

## A WOMAN ORATOR: APPRAISAL THEORY- SOJOURNER TRUTH'S "AIN'T I A WOMAN" SPEECH

### BİR KADIN HATİP: DEĞERLENDİRME KURAMI-SOJOURNER TRUTH'UN "BEN KADIN DEĞİL MİYİM?" KONUŞMASI

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Geliş Tarihi/Submitted:

17.03.2025

Kabul Tarihi/Accepted:

13.05.2025

#### Anahtar Kelimeler:

Değerlendirme Teorisi, Söylem Analizi, Sojourner Truth, Kadın Çalışmaları, Sistemik Fonksiyonel Dilbilim

#### Keywords:

Appraisal Theory, Discourse, Sojourner Truth, Women Studies, Systemic Functional Linguistics

#### Kaynak gösterme/Citation:

Altındış, H. (2025). "A Woman Orator: Appraisal Theory- Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I a Woman" Speech". *World Language Studies (WLS)*, 5 (1): 43-64

#### Abstract

This paper uses Appraisal Theory (AT hereafter) (Martin & White, 2005) as a framework and aims to analyze how discourse, managing the dialogic space, accounts for the interpersonal dimensions of language in Sojourner Truth's famous speech "Ain't I a Woman." Two versions of the speech are used as data to analyze the role of discourse in creating communities and using language effectively. Scholarly interest in African American literature (Siebler, 2010; Campbell 1986), Feminist studies (Collins, 1989; bell hooks, 1999), African American Rhetoric (Gilyard, 2018; Atwater, 2009; Royster, 2000) highlights the importance of her speech in women's rights, as a voice of African American women, and for social equality. However, her speech has not been subjected to discourse analysis, in which we create new opportunities for new knowledge. Utilizing AT, this study aims seek answer to the following questions such as How does language function, influence and reflect ideas/beliefs in interpersonal communication in Truth's speech? How can we identify and categorize the attitudinal language used in a text or speech? How does the selected text interact with a wider audience and beyond the occupied space of the text? The study demonstrates that Appraisal theory, as a critical framework, provides a critical lens to fill this space and contributes to the evaluation of interpersonal meaning-making in semantic discourse domain.

#### Öz

Bu makale, bir çerçeve olarak Değerlendirme Teorisi'ni (bundan sonra AT) (Martin ve White, 2005) kullanarak diyalojik alanı yöneten söylemin, Sojourner Truth'un ünlü "Ben Kadın Değil Miyim?" konuşmasında dilin kişilerarası boyutlarını nasıl açıkladığını analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Konuşmanın iki versiyonu, topluluklar yaratmada ve dili etkili bir şekilde kullanmada söylemin rolünü analiz etmek için veri olarak kullanılmıştır. Afro-Amerikan edebiyatına (Siebler, 2010; Campbell 1986), feminist çalışmalara (Collins, 1989; bell hooks, 1999), Afro-Amerikan Retoriğine (Gilyard, 2018; Atwater, 2009; Royster, 2000) olan akademik ilgi, konuşmasının kadın hakları, Afro-Amerikan kadınların sesi olarak ve toplumsal eşitlik açısından önemini vurgulamaktadır. Ancak Truth'un konuşması, yeni bilgi üretimi için fırsatlar yaratan söylem analizine açısından incelenmemiştir. AT'yi kullanarak bu çalışma şu sorulara cevap aramayı amaçlamaktadır: Dil, Truth'un konuşmasında kişilerarası iletişimde fikirleri/inançları nasıl işler, etkiler ve yansıtır? Bir metinde veya konuşmada kullanılan tutumsal dili nasıl belirleyebilir ve kategorize edebiliriz? Seçilen metin daha geniş bir kitleyle ve metnin işgal ettiği alanın ötesinde nasıl etkileşime girer? Çalışma, Değerlendirme teorisinin bir çerçeve olarak bu alanı doldurmak için eleştirel bir merceğe sağladığını ve anlamsal söylem alanında kişilerarası anlam oluşturma ve değerlendirilmesine katkıda bulunduğunu göstermektedir.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In their book's introduction, Martin and White (2005) define AT as the relationship between writers and speakers since both “adopt a stance towards both the material they present and those with whom they communicate” (p. 1). AT offers a comprehensive framework for analyzing interpersonal meaning-making across various discourses by examining how individuals express attitudes, position their audience, and articulate personal evaluations (White, 2015). White (2005) elaborates that the AT framework is a nuanced lexico-grammatical approach which aims to explore, define, and display how language is used to “evaluate, adopt stances, construct textual personas, and manage interpersonal relationships” (p. 2). Building on this theoretical foundation, Martin's (1992) classification of language into lexicogrammar and discourse semantics provided researchers with a more expansive lens for linguistic analysis beyond traditional grammatical structures.

In her work *Appraising Research: Evaluation in Academic Writing* (2010), Susan Hood further illuminates the perspective, noting that “discourse semantic systems function at a more abstract level than do those of the lexico-grammar, so meanings at the level of discourse semantics can be dispersed across a number of different lexico-grammatical systems” (p. 23). This observation underscores the complexity and flexibility of linguistic meaning-making processes. The reason why I chose AT is that it is critical to evaluate and understand the functional role of appraisal theory as a research tool within the broader field of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Hood, 2019, p.383). To analyze interpersonal meaning through semantic discourse in appraisal theory, Martin (2010) explains the meaning systems of assessment and evaluation as “how the interlocutors are feeling, the judgements they make, and the value they place the various phenomena of their experience” (p. 144).

AT offers a systematic evaluation of attitudes, judgements and appreciations in a “holistic model of language and social context” (Martin and White, 2005, p.7). These subsystems reflect authorial choices to discuss “how they appraise, grade, and give value to social events” (Miller et al., 2014, p.108). Using AT, we can also operate the way discourse is related to society and situated social acts through the writer's cognitive interface. As a framework, AT “addresses not only outright evaluations,” but functioning as an essential explanatory tool, it helps “to identify and describe subtler forms of appraisal” (Julian, 2011, p.769). According to Wei et al., AT refers “to the semantic resources including words, phrases and structures which speakers or writers employ to negotiate emotions, judgments, and valuations” (2015, p.235). The theory reveals how speakers tend to intertwine linguistic resources such as polarity modality and tense

to evaluate and establish the interactive relation between the speaker and audience. Thus, the theory as Oddo puts it “positions audiences to be aligned with or opposed to certain communities of value” (Oddo, 2014, p. 206).

Drawing on the meta-functional—ideational, interpersonal and textual—feature of SFL of Halliday (1994) and Matthiessen (1995), Martin & White (2005) situate appraisal as a holistic model of language and social context (2005, p.7). They state that SFL, as a multi-perspective model, provides researchers with perspective or lenses to analyze the language in use (p.7), but lacks interpersonal meaning study. Therefore, they suggest that AT interprets and evaluates speaker’s attitudes, judgements and appreciation. They situate appraisal as an “interpersonal system at the level of discourse semantics” (p.33) because in AT the reader is located at the center of interpersonal meaning. In *The Language of Evaluation: Appraisal in English* (2005), Martin & White state that appraisal has three interacting domains as “attitude, engagement, graduation,” which Hood (2010) calls as “a system network of interpersonal meaning choices” (p. 27).

Attitude is at the center of AT distinguishing it from engagement and graduation (p.39). Engagement, according to Hood, focuses on “sourcing attitudes and the play of voices around opinions in discourse,” while graduation focuses on the amplification of feelings and obscuring the categories (p.35). (Figure 1). All these three systems have subcategories which “focused on specific attitudinal and linguistic aspects” (Julian, 2011, p.769). Attitude is subdivided into affect, judgement, and appreciation. Martin and Rose (2003) defined affect as data for get across feelings, judgement as a source for judging character, and appreciation as a source for valuing the worth of things. The attitudes can be positive/negative, direct/implicit. Judgement can be personal—admire or criticize—or moral—condemn or praise, while appreciation, like affect, can be positive or negative. AT and analysis of discourse in a situated social context provide systematic and methodological analysis by which attitudinal utterances and reality are evaluated. As Bazerman notes that we use language as a tool to negotiate our perception of “reality” as the “language opens up or closes off various reality-productions deserves close attention “(1990, p. 78).

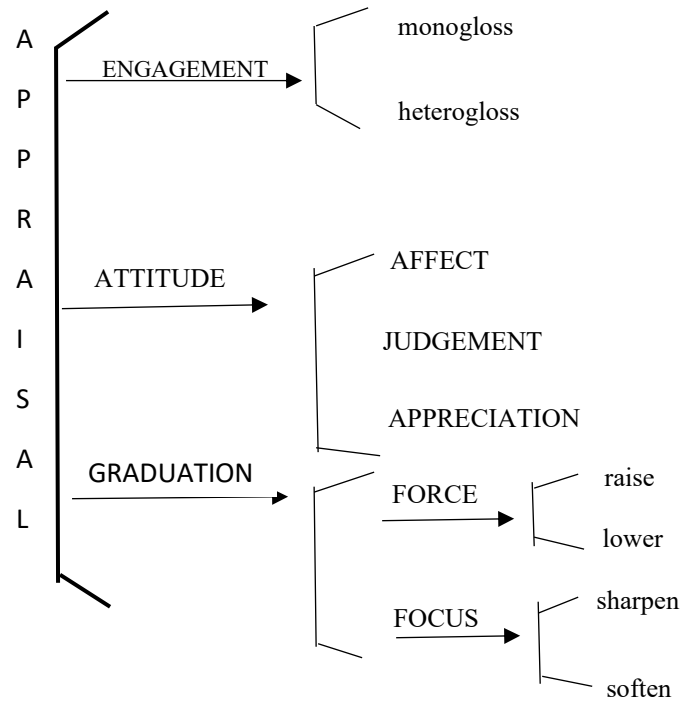


Figure 1- Appraisal Theory

## 2.LITERATURE REVIEW

Susan Hood (2010) has significantly expanded the AT, particularly in academic discourse. Her work on the evaluative stance in academic writing has revealed how scholars in academia use evaluative resources to establish authority and position themselves within their discourse communities. By showing how the tune of attitudinal meanings operates in academic texts, Hood shows that evaluation is not just localized but spread through textual structures. Hood's research illuminates how evaluation resources function differently across disciplines, revealing specific “evaluation profiles” that characterize different fields of knowledge. This contribution advances our understanding of how semantic fields are shaped by disciplinary contexts and epistemic cultures.

Although Teun A. van Dijk works primarily within critical discourse analysis (CDA), he has been interested in evaluative aspects of language in ways that complement Appraisal Theory. His socio-cognitive approach investigates how mental models mediate discourse and society, including how evaluative meanings are processed and reproduced. Van Dijk's work on ideology and discourse (2006) offers a cognitive dimension to understanding evaluative sources by examining how evaluative positions are naturalized through discursive structures. By integrating insights from Van Dijk's ideological square model with AT, analysts gain a more

comprehensive view of how positive self-presentation and other negative presentations operate through specific sources of evaluation.

Discourse refers to the way we use language within a context, written or spoken, to construct and convey meaning, communicate social realities, and shape and reflect power relations. Foucault conceptualizes discourse as an organized framework of thoughts that includes concepts, perspectives, behaviors, convictions, and customs that methodically shape both the individuals involved and the realities they discuss. According to Fairclough (2003), discourse represents a method of depicting various dimensions of reality—including physical world processes, connections, and frameworks; the psychological realm of ideas, emotions, and convictions; and social reality (124).

According to Johnstone (2006) discourse means “actual instances of communicative action in the medium of language (2), while Blommaert defines discourse as “meaningful symbolic behavior” (2005, p.2) because the speaker/writer chooses each item in their text from range of options, for that reason, analyzing language and the text within a context is important. We can understand discourse or discourses, as Johnstone explains, “meaning -making, in linguistic and other modes, and ways if acting, being, and envisioning self and environment” (2008, p.7). For James Paul Gee a discourse is a sort of “identity kit,” which comes complete with appropriate costume and instructions on how to act, talk, and often write, to take on a particular role that others will recognize (Gee 7).

Since discourse operates across multiple modes and levels, creating written or spoken communication is a contextually embedded social activity structured by various elements: semiotic components (such as sound patterns and visual elements), grammar, meaning, practical usage, and conversational dynamics. These structures rely on different types of mental frameworks and are guided by cognitive approaches that ensure the discourse is comprehensible, properly constructed, meaningful, suitable for its context, and communicatively effective in its specific situation. (van Dijk, 2012, p.1002).

Research questions:

The definition of discourse, I am particularly subscribing to Johnstone’s (2008) definition, and using AT, this research aims to seek answer to these questions:

- How does language function, influence and reflect ideas/beliefs in interpersonal communication in Truth’s speech?
- How can we identify and categorize the attitudinal language used in a text or speech?
- How does the selected text, using language, interact with a wider audience and beyond the occupied space of the text?

### 3.DATA

The data for this study is Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I a woman?" speech. There are two versions of her speech published at different venues by different authors. The first version (T1) was published in June 21, 1851 in the *Anti-Slavery Bugle* by Marius Robinson, a journalist, who was among the audience who listened Truth's speech at the Woman's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio in 1851, "where Truth made her speech, [and she] presented Truth's words in standard English" (Painter, 1996, p.128). The second version (T2), attributed to the southern slave dialect, was published by Frances Gage in April 1863 issue of *New York Independent*. For this analysis, I use both transcripts comparatively applying AT to examine the discursive and linguistic resources to analyze how discourse construes a powerful social action and how the way the text is presented, written or spoken, impacts lexico-grammatical choices and discourse semantics. After defining the framework and methodology, I used color coding to define the salient patterns and domains of appraisal theory. To present a more objective and comprehensive analysis and ensure the validity and reliability of qualitative analysis, I used interrater coding. After defining the domains, I analyzed the function of each domain in the text (s) and how they interact and create meaning in a social context.

### 4. DATA ANALYSIS

Social, cultural, historical, and situational factors shape the discourse and thus the context. The discourse in Sojourner Truth's text(s), in this sense, is a product of ideologies and social power relations. How these ideologies and power relations created inequalities for women in general and for women of color specifically, and how these ideologies and power relations are challenged is the core discursive argument of Truth's speech. Heuristics helps us to focus on specific qualities of the data, language used in the text, participants' prior discourse, and the constitutive power of discourse.

#### 4.1.ENGAGEMENT

The writer and reader enter in an interactive relationship with the previous utterances and with people who have stances on the issue discussed. Bakhtin's influential concepts of dialogism and heteroglossia constitute the foundation of engagement in AT. The notion of dialogism and heteroglossia can be explained as an approach which defines communication as a dialogic because "to speak or write is always to reveal the influence of, refer to, take up in some way, what has been said before, and simultaneously anticipate the responses of actual, potential or imagined readers/listeners" (Martin and White, 2005, p. 92).

Following Bakhtin's (1981) idea of dialogism, for Martin and White (2005) the voice in a text is either monoglossic or heteroglossic. The use of monoglossic voice, like bare assertions

or presumptions, indicates that there are no alternative points of view and that the audience agrees completely. In contrast, when they use heteroglossic resources, they acknowledge other perspectives. Martin and Rose (2007) demonstrate some significant sources help us to introduce “voices into text other than the writer’s” We can see these sources as quotes, responds, implied messages and processes are metaphorized (Hood, 2019, p.394-5).

There are two types of heteroglossic resources: dialogically expansive and dialogically contractive resources. While the former acknowledges various perspectives, the latter refutes opponents maintaining a specific viewpoint. Resources of ‘modality’ and ‘negation’ are used as signifiers of heteroglossic texts because both modality and negation accrue alternative viewpoints and possibilities. For example, you may not arrive on time if you keep looking around is implicitly dialogic with you may arrive on time. Truth in her speech uses both monoglossic and heteroglossic resources (Table 1) based on her rhetorical strategy and her expectation that she will both involve listener and will accept her proposition(s) as "novel, problematic, or contentious, or as likely to be questioned, resisted or rejected" (Martin & White, 2005, p. 93).

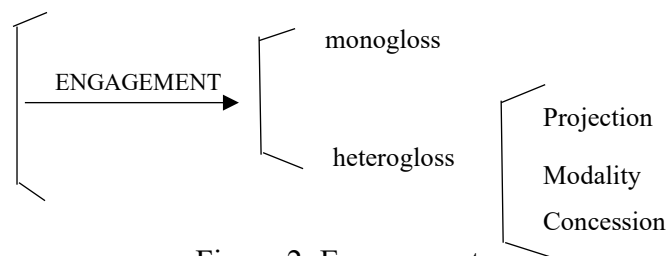


Figure 2: Engagement

In terms of engagement Truth’s speech is, though presented as monoglossic, the analysis shows that it is highly heteroglossic and dialogically expansive (Table 1) because it “permits multiple frames and voices to coexist” (Jaffe et al., 2015, p.136).

Table 1: Examples of engagement in Truth’s speech

ENGAGEMENT		Monoglossic	Heteroglossic
	T1	I cant read I have ...	May I.....? You need not be afraid..... Why children, You will have your ..... The lady has spoken... Man. Where is your part?
	T2	I...	Well Children I think that A member whispers



			That's it honey Ain't I a woman? Look at me! He says.... Where did your Christ come from? They is asking..... Look at me ..... Look at my arm
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It is true that there are a lot of “I” pronouns that make the speech look like monoglossic. First person pronoun usage signifies a strong sense of self. This monoglossic approach displays her courage and attracts attention to herself to support her stance and argument both as a black woman problematizing and challenging racial discrimination and as a woman seeking equal rights with men. Using pathos as a theoretical strategy, she effectively exposes her gestural language, such as hands, arms, eyes, to create semantic discourse. In AT “projection” within heteroglossic represents one voice within another; in other words, to construct an argument multiple viewpoints are integrated. In linguistic mode it is generally presented as reported speech’ which is a manifestation of dialogic extension. Asking Jesus to raise Lazarus is a projection of heteroglossic text.

-and besought him to raise their brother.

Modality has a crucial role in defining the stance of the speaker as well as shaping the interpretation of the reader. When talking about realization, Martin and White (2005) define three types of coding, phonology, lexicogrammar, and discourse semantics, and when we use appraisal as a critical lens, we evaluate a text from the stratification of discourse semantics.

-May I say a few words?

Through the discourse semantics points we recognize that the usage of modal in this sentence avoids alienation of the listeners/audience and invites multiple voices and perspectives into dialogue because through analyzing usage of modality we are “concerned with meaning beyond clause” (p. 9). “May I?”, in addition to acknowledging the audience, building intimacy, and asking for permission, presents a social action. It, as a rhetorical question, also emphasizes ethos and implies a moral authority that establishes interpersonal meaning and the right to address the convention.

-I can do as much as man

-I can't read, but I can hear

You need not be afraid of

Modality in these sentences refers to both pronounce and disclaim challenging denouncing and belittling illiteracy. Interpersonal evaluation displays a constructive resource,



a negation and judgement by uttering need not be afraid. Ability to hear sounds leads to the ability to use cognitive interface. The usage of ‘can hear’ highlights the strength of the speaker. Concessions in discourse are rhetorical strategies used to strengthen the argument of the presenter acknowledging the opposite views, which offers a balanced and reasonable attitude.

-he says women can't have as much rights as men,

-I can't read, but I can hear

-the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about?

The multifaceted functionality of these sentences adds a level to modality adding a concession marker, but. The concession markers create a dialogic space in which we can see implicit heteroglossic interaction. Bringing an external voice to the text, Truth demonstrates interaction with another voice, broadening the range of perspectives on the topic and develops counter argument to better present her viewpoint.

Through subdivisions of heteroglossia, AT heteroglossia highlights the plurality of voices that create dynamic and interactive perspectives and challenges the idea that texts are monolithic. Thus, as a heteroglossic text, “Ain’t I a woman?” reflects complexities of meaning making and social interaction. When she requests the audience to look at her physical prowess, it is not just showing facts but inviting active participation of the audience. The text through engagement modal produces meaning that construe the text as heteroglossic referencing prior utterances, alternative viewpoints and positions the reader to a reactional stance. The audience that would contribute heteroglossic text are regarded “holding the reins of social power and justice” (Limpscomb, 238). The text has dialogically expansive and contractive resources such as negations or explicit proclamation.

#### 4.2.ATTITUDE: AFFECT-TYPES FEELING

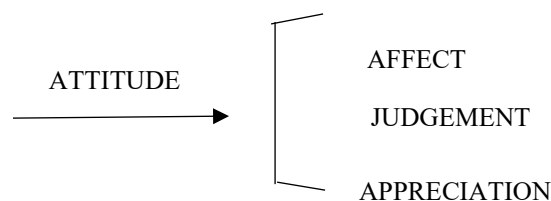


Figure 3-Attitude

Martin and Rose (2003) note that attitudes refer to “evaluating things, people’s characters and their feelings” (p.22). One of the three kinds of attitude is “affect,” the reflection of feelings, which can be seen as positive or negative, direct or implicit (Table 2). Martin and White (2005) classify affect adopting “the strategy of mapping out the terrain as systems of oppositions” (p.46).

**Table 2: Attitude-affect in Truth's speech**

		T1	T2
<b>affect</b>	Positive		Jesus heard me! Strong
	Negative	Poor slave Poor man Tight place And Jesus Wept	Cried Mothers' grief
	Direct	Afraid	
	Implicit		Jesus heard me! Sold off to slavery

These binary oppositions are used to demarcate mental and behavioral reflection of feelings and emotions. Some examples of affect in Truth's speech are culturally construed "Jesus heard me!" and "mother's grief" (Table 1). While the utterance "Jesus heard me" reflects a positive moral feeling, relief, relating the feeling to divinely peace and blessing, implicitly the same feelings imply the fact that nobody, but Jesus gave her hope and support to resist and challenge oppression, to be a strong woman and fight for social justice and equality. Similarly, the phrase "mother's grief" represents a culturally construed intensity of feeling adding the noun "mother." The noun allows for double coding as "affect and force" that level of feeling and creates a logical supportive ground as explanation of the felt grief, thus creates an associative power.

The following examples show paralinguistic manifestation of emotions

- Jesus heard me!
- and seen most all sold off to slavery,
- When I cried out with my mother's grief

The level of grief is intensified through witnessing the children sold off to a brutal and dehumanizing system. Not using any adjective describing feelings would be limiting, for that reason this sentence presents a rhetorical act and involves the reader evaluating the level of grief. These examples support the idea that "the selection of ideational meanings is enough to involve evaluation, even in the absence of attitudinal lexis that tells us directly how to feel" (Martin and White, 2005, p. 62). Truth's realization and utterance of "sold off to slavery" embodies the nature of realization of the interpersonal meanings (62). The ideational selection strengthens the affect and provokes attitudinal response in readers.

- If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone,.....
- I have heard much about the sexes being equal

This idea that the sexes being equal triggers negative feelings because the speaker feels that the idea has not been practiced or applied in patriarchal supremacy. White men claim that they are equal but give no rights to women to experience and internalize the equality. In her speech, Truth combines racial struggle through abolitionism and suffrage movement.

### 4.3.JUDGEMENT

Judgement deals with the attitudes toward people or their behaviors which we admire or criticize, praise or condemn (p. 42) (Table 3). In other words, we construe meaning through our attitudes towards the way people behave. Similar to the affect domain, in this domain judgement is categorized as social esteem and social sanction (Martin and White, 2005, p.52). Social esteem, common in oral culture, focuses on normality, tenacity, and capacity through jokes, stories, gossip, while social sanction deals with veracity and propriety (p. 52). In social esteem we can see positive or negative, explicit or implicit evaluations. However, as opposed to affect, here we have personal or moral judgement. Personal judgement can be admitting or criticizing (Martin and Rose, 2003, p.28).

**Table 3: Examples of judgement in Truth's speech**

			positive	negative
<b>JUDGEMENT</b>	Social Esteem	Normality		
		Capacity	T1) I have plowed and reaped and husked and chopped and mowed, T2 I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns	T1 I can't read
		Tenacity	the white men will be in a fix pretty soon	T1 can any man do more than that? T2 No man could head me
	Social Sanction	Veracity	T2- the men better let them.	T1 I have heard much about the sexes being equal; T2 ... to have the best place everywhere.
		Propriety	T1 As for intellect, all I can say is.. T1 you will feel better T2 These women together ought to be able to turn it back.	T2 ...wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?

As table 2 shows, meaning construed through positive judgment of capacity is rigorous and powerful because Truth accomplishes so much physical work that demands manpower:

-I have plowed and reaped and husked and chopped and mowed,

-I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns

Modality in Truth's speech is balanced in terms of positive and negative positionality.

-I can't read

The sentence announces her illiteracy while claiming her intellectuality. She upsides down this negative aspect and turns it into positive capacity and success.

Truth's semantic discourse in judgement shows how tenacity reflects patience and caution when Truth declares that *the white men will be in a fix pretty soon*. As a judgement we see that this utterance also reflects inclination of the brave and heroic character of "the white man," who will "fix" the problem very soon. In tenacity we can also see negative judgement as Truth presents this through grammatical functions of modality:

-can any man do more than that?

This judgement emphasizes incompetence while intensifying the meaning through comparison. A similar function of tenacity is constructed through incompetence in the following example: *No man could head me*.

In judgement of veracity parameters of social sanctions, we see that moral judgements are actively conveyed through interpersonal meaning making. The moral philosophy is presented in a direct and honest way through veracity in the following example:

-And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them.

Truth's positive discourse implies that she regards men as candid in their evaluation of the struggle of the women. At the same time there are negative judgments in her speech that fall into the veracity category.

...to have the best place everywhere (the subject is women)

The judgement is that she finds this utterance manipulative and deceitful. A similar judgement of dishonesty was conveyed in the following sentence in a constructive way.

-I have heard much about the sexes being equal.

Modulations "can be related to lexicalized judgements of propriety" (Martin and White, 2005, p. 55). Propriety of judgement in this example implies modest and humble character of the speaker. The negative judgement of propriety reflects cruel and mean nature.

-As for intellect, all I can say is..

-wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?

-These women together ought to be able to turn it back.

The modulation in this sentence "can be related to lexicalized judgements of propriety" (p. 55).

#### 4.4.APPRECIATION

Truth's text is more about feelings, judgements and graduation which means the interpersonal meaning mostly focused on people rather than things. However, it includes some elements that can be read as appreciation if we consider from the point of discourse semantics. While affect deals with feelings and judgement deals with characters, appreciation focuses on our attitudes towards "things." Martin and White (2005) include appreciation of "natural phenomena—what such things worth (how we value them)" (p. 56). The things we appreciate can be concrete or abstract, material or semiotic.

but Jesus heard me  
and a few of the men are coming up with them.  
But the women are coming up blessed be God  
how he never spurned woman from him  
the white men will be in a fix pretty soon

Reaction, composition, and valuation are illustrative realizations of appreciation. The intense appreciation in "but Jesus heard me" is a reaction, which is related to affection (Martin and White, 2005, p. 57). Truth appreciates that she found agency and voice in Jesus, who gave her strength to fight against injustices. "Jesus heard me" also functions as a valuation since it is related to opinions. Similarly, in the following sentence "and a few of the men are coming up with them," Truth appreciates that there are some men supporting the suffragist movement. This support is significant because it was the man in power who does not give the women the rights they are fighting for. It is not only the man but also, more importantly, Truth's word choice and discourse semantics include divine support into the struggle. Another positive appreciative reaction is to Jesus about his support and respect for woman because "he never spurned woman from him." Truth is positive and optimistic about the future because "the white man will be in a fix pretty soon." The definitive article "the" implies a specific white man such as the president because the white man who has the power give women the rights they are fighting for.

#### 4.5.SOURCE- GRADUATION

Graduation, as a semantic domain of appraisal, deals with up-scaling or down-scaling. Martin and White (2005) state that graduation "is central to the appraisal system" (p.136). Graduation is realized with lexicogrammatical resources. Force and Focus, as two axes of scalability identifying semantic options—intensity or amount and prototypicality and preciseness—are domains in graduation (p.137). Force refers to the up-scaling or down-scaling

that adjusts the ‘intensification’ of a value for example, from important to very important or to not so important (Hood, 2019, p. 389). Martin and White use the analogy of turning the volume system up and down (p. 37). Force shows the assessment of degree and amount (slightly, extremely, much, little, just, very, large etc.).

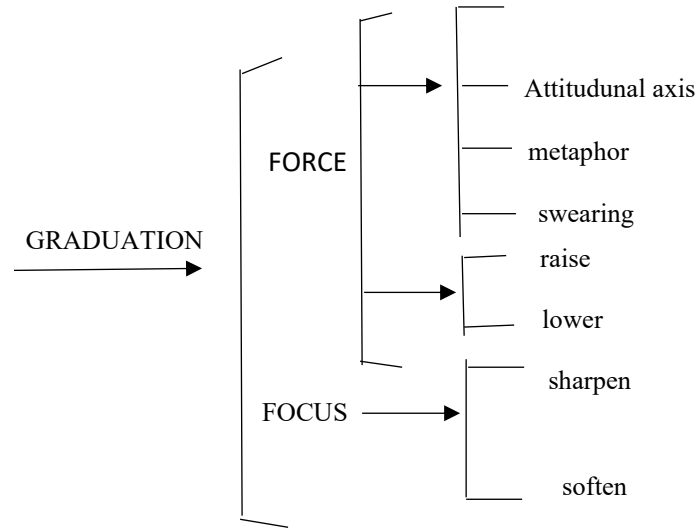


Figure 4- Graduation

Prototypicality (Focus) applies to the “either-or-categories which operate in experiential taxonomies” (p.137). For Hood (2019) focus “refers to the relative sharpening or blurring of categorical boundaries” (p.389). For focus, she makes the analogy of a camera in which we either sharpen or soften the focus. This is exemplified in expressions such as *absolute* misery, *real* research, a *vaguely* relevant study, a *sort of* pleasure, *pure* joy (p. 390).

Intensification and graduation are two domains that we see in Truth’s speech. One of the most commonly used intensifications is repetition, which can be in the form of using lexical items that are closely related or repeating them (Martin 2000, p.144). There are multiple ways of encoding intensification. As Hood (2010) explains “by considering these various grammatical realizations from a semantic perspective, we can consider how they function in the rhetorical strategies that writers employ” (p.77). This shows us the fact that force can function to grade experiential meanings, which may invoke attitudinal meanings. In the examples below we can repetition as a form of intensification.

-Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from?

-May I say a few words? I want to say a few words

We see “imprecise reckoning of numbers and of mass or presence” of quantification as a force of graduation (p.150). The rhetorical effect of the focus is defined whether the value is sharpening or softening. Truth’s repetitive rhetoric is an argumentative strategy as she repeats some utterances previously said by opponents, she turns those strategic intensifications for refutation. When Truth heard a white preacher arguing about the superior rights of males because of Christ and his manhood, she poses the rhetorical question “where did you’re your Christ came from?” and repeating the question has multifunctional semantic implications. She then openly states that Christ coming to the world has nothing to do with men. Her ‘logos’ destroys the superiority and privilege which is intensified and realized through repetition.

As the Table 4 shows Truth’s uses of intensification are realized mostly as repetitions. The repetitions include both sentence repetition and repetition of quantity.

-May I say a few words? I want to say a few words

-Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from?

The purpose of the questions is not to elicit an answer from the audience. Everybody knows the answer, in the first situation, that Truth is already on the stage and about to address the women’s convention. In the second one she intensifies equality of the sexes even lowering the power and status of men in the example of virgin birth.

**Table 4: Examples of graduation in Truth’s speech**

GRADUATION	FORCE		T1	T2
		Intensification	A tight place Poor slave May I say a few words? I want to say a few words	As much rights as men I could work as much as and eat as much as a man Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from?
		Quantification	As much as, as much too, more than that? Too much A few, any	Little half measure Little man
	FOCUS	sharpen	A few	



		soften	Poor slave	need to be helped into carriages, lifted over ditches, and to have the best place
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Truth aims to intensify the message that man played no active role in Jesus's birth. At the same time, through her selective examples of the role of Eve in the fall and virgin birth, Truth attests the power of women implicitly comparing these acts to those of man. There is an overlapping between linguistic and semantic intensification and quantification. The functionality of intensification and quantification is to emphasize equality and challenge socially structured classifications, definitions, and gender roles.

-I could work as much and eat as much as a man

The example taken from T2 shows that repetition of the quality of action (work and eat) intensifies the interpersonal argument of the speaker on equality of genders. The sentence construes semantically complex meaning "as much" signifies both lexicogrammatical amount and process. Focus plays an attitudinal role of softening the status of woman through men's perspective. Being helped into carriages or lifted over ditches still show women as weak and argues that this is a diverting of focus.

-need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere

Though "softening" semantically creates a meaning that values the state and status of woman in a society, it implicitly creates a force affect which sharpens the criticism toward power. Sharpening indicates "maximal investment by the authorial voice in the value position" (139).

Most of the intensifiers used in the text construe interpersonal meaning through comparing people (man and woman). Through comparison, she intensifies gender equality as well as racial equality.

-I have as much muscle as any man, and can do as much work as any man.

-I can carry as much as any man, and can eat as much too

-I am as strong as any man that is now.

As a former slave, Truth, like many slave women, is forced to perform hard jobs and chores (house or field work) and worked under harsh conditions to stay alive. This made her stronger

both physically and spiritually. Because we explained in the appreciation section, it was the God heard her anguish and voice and responded to her.

## 5. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Sojourner Truth's speech analyzed through Appraisal theoretical framework revealed several important findings. As stated in the introduction, this article used appraisal theory to inquire several problems answering the attitudinal evaluation of the selected text, to understand the ways in which semantic discourse is used by the speaker creating a heteroglossic text. The analysis has shown that Truth's speech 2 (T2) used engagement more effectively. A comparative analysis of the two versions of the same speech shows that T2 written in vernacular southern slave dialect is a more heteroglossic text than T1, which is written in standard English. While the journalist in T1 focuses more on the deliberative function of the language, In T2 repetition, modality, and questions are used more frequently, addressing directly to the members of the audience. Usage of all these strategical elements in vernacular language is based on "call and response" aesthetics of African American language and rhetorical traditions. Call and response create engagement of the audience. When she could not remember a word while she was giving her speech, she turns to the audience and asks what it was and one of the members of the convention whispers "intellect." We cannot see the same reflection in T1.

Repetitions and asking rhetorical questions are other significant strategies that contribute to the heteroglossic structure of the speech in terms of engagement. When Truth directly asks a man about the role of man in virgin birth, she is not only challenging and problematizing gender inequality but also aims to deconstruct socially constructed superiority of one sex over another. She invites the public to respond to her questions and approve of her viewpoint. Thus, analyzing the engagement function of the attitudinal domain, the study has found that in social movements heteroglossic text recognizes the audience and though writer/ audience dualism. The writer/speaker presents semantic discursive strategies to convey interpersonal meaning to the audience. The analysis of affect shows that both versions used a balance representation of positive/ negative and direct/ implicit feelings. While T2 used more positive and implicit affect (Jesus heard me!: sold off slavery), T1 used more negative and esteem and social sanction. While in the social esteem section capacity and tenacity were addressed in both versions, in social sanction veracity and propriety were used in both versions. In appreciation domain, we can see that Truth more appreciates natural phenomena.

Appreciation of the things and natural phenomena were illustrated through reaction, composition, and valuation. Analyzing Graduation shows that the speech is predominantly

structured around engagement, graduation, and affect. In graduation, usage of intensification and quantification emphasized the affect and engagement. The analysis of *force* shows that the speech mostly focuses on pathos, intensifying the quality, quantity of the subject matter. *Focus*, on the other hand, emphasizes softening language and argument. *Focus* shows how male discourse softens the seriousness of the suffragist movement showing women as weaker individuals that need to be helped into carriages, lifted over ditches and those who deserve the best place. This study shows that AT can be used effectively to analyze the attitudinal dimensions of Truth's historical speech about a history-making black women rhetor. By examining the engagement, attitude, graduation, we gain insights into Truth's passion for social and gender equality.

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### EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Appraisal Theory, developed by J.R. Martin and P.R.R. White (2005) within Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), provides a framework for analyzing evaluative language. This approach examines how language constructs attitudes, interacts with different perspectives, and regulates communication power and focus. The theory emerged from the interpersonal metafunction of language and offers systematic tools for understanding how speakers encode judgments, emotions, and aesthetic evaluations. Appraisal resources operate within three interactive domains: attitude encompasses the expression of emotions, including emotional reactions, judgment, and appreciation; engagement involves speaker/writer positioning relative to other voices and perspectives, using Bakhtin's monoglossic and heteroglossic concepts; and graduation concerns positioning on power and focus through intensification or reduction of meaning and effect.

Susan Hood (2010) significantly expanded Appraisal Theory in academic discourse, revealing how academics use appraisal resources to establish authority within disciplinary communities. Her work demonstrates that evaluation spreads through textual structures and functions differently across disciplines, creating specific "evaluation profiles" for different knowledge domains. Teun A. van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach complements Appraisal Theory by investigating how mental models mediate between discourse and society. His work on ideology and discourse examines how evaluative positions are naturalized through discursive structures. Integrating van Dijk's ideological square model with Appraisal Theory provides comprehensive understanding of how positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation operate through specific appraisal resources.

This study examines Sojourner Truth's 1851 speech at the Women's Congress in Akron, Ohio, using discourse analysis and Appraisal Theory. Truth's speech represents a masterpiece of African-American rhetorical art, analyzed extensively by Women's Studies scholars. The research investigates Truth's ideological position, political stance, and cognitive structures underlying evaluative patterns by comparing two versions: standard language (T1) and local dialect (T2). Truth's speech demonstrates how cognitive evaluations form and express emotions through strategic language use. She strongly emphasizes threats from slavery and sexism, evaluating injustices against women and blacks as systematic wrongs. These negative evaluations activate anger and determination, showing language's functional power in mobilizing social action.

Through expressions like "Ain't I a Woman: Look at My Arm," Truth cognitively interacts with listeners, demonstrating her strength and resilience against racial and gender discrimination. Truth successfully evoked specific emotional responses through strategic use of tone and rhetorical devices. Cognitive activation occurs through repetition of questions like "Ain't I a woman?" This repetitive structure engages listeners and challenges social evaluation patterns. The speech exemplifies how emotions function as powerful tools for social change beyond individual responses.

The dialectal version (T2) proves more effective in attitude, engagement, and evaluation dimensions compared to the standard language version (T1). T2 demonstrates clearer engagement and reader response adoption, utilizing the "call and response" method characteristic of African-American culture. This approach invites listener participation in meaning creation. From an SFL perspective, T2's repetitions, modal structures, and direct questions exemplify heteroglossic text usage. The attitudinal domain reveals author/listener dualism recognition. Both versions display balanced positive/negative and direct/indirect attitudes, though T2 employs slightly more positive and implied sentences.

In the evaluation domain, both versions emphasize determination and confidence in social esteem terms, while utilizing truth and appropriateness in social sanction contexts. Appreciation toward matter and natural phenomena appears throughout both texts. Graduation analysis reveals heavy emphasis on intensification and quantification, with emotional references focusing on quality, quantity, and main subjects.

This analysis demonstrates Appraisal Theory's effectiveness in analyzing attitudinal behaviors. Truth's speech, when examined through this framework, reveals how she semantically and contextually emphasizes social equality, racial and gender equality, and cognitively mobilizes society toward action and response. The study confirms that the dialectal version (T2) more powerfully employs appraisal resources, creating stronger interpersonal connections and ideological positioning. The research highlights language's role beyond mere communication, revealing its importance in developing cognitive and reactive actions that shape social understanding and promote change.