implicit attitudinal strategies are present, with discourse without explicit attitudinal markers making up a quarter of the total data. This suggests the use of rhetorical structures and contextual cues to convey attitudes without direct evaluative lexis.

The findings align with prior research on attitudinal language in cinematic discourse. Studies on *Aladdin* (Nafisah et al., 2020) and *Cars* (Pradana, 2022) similarly identified a reliance on attitudinal language to establish character relationships and narrative direction. However, while these studies emphasized the dominance of positive Appreciation, the present study highlights a slightly more balanced use of positive and negative attitudinal expressions, with Affect and Judgment playing a central role in shaping character interactions. The patterns observed also correspond with *Freedom Writers* (Hidayati, 2017), where a combination of Affect and Judgment was found to be common in films addressing personal and social transformation. While *Freedom Writers* focused on resilience and social change, this study emphasizes attitudinal language in expressing expectations, emotional attachment, and competence-related evaluations.

In contrast to studies on film reviews (Crystalia & Sunardi, 2018; Tingyu & Afzaal, 2020), which identified Appreciation as the dominant attitudinal resource in external evaluations, this study confirms that cinematic discourse itself places greater emphasis on Affect and Judgment. This distinction highlights the difference between how films are critiqued by audiences and how attitudinal meanings are embedded within film dialogues.

The findings have significant implications for both discourse analysis and media studies. First, they demonstrate that attitudinal meanings in cinematic discourse are not solely conveyed through explicit evaluative markers but are also

embedded in broader discourse structures. The reliance on verbs and adjectives suggests that attitudinal meanings are often realized dynamically through descriptions of actions and attributes rather than static classifications. Second, the study highlights the ways in which different attitudinal strategies contribute to meaning-making in film narratives. The prominence of capacity-related Judgment suggests that competence and ability are central concerns in the attitudinal discourse of family-oriented films, while the frequent use of desire-related Affect indicates that emotional intensity and aspirations shape character interactions.

Additionally, the presence of implicit attitudinal strategies, such as rhetorical questions, repetition, and imperatives, suggests that evaluative meanings in cinematic discourse extend beyond individual lexical choices. These strategies reinforce expectations, challenges, and emotional states without relying on overt attitudinal markers, highlighting the varied ways in which attitudinal language functions within cinematic dialogue.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

This study analyzed attitudinal language in *I Am Sam* and *Big Daddy* by examining the distribution and lexicogrammatical realization of Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation resources. The findings indicate that Affect is the most dominant attitudinal resource in both films, particularly desire-related expressions, which emphasize aspirations and emotional investment. Judgment also plays a significant role, especially in evaluations of Capacity (competence), with *Big Daddy* featuring a higher proportion of negative judgments than *I Am Sam*. Appreciation, though less frequent, primarily revolves around quality-based evaluations rather than structural or aesthetic assessments. From a linguistic perspective, verbs and adjectives serve as the primary means of encoding attitudinal meanings, while implicit strategies such as rhetorical questions and repetition contribute to the discourse without explicit evaluative markers.

While this study provides valuable insights into attitudinal language in cinematic discourse, it has certain limitations. The analysis was limited to two films, which, while thematically comparable, may not fully represent broader patterns across different genres or cultural contexts. Expanding the dataset to include a wider range of films would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of how attitudinal language varies across cinematic narratives. Additionally, the study primarily relied on a qualitative approach, with quantitative support from corpus analysis tools. While this approach allows for an in-depth exploration of discourse patterns, a larger-scale computational analysis could enhance the reliability and generalizability of the findings by identifying trends across a broader dataset. Another limitation is the focus on textual discourse, without considering multimodal elements such as prosody, facial expressions, and gestures, which are crucial in conveying attitudinal meanings in film. A future study incorporating multimodal discourse analysis could provide a more holistic understanding of how attitudinal language interacts with visual and auditory elements in cinematic storytelling.

Building on the findings and limitations of this study, future research could explore attitudinal language in a wider range of cinematic narratives, including those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. A comparative study of attitudinal discourse in Western and Asian films, for example, could provide insights into how cultural norms influence the use of evaluative language in cinematic storytelling. Additionally, future studies could employ computational linguistics to analyze attitudinal markers across a large corpus of film scripts. By identifying recurring patterns and trends, such research could contribute to a more systematic understanding of how attitudinal language evolves across different film genres and time periods. Finally, incorporating multimodal analysis would offer a more comprehensive perspective on how attitudinal meanings are conveyed through a combination of language, tone, body language, and cinematic techniques. Such research could bridge the gap between linguistic analysis and film studies, providing deeper insights into the role of language in shaping narrative and audience perception.

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