

# MORAL VALUES FOUND IN NAOMI SCOTT'S 'SPEECHLESS' SONG LYRICS: AN ATTITUDINAL ANALYSIS USING APPRAISAL THEORY

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**Abstract:** *Language is a communication source to deliver information or message. In the communication process, people use language to express idea, opinion, thought, or desire whether in spoken or written form. Following the globalization era, music evolves in human daily life. Through its lyrics, people communicate feelings. Message contained in a song is called as moral value. This research aimed to describe the moral value of an English song viewed from the perspective of appraisal theory. It employed descriptive qualitative approach. The object of the study is the Aladdin's soundtrack entitled Speechless sung by Naomi Scott released in 2019. The result of the study depicted that the dominant attitude system found is affect system (68.97%) followed by appreciation (17.24%) and judgement (13.79%). The result showed that the songwriters mostly using their feelings in its lyrics. The feeling that dominantly appeared are positive feelings of fearlessness, confidence, and bravery. Furthermore, the prominent attitude of the song is inscribed attitude (72.72%) that indicated directly conveyed, and followed by invoked attitude (27.27%). Related to feminism, the song delivered message in which women should not be underestimated and all the old stigmas which weaken women position should be against in order to achieve equality among genders. Based on the analysis, the song can contribute in material development for the sound argument teaching.*

**Keywords:** *appraisal, feminism, moral value*

## INTRODUCTION

Language is a communication tool that relies on verbal or non-verbal codes to convey information or message. Matthiessen & Halliday (1997) states that it is a resource for construing value. Language is the highest form of intelligence interaction that differentiate human from animal. Through language, people are able to share ideas, opinions, emotions with others either spoken or written. Therefore, language is the primary means of communication among people. In the communication process, people use language to express ideas, thoughts, emotions, desires, messages either in spoken or written form.

Language and communication are different things, however those work continuously. As a communication tool, language has several roles, there are: (1) tool to interact with others means that people talk to each other every day, create an interaction to build connection among them; (2) reflection of person's level of education, means that it relates to the quality of their circle of colleagues. The higher a person's education, the higher their speech wisdom. The educated people will tend to interact with those who support the use of language quality more than those who don't; (3) language indicates authority. A great leader would have to be able to speak well so that he can express ideas clearly and straightforward to show his authority; (4) as the force of law, means

that a person can identify the language of self-defense or rival by the way one speaks; (5) attract the customer. The good language and interesting ads will interest customers in trying your product; (6) language reflects a person's social standing. Diversity of language mastered will absolutely differ from one to another. The higher diversity of language, they will be seen as the privileged in society. Keraf, 1977 in (Rabiah, 2012).

Globalization brings a great development in many sectors, including art. It has had a big evolution in this era, especially music which has influenced people around the world including students. Music is the expression of emotions. In this modern era, a song becomes something essential in human life. People hear songs almost everyday in their daily life. Besides entertaining, songs are also made to communicate feelings to others. Through songs, people share their feelings, thoughts, and messages either good or bad. Hence, song is contemplated as a communication medium. Furthermore, music is a part of literary works and it is able to make one's brain more receptive to learn something. When one is listening to music, it automatically activates the reward center of his brain that brings enough motivation for the brain to learn new information. Moreover, music will increase concentration, ideas, and decrease duration of work.

Meaning that delivers a speaker's attitudes and judgements about an object is a interpersonal meaning (Susanto & Watik, 2017). The part of interpersonal meaning is moral value. Moral value is something that is closely related to any kind of art. It is about something good to learn or bad to avoid from a masterpiece related to daily life. How good or bad is determined based on what society believes or on the other word, it is relative. If this group has belief that something is good, it does not mean that that group will say it as well, depending on their view of life. As song is part of art, it means that it has moral value inside. Thus, every song has its own messages and intentions.

Song does not stand by itself, however it has lyrics which are the most essential part of it. Without the lyrics, a song will not have any

meaning. If a song is seen from rhythm and melody, a song is one of the examples of non-verbal communication, while lyrics is verbal communication of song. When creating a song, a composer tries to express his feelings through the lyrics made. Those can be sadness, happiness, spirit, love, faith, sorrow, etc. The researchers ask the hearer to interpret the song based on their experiences and knowledge, and process it as the basis to understand the lyrics. In song lyrics, metaphor is used oftentimes. Usually, a composer use metaphors to make listeners easy to understand the song lyrics.

Feminism is a concept or women movement which demands equity or emancipation to fight genders injustice. Feminism comes from Latin, *femina* or woman. This term came into use around 1890s to obtain women rights. Starting from the assumptions which stated that women experienced discrimination and the intentions to finish it. Feminists is not always women, it can be everyone who has the same purposes towards feminism itself. In Indonesia, there is Raden Ajeng Kartini who is a woman national hero. She contribute in fighting for women's rights to gain equality. As a result, in todays era, women has rights to achive education, politics, economics, etc. Following the era, feminism continues the struggle about voicing women's rights by several kinds of medium, such as a movie soundtrack. There are many soundtracks relates to feminism, and one of them is *Speechless* (2019).

Feminism has been discussed lately. In society, men are often seen as superior and women as inferior. The inequality not merely happened in a certain sectors, however, almost all sectors of life. Women are prohibited to voice, express their feelings freely, or even must be loyal to men. In job field, the existence of woman leader will be a hot topic as if her skills should be contested by men. *Speechless* is considered as empowerment song which represents the *Aladdin* movie. As every song has its meaning and moral value, so does this song. Moreover, the role of Princess Jasmine in *Aladdin* movie played by Naomi Scott, who is the singer of the soundtrack. Covering by an

empowering voice, make the song very deep and magnificent. I was interested to know what empowerment consisted in *Speechless* song regarding to the condition where the singer and the main character of Aladdin movie are the same woman.

*Speechless* is a soundtrack from Aladdin movie (2019). Aladdin is a musical fantasy movie which tells about Princess Jasmine's bravery in sounding her voice. She did not want to be married to a man that she did not love. Moreover, many people doubted her for the ability of leading Agrabah, including her father. However, she tried to prove that she could do more than that. Finally, Princess Jasmine could marry her beloved man, Aladdin and she lead Agrabah replacing her father.

*Speechless* is song sung by Naomi Scott for the Aladdin film besides *A Whole New World* which she sang featuring Mena Massoud. Released on May 17, 2019 and written by Alan Menken, Pasek and Paul. *Speechless* is such a power-ballad that provides the strong empowerment. Naomi Scott has released some singles as a singer, thus it is not surprising that she sung it amazingly. Since becoming popular, *Speechless* has attracted a lot of listeners of all ages, especially teenagers. Some of them are successfully hypnotized by the song, however not a few of them are curious about the lyrics and its meaning. In fact, the use of figurative languages in song lyrics often makes the hearers not really understand the song's messages. It is the reason why it is very fascinating for me to discover the real messages found in the song, about the way the composer interprets the interpersonal feeling through the song, the relation between the song and Aladdin movie, and its contribution to the material development of language teaching by using Appraisal Theory proposed by Martin & White (2005).

Appraisal Theory developed by Martin & White (2005) is the development of interpersonal meaning in Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG). It explains how the taxonomy of language is employed, how attitude is conveyed, engagement, and graduation. Appraisal system brings contribution in discourse analysis by improving the quality of

the text in engaging the readers about the intention of the writer. It is very interesting to discover how the composer tries to distribute feelings through words and deliver the messages. Appraisal theory has been used for some studies, there are appraisal for analyzing novel, speech, essay, academic writing, and song. Unfortunately, the lack of the use of appraisal in analyzing English songs causes the necessity to do other studies about it.

According to Norris and Phillips (2003), fundamentally, literacy includes comprehension, interpretation, analysis and critical text, argument study and its construction, the data evaluation, and the opposing hypotheses consideration in which those must become an essence of pedagogic practice. Building a sound argument in teaching is quite challenging. Sound can be an argument, since it provides arguers with powerful resources to increase or ruin deliberation.

#### ***Literature review***

Several researchers were interested to use appraisal resources as vehicles to discover the way songwriter conveying meaning to the listeners or readers. Firstly, Jatikusumo (2012) conducted a research of Michael Jackson's songs: 'Earth Song', 'We are the World', and 'Heal the World' analysis. Three of them indicated attitude, judgement, and appreciation. However, two of them had the dominant judgement in the song lyrics. Next, Li (2016) who used random English song as the object of his study on appraisal. The result showed that attitude resources affect and appreciation were appeared oftentimes in English song discourse. Thirdly, Yuningsih (2018) held a Korean song's lyrics analysis on 'Lonely Night' sung by CNBLUE. The study showed that affect was far dominant in the lyrics than judgement and appreciation. She also concluded that the lyrics showed unhappiness, disrespectful, and dumb feeling. The fourth, Arif & Triyono (2018) analyzed "Baby Shark" song to discover the composer's attitudes, the social relation, and the situation context of the discourse using Appraisal theory. It indicated that the song is about Korean local wisdom. The use of the shark

was the implication of the writer's favorite animal and used as a metaphor of the Korean mindset showing hard work.

Various studies presented to give understanding in revealing feminism in discourse. Several researchers applied Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to discover feminism in their studies, such as (Lisara, 2014; Martiwi, Karlina, & Suharyadi, 2017; Sihotang & Pasaribu, 2020).

Martiwi et al. (2017) found the liberal feminism in several songs of Katy Perry (One of the Boys, Tenage dream, part of me, Dark House, Roar, and International Smile). It denotes that she wants to declare to women to realize their power or the ability due to the differences between women in the past and women today. Furthermore, Sihotang & Pasaribu (2020) claimed that there was liberal feminism in Toba Batak Song that indicated woman has mandatory roles in some sectors of life. Women are supposed to be powerful, and fight for freedom.

According to the previous studies presented above, it can be seen that further study related to the implementation of appraisal in revealing moral value in feminism and contribution to material development is necessary to be carried out. Moreover, the results of the study are believed to have contribution in escalating the quality of English teaching and learning.

## METHOD

The researcher required a data source in this research, which is a mandatory part in conducting research. Data source is stuff where the information required by the researcher can be gained. The source of the data in this research was taken from the soundtrack of Aladdin movie (2019) entitled *Speechless*, sung by Naomi Scott. The data were written in form of clauses in the lyrics. The unit of analysis is literary work in the form of clause level analysis. In this research, the song lyrics were divided into clauses then analyzed based on attitude system of Appraisal Theory (affect, judgement, and appreciation). It is conducted to discover the appraisal category

used in the song lyrics and will be expanded with the demonstration of feminism moral value and the contribution in material development of sound argument teaching.

This study used discourse analysis. According to Rosalind Gill (2000), discourse analysis is a variety of difference approaches to the study of text, which have developed from different theoretical traditions and diverse disciplinary locations. It is a research method for studying the relation of written or spoken language to its social context which aims at understanding how language is used in real life situations. There are two stages accomplished in this research. At first, the text was comprehensively read to get a deeper understanding. After that, the text was analyzed for appraisal devices using the framework of the appraisal system offered by Martin and White (2005).

To gain the data, the researcher uses text analysis and note taking to collect it. Thus, the researcher will analyze '*Speechless*' lyrics to collect the data. There were two steps, accessing and segmenting. Firstly, the researcher explored the song lyrics of '*Speechless*' from a credible trusted website, zenius.com. After finding the full lyrics of '*Speechless*' song on the zenius website, the lyrics were divided into clauses. After that, those were inserted into the table.

Furthermore, the data were analyzed through several steps: reducing data, calculating, explaining, and conclusion drawing. Reducing data means that the researcher put the indicated expressions of each sources, that is, affect, judgement, and appreciation to the column of the table. After that, the researcher calculated the amount of each sources and converted it into percentage. From the result, the researcher explained or interpreted the data by giving the evidences or examples. The explanation were related into the research question in Chapter I, and the researcher delivered the result of the research. The last, the researcher concluded the results of the research, explained whether the research questions answered well.

Triangulation means developing an extensive understanding of phenomena by using the multiple methods or data sources. There are

several kinds of triangulation, that is, method triangulation, theory triangulation, data triangulation, and investigator triangulation. Moreover, in order to prove the validity of the research, the researcher applied theory triangulation using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) developed by Halliday related to field, tenor, and mode.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Distribution of Attitude System

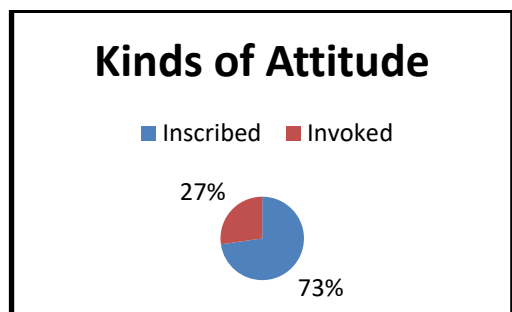
The distribution of attitude system: Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation contained in *Speechless* song lyrics can be seen as the following table:

Table 1. The distribution of attitude system

No	Attitude System	Frequency	Percentage
1	Affect	19	68.97%
2	Judgement	4	13.79%
3	Appreciation	5	17.24%

From the table 4.1, the dominant attitude system is affect with 68.97% followed by appreciation device at 17.24%. However, the judgement device placed in the last number with a percentage 13.79%. There are 20 expressions of affect, 4 expressions of judgement, and 5 expressions of appreciation. It means that affect is dominantly appeared in the song lyrics. The findings of the kinds of attitudes showed as follows:

Figure 1. Kinds of attitude



From the Figure 1, inscribed attitude frequently appeared with a percentage 72.73% followed by invoked attitude with 27.27%. Thus, it can be seen that the songwriters frequently used inscribed attitude, which means the messages of the song are mostly inscribed.

Affect includes positive and negative expressions of judgements relating to feelings about something being said or related to expression of emotions. In this research, there are two types of affect found. The songwriters used 18 expressions of security (sec) and 2 expressions of displeasure (displ.). According to the data, it can be said that the song lyrics mostly indicated positive energy (+) than the negative (-). This attitude was also shown in some of the lyrics of *Speechless* song, that is, "But I *won't cry*". The utterance shows an affect of security (sec). It tells the feeling of the songwriter to represent a woman's strength. Here means that the woman is tough in facing her problems. Because the meaning of the utterance is explicitly told, thus it belongs to inscribed attitude. It tells Princess Jasmine's resilience in facing her problem. Moreover, the clause "And I *won't start to crumble*" denotes the expression of toughness, and cannot be broken easily. In the affect, it is part of security (sec). The singer, who is a woman, becomes the representation of the lyrics made by the song writer. The classification of attitude is inscribed attitude. In this part, the songwriter tries to deliver emotion toward the situation he faced. Woman is attempting to not be wrecked easily. It represents the situation where Princess Jasmine needed to fight Jafar, the right-hand man of her father. Another example "I *won't be silenced, you can't keep me quiet*" indicate resilience or fearless action, and include security (sec). It shows from the words '*silenced*' and '*keep quiet*' which will not stop the singer. This shows the tendency of the songwriter who wanted to show women's capacity in the world. Both of the clauses include in inscribed attitude. Both of the clauses above tell us that women have rights to voice their opinions. The inequity that happened to women now and then should be removed and against. Jafar did many ways to obstruct Princess Jasmine in voicing her rights about leading the

Agrabah. However, she fought for saving her dynasty from the wrong person.

Judgement is about negative and positive judgements toward behavior of what is being said. Based on the data, there are merely 2 type of judgement used: capacity (cap) and tenacity (ten). Capacity deals with capability or ability, about how capable someone or something. While tenacity relates to how dependable someone. Moreover, both of them are divided into two kinds, those are, positive and negative. For example, the clause “*there comes a wave meant to wash me away*” indicates judgment of social esteem—negative capacity, cap (-). The word ‘wave’ represents problems or unbreakable things. While the phrase ‘wash me away’ denotes that someone is weak and has no ability to fight. Here, Princess Jasmine’s father and her surroundings claim that she is powerless.

Appreciation is the affirmation of the form appreciating things or things against something being said. After analyzing the data, it is found 5 appreciation contained in the *Speechless* song’s lyrics. All of those included in reaction (reac). In reaction itself, divided into two, positive and negative reaction. In the data found that 4 expressions indicated negative reaction, and 1 expression denoted positive reaction. *I won’t be silenced* indicates positive appreciation of reaction.

### **Moral Value**

According to the Appraisal analysis of *Speechless* song lyrics, many words and clauses indicated feminism. If we take a look at attitude analysis, especially in affect device, the songwriter wants to deliver a huge message towards the hearer.

From the analysis, the clauses represented the feelings of fearlessness and bravery, and dominated by resilience which is 53%. It denotes the unbeatable objects which in this case is women. Related to feminism, the lyrics showed women empowerment. The songwriter demonstrate the feminist voice that want all women to not be speechless because they have voice, so they should speak up against injustice that happened to them or around them.

The use of clauses ‘*Written in stone, Every rule every word, Centuries old and unbending*’ represent that a long time ago, all of the rules for women had appeared, and unfortunately, it was really hard to break. Women lived in the shadow of rules that she did not make, yet limited their movement. They were forced to follow things she did not even want to. Furthermore, it showed by these other clauses, “*Stay in your place*” and “*Better seen and not heard*” which denotes that women were supposed to be home, and had not any choice to determine what is good for themselves. Usually, ancient people merely permitted or gave access to their daughter for child rearing, marriage, and maintaining household. Women were not allowed to get education, focus on career, become a leader, and enhance skills. Most of people underestimate what women would do. However, the clause ‘*But now that story is ending*’ becomes the epic part that indicates it will not happen anymore in this era.

Furthermore, liberal feminism deals with superior-inferior position between men and women. Society always maintains a stigma that instructed women to stay in their place without any choice, and it happened for centuries. *Speechless* was truly an empowerment song that taught women to not only be passive victims. Through this song, we can discover that the songwriters—Menken, Pasek, and Paul are feminists that try to deliver their intentions or messages by the lyrics. If we connect this song with the movie entitled ‘Aladdin’ new version, we will achieve deeper understanding because it is in line. Based on the story, Princess Jasmine loved Aladdin who imitate himself as a royalty family, and finally when they know that Aladdin only a poor man, they did not get blessing from Jasmine’s father because she was supposed to marry a “suitable member of royalty’ to extend his dynasty. Here, Princess Jasmine was expected to do whatever she was told, however, she thought she had rights and voice yet never listened to. In the story, Princess Jasmine showed her bravery. She refused it and showed her father that she was more than able to govern the country. She also challenges herself to

choose her own husband without her father's interruption.

The conditions above relate to today's era. Injustice between gender, gender inequality still exists. Women are seen as inferior, and expected to do a subordinate role to men. Sometimes, women have no choice to put themselves forward. Every single step is shadowed by an old paradigm in society. Thus, this song is such a powerful song that invites women to hear their inner voice, follow what they love, decide what is comfortable to them. The singer, Naomi Scott, successfully sang the song with deep feelings and emotions so the message can be felt by the listener.

Liberal feminism which found in the *Speechless* song lyrics similarly with the studies conducted by Martiwi et al (2017) about Katy Perry's songs. It showed how women actually have crucial roles in life, even though women will always tend to dependent to men in some cases, however, their ability and capability cannot be doubted.

### **The Contribution To Material Development of Sound Argument Teaching**

Argumentative text is a text which aims at claiming that something is true. Furthermore, it is created to persuade people to agree by showing evidence to convince it. It requires investigation of the topic, collecting, generating, and evaluating evidence.

According to Lunsford, et al (2020), argument needs three things: claim, reason, and evidence. This theory was used in this research and the findings showed that *Speechless* song contained three of it. The clause *'but now that story is ending'* indicated claim which related to thing that we argued, and that clause represented the beginning statement of argument that declared women's freedom. In the song, the songwriters talked about women and what society expected about women. Thus, the claimed I presented in the previous, the songwriter wanted to argue about the issue. Then, what story it is? The story where women were supposed to follow the unbending rules and did not have any right to against. Then, reason

means 'why' did the claims made. Based on the findings, the use of clauses *'written in stone every rule every word'* and *'stay in your place'* became the reason why the claim was told.

Moreover, evidence deals with supporting ideas to convince the argument. The songwriters utilized *'try to lock me in this cage'* and *'I will take these broken wings'* as the evidences to strengthen the claim and reason stated above. We can read from Table 2 in evidence aspects that no matter how inferior the society saw them, injustice, they will prove that they have power, persistence, and positive impact towards the world. Thus, the story of it will end as what was been said in the claim.

To sum up, all of the argument requirements were fulfilled. Therefore, this song can supply a contribution towards material development in English majors, especially for teaching argumentative text or essay. Moreover, through this song, students can learn how to build a great argument and be a critical thinker. Furthermore, in teaching, not merely students, a teacher also should be a critical thinker and be able to make an argument convincingly.

Based on what the researcher explained above, song can be one of the mediums in teaching, especially language teaching. Starting from analyzing the lyrics, discovering the moral value or messages contained in the song can build students' critical thinking. Besides, students will be able to argue about what they learn. The use of teaching strategies, individual or group, more or less will enhance students' awareness of the topic.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

According to the findings and discussions, it can be concluded that in the lyrics of *Speechless* song sung by Naomi Scott, mostly the clauses in the lyrics used affect as main device and followed by appreciation. It indicates that the songwriter frequently used his feelings through the lyrics made. Furthermore, the inscribed attitude frequently appeared indicates that the messages are mostly conveyed directly.

Moral value found in *Speechless* song regarded feminism dominantly about how women should not be underestimated and the old stigma about women in society have to be against. Women were seen as helpless, inferior, submissive and obedient. However, women have the same right as men to voice, do things they love, and enjoy their life.

Based on the analysis, *Speechless* song fulfil the requirements of argument. Therefore, it can contribute in material development for teaching, especially teaching of argumentative essay. Moreover, in learning and teaching, argument is mandatory. Students and teachers are required to be critical thinkers and aware about certain issues. Those aim at producing convinced arguments.

According to the analysis above, I recommend that English teachers teach Appraisal Theory to their students. Beside increasing vocabulary, it also aims at enhancing the students' linguistics knowledge. Furthermore, I suggest that the future researcher can enlarge the research to analyze the engagement and graduation systems of Appraisal.

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